

The Global Partnership for Education's Thematic and Country-level Evaluation

Annex - Data and Evidence for the 2024 Synthesis Report, by Key Evaluation Question

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1 Do reforms prioritized in partnership compacts demonstrate potential to transform education systems?

This section explores the conceptualizations of system transformation and the substantive content of the proposed priority reforms in order to examine whether the priority reforms, as identified and prioritized by country-level stakeholders, demonstrate the potential for transformation.¹

This section is organized as follows:

In **section 1.1**, we first examine various **understandings and conceptualizations of system transformation**, particularly from the perspective of country-level stakeholders. This includes how and to what extent system transformation is understood (or conceptualized) in different country contexts and whether stakeholders share or are aligned on understandings.

We then examine the substance of the priority reforms identified in our case study countries in **section 1.2**. This includes an assessment of whether the priority reforms meet the **criteria of system transformation reform**.

Finally, in **section 1.3**, we examine the **level of reform prioritization** and **compare the priority reforms against countries' previous reforms** in this area.

1.1 Understandings and conceptualizations of system transformation

Before examining the proposed priority reforms, we first examine different conceptualizations of system transformation across different country contexts.

In our interviews with key country-level stakeholders involved in the compact development process, we asked an open-ended question of respondents' own understanding and interpretation of system transformation. We used these responses to not only identify what different stakeholders understood system transformation to be, but also whether stakeholders were in agreement on the need for system transformation as a means to understand their commitment to the system transformation process.

These responses also allowed us to compare stakeholders' understanding of system transformation against Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) own definition,² as well as to explore whether country-level stakeholders held similar or aligning understandings of both the concept and theory of system transformation and on how to achieve, concretely, system transformation in their country context.

¹ This section corresponds to **Leading evaluation question 1** in our evaluation matrix, where sections 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 1.1.3 correspond to **sub question 1.1**, **sub question 1.2**, and **sub question 1.4** respectively. Note that **sub questions 1.3 and 1.6**, which examine the priority reforms with regards to gender hardwiring and the gender-equality related pathways in priority reforms, has been moved to **section 5. Sub question 1.5** which examines the theories of change underpinning the priority reforms has been moved to **section 3.1**, and **sub question 1.7** on the presence of the enabling factors in the priority reforms is now covered under **section 2.2**.

² GPE, in its partnership compact guidelines (2024), has defined system transformation as 'a change with the potential to positively impact broader parts of the education system and improve service delivery at scale'; 'a change that contributes towards accelerated education progress, including addressing system inequities and gender inequality'.

Key findings

- Buy-in and support for the concept of system transformation was demonstrated across the case study countries, with widespread agreement reported by country-level stakeholders (and in particular, government stakeholders) on the need for system transformation in their country context.
- Country-level stakeholders generally understood the concept of system transformation but emphasized different aspects as key, such as:
 - Prioritizing and addressing the most critical challenge to improving educational outcomes
 - Identifying root causes of poor educational outcomes and the importance of diagnosis
 - Addressing multiple system constraints
- Differing definitions at the country-level can be explained on the one hand, by the challenges faced by the GPE Secretariat in the initial rollout of the operating model, but on the other hand by the value of allowing country-level stakeholders to adopt their own interpretations.

Strength of evidence



Findings are supported by data from multiple primary and secondary sources, including interviews with a range of country-level stakeholders and a review of partnership compacts across all eight case studies. Findings were further corroborated by global interviews with members of the GPE Secretariat, including members of the Country Engagement and Policy Team and country team leads, as well as a review of GPE program level documentation of lessons learned over time.

A summary of the proposed priority reforms, including the targeted level(s) of education and thematic areas covered, can be found in **Table 1**. Across the case study countries, four of the eight countries targeted pre-primary (**El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda**) and six³ targeted primary level education with their priority reforms. All priority reforms covered the thematic priority of quality teaching and either learning or early learning, while five of the priority reforms explicitly targeted gender equality (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania**).

We found widespread **agreement on the need to transform education systems** in case study countries. This was particularly reflected by government stakeholders (policy makers and ministry representatives) as well as among development partners (such as donors). This suggests that the appetite for system transformation was generally strong among stakeholders in case study countries and that there is perceived value in exploring issues through a system transformation lens.

Where skepticism was expressed, it was not in disagreement on the need for transformation but that the term came from the international donor community, was posed as a ‘new’ way of working or was too abstract. For instance, a stakeholder in **Democratic Republic of Congo** defined system transformation as “another magic word from the international community.” In **Tanzania**, a stakeholder expressed that “system transformation is a big word – it’s jargon;” while in **Nepal**, government stakeholders believed that the concept was not “revolutionary” in terms of their approach to education reform but was the “new name of the game” for the international donor community.

Overall, we found that across countries and key country-level stakeholders, **there was a general understanding of system transformation, but different countries emphasized the importance of different aspects of transformation**. Table 2 provides examples of the different understandings and interpretations for system transformation in our case study countries, as articulated by country-level stakeholders involved in their respective compact development processes.

³ Only El Salvador and Nepal do not target primary education; they both target pre-primary only.

Table 1. Description of the priority reforms undertaken by case study countries

Country	Focus area and strategic parameters for GPE funding	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Thematic priority areas ⁴
Cambodia	(i) Classroom learning, with a priority on the expansion of early grade learning practice nationwide on Khmer language and Mathematics and the development of a classroom assessment system; (ii) Teacher professional development with support to the continuation of the teacher reform and to the harmonized implementation of school-based management, mainly in primary education.	✓	✓	✓	Learning, Quality Teaching, Gender Equality
Democratic Republic of Congo	(i) Quality teaching, evaluation and professional development of teaching workforce, gender equality in the workforce; (ii) Quality learning, inclusion, and improved schooling conditions		✓		Learning, Quality Teaching
El Salvador	The achievement of quality early childhood learning with equity and inclusion	✓			Early Learning, Learning, Gender Equality
Nepal	Enabling children to complete their education cycle and learn by putting teachers at the center (with sub-areas of: quality teaching (especially in-service training), early childhood education (teacher training and minimum enabling conditions), gender equality (school and local level planning and monitoring and teacher training and mentoring for gender sensitive and inclusive schools)	✓			Early Learning, Quality Teaching, Gender Equality
Sierra Leone	Improving children's school readiness and foundational learning (through primary grade 4), including closing learning disparities for girls and boys and for vulnerable groups	✓	✓		Early Learning, Quality Teaching, Gender Equality, Inclusion
Tajikistan	Improving learning through the implementation of competency-based education (CBE)		✓	✓	Learning, Quality Teaching
Tanzania	improved teacher workforce planning and management supported by improved gender equality and inclusion and improved teaching and learning environment		✓	✓	Learning, Quality Teaching, Gender Equality, Domestic Finance
Uganda	Quality foundations for learning	✓	✓	✓	Early Learning, Learning, Quality Teaching, Domestic Finance

Source: Country compacts and board documents on the initial allocation and strategic parameters for GPE support

⁴ As reported in the quality assurance reviews of the strategic parameters for each country.

Table 2. Understandings of system transformation by country

Country	Country-level stakeholders' understanding of system transformation	Essence of understanding
Cambodia	Emphasis on the importance of teacher capacity as the country's significant challenge	Prioritizing a significant challenge
Democratic Republic of Congo	Broad-ranging and substantial change and the need to "do things differently" in the education sector	The importance of doing things differently
El Salvador	Change in multiple points in the system to address the complex problem	Addressing multiple system constraints
Nepal	"New name of the game" with an understanding that learning poverty is a critical issue to be addressed	Prioritizing a significant challenge
Sierra Leone	Shared and deep comprehension of the pressing challenges facing the education system	Problem identification
Tanzania	Longer term transformation in line with national, technological, and social developments, change in practice and modalities, a vision owned by government; looking at what was not working before and changing	Problem identification and collective support for change
Tajikistan	A continuation, spiral process, activities at different stages and levels of education; transformative reform ... will eventually need not only to achieve the desired impact, but to spill over across the board and have positive impact across other areas of the education sector; the humanization of education; the need to encourage decentralization of decision making and discussion	Addressing multiple system constraints
Uganda	Getting to 'the root' of what is identified by most as the fundamental 'problem' of the Ugandan education system – a crisis in learning outcomes	Problem identification and prioritizing a significant challenge

Source: Country-level stakeholder interviews from country case studies

Most examples emphasized **prioritization and a focus on addressing the most critical challenge to improving educational outcomes**. The most commonly agreed aspect of system transformation among the case study countries was the need for the identification of root causes of poor educational outcomes and the importance of diagnosis (as evidenced in our case studies for **El Salvador**, **Democratic Republic of Congo**, **Uganda**, **Sierra Leone** and, to some extent, **Nepal**).

Stakeholders in **Tanzania**, **El Salvador**, **Democratic Republic of Congo**, and **Tajikistan** also identified the **importance of wider stakeholder engagement** to achieve system transformation, particularly with the inclusion of civil society more widely in the process.

In four countries, stakeholders made explicit reference in interviews to the fact that system transformation required a **move away from "business as usual"** (**El Salvador**, **Tajikistan**, **Tanzania**, and **Sierra Leone**), suggesting an emphasis that it required a new way of working. In four countries (**Tanzania**, **El Salvador**, **Tajikistan** and **Democratic Republic of Congo**), stakeholders recognized that system transformation needed to address **multiple constraints within the system** and also recognized the importance of considering both the system and sub-system levels.⁵ These different emphases generally reflect the GPE Secretariat's own descriptions of the steps or aspects of the critical pathway

⁵ This reflects the system transformation criteria related to aligning relevant sub-systems, policies, and practices.

to support transformation, particularly with regard to the first two steps ('assess and diagnose' and 'prioritize and align').

In some cases, the **concept of prioritization** in system transformation was interpreted as the narrowing down of policy priorities and therefore a deemphasizing of support for some policies which were central to education sector plans. For example, in **Uganda**, the system transformation approach led first to the suggestion of 125 priorities which needed to be reduced to three, which, according to the interviews with stakeholders, led to "sectored thinking" rather than "system thinking". This narrowing was thought to have an exclusionary effect on government departments that were not working on the chosen priorities.

In **Sierra Leone**, country-level stakeholders held a more positive interpretation of the prioritization component of the system transformation approach. Here, it was considered an effort to prioritize relevant subsystems, policies, and practices (such as teacher professional development, curriculum, assessment systems, education management and information systems (EMIS) to achieve the intended outcomes, channeling as many resources as possible into it from government and development partners. The expectation was that the prioritization and alignment of resources could achieve significant change. This example has been shared by the GPE Secretariat with other partner countries to showcase how countries can endeavor to achieve systems transformation through prioritization and alignment. During interviews, stakeholders from across the countries emphasized the importance of providing inspirational examples of system transformation approaches in practice to support embedding systems thinking within policy reform.

Interviews with members of the GPE Secretariat, including country team leads for countries in our case study sample, also validate that understandings of system transformation appear to vary across countries. This variation is explained in two ways. Firstly, several GPE Secretariat respondents suggested that, at the start of the roll-out of the model, the GPE Secretariat had difficulty communicating the concept of system transformation to country stakeholders. This difficulty was attributed to the lack of initial internal coherence on system transformation within the GPE Secretariat. Across almost all our interviews with staff from the GPE Secretariat, respondents reported that even within the GPE Secretariat there were (and continue to be) different understandings and definitions of system transformation. This was not generally considered to be a problem and reflects the natural process of rolling out and socializing a complex concept, where understanding evolves over time. However, GPE Secretariat respondents described the rollout of the model as a 'learning by doing' approach, particularly with regards to the development of guidance and tools. As a result, several members of the Country Engagement and Policy Team expressed that at the start of the rollout they did not feel sufficiently prepared for the discussions with country-level stakeholders on system transformation or that the discussions did not go into enough depth on this, resulting in differing uptake of the concepts.

Yet, the same GPE Secretariat respondents also emphasized **the importance of allowing space for country-level stakeholders to take on their own interpretations of system transformation**. This follows the movement within the GPE 2025 operating model to be country-led and to 'meet countries where they are'. GPE Secretariat staff expressed that both the process and end-product of system transformation may look different for different countries, particularly within the time frame of support under GPE 2025.

Looking at the alignment of definitions of system transformation across stakeholders *within countries*, in five of the eight countries, interviewees explicitly stated that, **within countries there was a "lack of consensus" on definitions of system transformation and how it should be achieved** in practice (**Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Cambodia**). However, in our case studies, we found limited examples of the concrete ways in which understandings differed, or among whom. The lack of consensus on the interpretations of system transformation has implications for both alignment of stakeholders as well as alignment of resources, which we explore further in **section 2.5**.

1.2 The reforms which countries are undertaking and whether they meet the criteria of system transformation reform

Following on from the understanding of the concepts, we explore the extent to which the priority reforms set out in case study partnership compacts meet the criteria of system transformation. We first provide an explanation of the priority reforms which case study countries have proposed to undertake. This information largely draws from the priority reform as articulated in each country's partnership compact. We then analyze whether the priority reforms demonstrate the attributes of the following criteria for a transformative reform:⁶

- The reform endeavors to achieve improvements to learning with greater speed, scale, and inclusion than past and/or business-as-usual reforms.
- The reform endeavors to achieve learning improvements through approaches that are evidence-based.
- The reform addresses multiple system constraints through a multi-faceted approach to change.
- The reform aligns relevant subsystems, policies, and practices, such as those related to teacher professional development, curriculum, assessment systems, EMIS and more, to achieve the intended outcomes.
- The reform aligns the incentives of actors from all relevant levels and aspects of the education system (e.g., national, regional and district).

Key findings

- Countries did not embed accelerated education progress (speed) and only one country embedded improved service delivery at scale (scale) in the design of the priority reform.
- All countries aimed to address system inequities and gender inequality (inclusion), but only two took inclusion into account in the reform designs and implementation.
- The problem diagnosis phase was well conceived and underpinned by country-level data and evidence, but the solutions proposed to address the priority reforms were less well evidenced.
- While some countries have begun to integrate system transformation criteria into their reform designs, there remains significant progress to be made, particularly in addressing multiple system constraints and ensuring the alignment of incentives.
- Additional efforts are also needed to enhance and structure subsystem alignment mechanisms, facilitating efficient planning and implementation of priority reforms. This improvement is crucial not only at the national level but also at subnational levels, ensuring effective transformation throughout the system.

Strength of evidence

High

Findings are supported by a desk review of partnership compacts across all eight case study countries and further corroborated with country-level stakeholder interviews. Data sources are complete and credible.

⁶ We set out these criteria in our inception report. In addition to these five criteria to define a transformative reform, there are three additional transformative reform criteria which examine the implementation of a transformative reform as well as five criteria which define the process required to design a transformative reform.

1.2.1 Achieving learning with greater speed, scale, and inclusion

Our case studies used primary interviews, combined with a review of the partnership compacts, to examine the extent to which the priority reforms include or reference attributes of greater speed, scale, and inclusion, three attributes GPE uses to describe systems transformation. For instance, a priority reform is defined in GPE’s Partnership Compact Guidelines (February 2023) as: ‘a change with the potential to positively impact broader parts of the education system and improve service delivery at scale’; ‘a change that contributes towards accelerated education progress, including addressing system inequities and gender inequality.

We examined whether in their partnership compacts, partner countries explicitly stated ambitions for speed, scale, or inclusion (face validity) for their priority reforms, as well as whether the ambitions and approaches for speed, scale or inclusion were implicitly described (construct validity). We examined ‘construct validity’ by looking at whether we were able to find evidence of intent or ambitions to achieve speed, scale or inclusion by looking at the proposed approaches or activities described as part of the priority reform, embedded within proposed M&E framework indicators (such as through descriptions of baselines and target values, or in proposed ways to disaggregate data), or whether (the lack of) speed, scale or inclusion are implied as part of problem diagnosis.

Finally, where the references were present, we also examined the feasibility of the intent; however, in practice, we were unable to conclusively determine feasibility in most cases due to a lack of detail or data in the compacts to support this. The following table provides a summary of our findings while **Table 6** in **section 6** includes our more detailed analysis.

Table 3. References to speed, scale, and inclusion by country⁷

Criteria	Cambodia	Democratic Republic of Congo	El Salvador	Nepal	Sierra Leone	Tajikistan	Tanzania	Uganda
Speed	N	N	(y)	N	N	N	N	N
Scale	(y)	(y)	(y)	(y)	(y)	Y	N	N
Inclusion	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(y)	(y)

Key: Y = strong (both intent and explicit) mentions of the criteria, (y) = to some extent, (implicit) intent is expressed, N = no explicit or implicit mentions or only weak mentions.

Source: Country-level stakeholder interviews) and analysis of partnership compacts

Across our case studies, no partner country strongly demonstrated ambitions for accelerating education progress (speed). **El Salvador** was the only country that **explicitly** referenced speed as a goal for its priority reform, although speed was somewhat **implied** in the cases of **Sierra Leone** and **Tanzania**. However, in all three cases, neither documents nor interviews offered evidence that speed was incorporated as a goal into the design or planning for implementation through approaches or interventions that imply or are intended to support greater speed of change. For other case study countries, there were some implicit references to speed, although for the most part these were weakly implied. For example, there was a notable absence of references to specific qualifiers of speed (for example, references to time-bound targets for improved learning outcomes) or data on previous trends as benchmarks. Other countries made no references to accelerated progress of the achievements of the reform in the design phase (including in their theories of change) or planning for implementation. There was also some skepticism reported by stakeholders regarding speed as a

⁷ The assessment of whether speed, scale and inclusion is referenced in the interviews and compacts was undertaken by reading the documents and looking for these key words and associated terms, specifically in relation to the roll out of the priority reform. The interviews asked more directly whether these attributes were associated with the ambitions of the priority reform. (y) indicates not strong, but present to some extent.

criterion for system transformation, recognizing the importance of allowing time for reform processes (**Nepal** and **Tanzania**).

Ambitions for delivery at scale were to some extent present in some partnership compacts and acknowledged in interviews as an intention of the priority reforms in: **Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan**. It was not possible to assess the feasibility of ambitions for scale, as there are no baseline and target figures in the compacts. **Tajikistan's** reform design and implementation plans is the only compact to include more specific information on how it would deliver at scale, through the expansion of the competency-based education (CBE) curriculum from primary to secondary level, accompanied by documented plans and activities to reform governance at a national level. Across the remaining case study countries, there was some recognition of the importance of scale (either explicitly or implicitly) and in-country respondents expressed recognition of the importance of scale.

Enhanced inclusion was the most strongly referenced criterion and was explicitly referenced in partnership compacts and interviews as an important goal in the priority reforms for all eight case studies. For **Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, and Tanzania**, supporting gender equality and inclusion was recognized as fundamental to the achievement of system transformation (for example, gender equity and inclusion is one of the three expected outcomes of the priority reform in **Tanzania**). Notably, **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Sierra Leone** compacts contained a stronger emphasis on inclusion than past reforms. Two countries compacts demonstrated inclusion being clearly reflected in the design and implementation of the priority reforms. **El Salvador** integrates gender dimensions into new curricula and teaching materials as well as in their data collection practices and assessments. In **Democratic Republic of Congo** inclusion is embedded into the priority reform design through a focus on education in emergency and securitization of school places for girls in particular. **Tajikistan's** compact described disability, gender, and some minority groups as a focus for the priority reform and is committed to the creation of better evidence in this area. There were reported efforts to hardwire gender and inclusion into activities. Although plans to operationalize inclusion were present to some extent, minimal details were included to describe how it will be achieved.

1.2.2 Evidence-based approaches to support learning

To shed light on the degree to which the chosen priority reforms, and the approaches to learning that the priority reforms propose, are built on evidence, we more closely examine the content of the priority reforms for both an implicit and explicit discussion or reference to the evidence-base that informed the selection of approaches. We specifically examine the examples of data sources described in the compact (see **Table 7, section 6**) and whether proposed approaches in priority reforms are generally considered as an approach grounded in evidence (both local and global). The results can be found in **Table 8 (section 6)**.

Although the problem diagnosis phase was well conceived, the solutions proposed to address the priority reforms were less well evidenced. Country-level data and evidence strongly underpinned the process of problem identification in seven of the eight sampled countries. All countries used evidence to identify priorities, with the types of evidence used varying across the countries. In **Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda** problem identification was mostly informed by national-level evidence. In **El Salvador**, the priority was also informed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MINEDUCYT) and the Office of the First Lady through listening to advice from UNICEF. **Sierra Leone** also used some global evidence to inform its priority on improving literacy, numeracy, curriculum and learning materials.

Specific references to the use of studies on or assessments of past or ongoing reforms to help identify problems and related priorities were also evident in the partnership compacts of **Tajikistan** and **Tanzania**. These included references to national studies conducted by development partners as well as national data sources (including EMIS data and annual school censuses). In **Tajikistan** particularly, a stock-taking exercise, covering around 150 documents (national- and regional-level),

was conducted ahead of the compact development process and identification of the priority reform. In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, a process of problem identification and prioritization took place during the compact development. However, the strength of the underlying evidence base, and the quality of this process, was hindered by the lack of systematic and up-to-date data (a critical gap identified in the enabling factors analysis process). The majority of the action points identified by the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP) to address enabling factors were not taken into account in the compact, and there was no detailed in-depth review of previous reforms and the reasons they might have not succeeded, nor a thorough review of the issues hindering gender equality in the education sector. This was postponed to the next phase of implementation.

The process of selecting the appropriate solutions was significantly less evidence-based than identifying the problems themselves (the reasons for this are not immediately apparent). Taking evidence-based approaches to designing the priority reform is one of the criteria used by the evaluation to assess system transformation in the context of the GPE operating model. Overall, the countries did not seem to have made extensive use of the existing (including global) evidence base when designing their priority reforms. The selected solutions either lacked references to underpinning evidence, or the use of evidence was not fully clear. For instance, in **El Salvador** evidence had been collected to justify and validate the choice of reform - improvement of the curriculum, development of better teacher profiles for early childhood care and strengthening teaching capacities - but it was not clear whether evidence had also been used for the selection of specific solutions (such as how the curriculum would be improved or what new profiles for teachers would include) and these were not set out in the compact, beyond some references to members of the local education group looking at academic literature and considering best practices from neighboring countries. In other countries, the intention to use evidence to inform implementation plans was deferred to the future (**Tajikistan** and **Tanzania**).

Cambodia was the exception, as it used a stronger evidence base to identify its priority reform and has proposed approaches that are strongly grounded as ‘evidence-based approaches.’ Its partnership compact most clearly exhibited a priority reform (improved student learning outcomes at primary and secondary level), with explicit references to both global and national-level evidence to support its selection of program areas. The design of Cambodia’s priority reform included three evidence-based solutions to respond to learning loss: structured pedagogy, teaching at the right level and remediation. These three approaches were thoroughly supported by evidence-based problem identification and prioritization processes and were clearly explained in the compact. The compact also built on national-level early-grade assessment data to inform design of the priority reform.

1.2.3 Addressing multiple system constraints through a multi-faceted approach to change

Addressing multiple systems constraints through a multi-faceted approach to change was recognized in the design of reforms in four countries (**Tanzania, El Salvador, Tajikistan, and Democratic Republic of Congo**). For example, in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the selected priority reform addressed multiple dimensions of the education system affecting the quality of teaching, from the management of the teaching staff to salaries, training and teaching conditions. In the other four countries (**Cambodia, Uganda, Nepal, and Sierra Leone**), the priority reforms did not address this transformation criterion of addressing multiple system constraints or addressed it to a small extent. In **Uganda**, the priority reform aimed to address constraints around improving quality of education outcomes through an understanding of the need for coherent interventions in literacy and numeracy (including pre-literacy and pre-numeracy) from pre-primary through to secondary levels. However, it did not fully address constraints to the ambition to improve and expand access to pre-primary education, such as the lack of a framework for public budgeting and investment, and prohibitive fees for private provision.

1.2.4 Aligning relevant subsystems, policies, and practices

In four countries (**Uganda, Tajikistan, Sierra Leone, and Nepal**), there was some evidence that the priority reforms **aligned relevant subsystems, policies, and practices**. In **Tajikistan**, for example, the competency-based education curriculum with updated standards was being aligned with the continuous professional learning system for teachers. In **Sierra Leone**, the priority reform intends to align teacher professional development with changes to the curriculum. However, there are challenges to this alignment, particularly at subnational levels, where the absence of infrastructure (transportation, buildings, connectivity for example) hinders the alignment.

1.2.5 Aligning the incentives of actors from all relevant levels and aspects of the education system

There was limited evidence of aligning incentives in the design or the implementation planning of priority reforms across the countries. The clearest examples of intention to address this criterion was in **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Uganda**, both of which specifically referenced a need to consider pay and conditions for teachers. **Tajikistan** also recognized the importance of incentives for teachers but the evidence of this being considered as part of the design of the reform or in its implementation was weak.

Across all of the case study countries, there is more limited evidence of progress in planning incentives for relevant actors (e.g., teachers, school inspectors) and aligning these incentives with different levels and aspects of the education system. This lack of progress relates to wider issues around planning, as well as budgeting and alignment of resources (discussed in more detail below).

While **Cambodia** has attempted to balance competing stakeholder incentives, this has resulted in challenges around prioritization during the various stages of the GPE operating model. **Nepal** and **Sierra Leone** have both acknowledged the need to engage in dialogue with the sector and coordinate action in order to align incentives for relevant actors but have not elaborated on how this will be achieved. Due to challenges in evidence collection, it is not possible to determine whether **Tajikistan** has aligned incentives of all actors at all levels. However, national stakeholders noted that providing adequate incentives for teachers would be crucial to the success of the priority reform. Similarly, stakeholders in Tanzania highlighted that ‘partnership and alignment’ were key criteria for assessing system transformation.

Although the **Democratic Republic of Congo** has made limited progress in implementation planning, the priority reform intends to address elements of the education system that affect teachers, such as training, pay, pensions and working conditions. Likewise, **Uganda’s** compact identifies specific incentives, including improving teacher salaries and motivation, as fundamental to achieving the priority reform, but there is limited evidence of planning in this area.

1.3 Prioritization of reforms and learning from past reforms

This section first explores the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders in case study countries in identifying priority reforms, whether the reforms are sufficiently prioritized and some of the challenges affecting a country’s ability to prioritize, before examining the proposed priority reforms against countries’ previous (or ongoing) efforts of education reform in the same area (e.g., reforms that aimed to achieve similar objectives to that of the priority reform). To do so, we have examined countries’ existing or previous education sector plans to identify similar reform efforts.

Key findings

- The focus on prioritization was valued by countries and the chosen priority reforms are more coherent than past reforms in the same areas.
- There is a high degree of alignment between country priority reforms and objectives set out in education sector plans. It is too soon to know how this will work in practice, as countries have not yet advanced on their priority reform planning and implementation.
- Countries do not present evidence of learning from past reforms when designing their partnership compacts

Strength of evidence



Findings were derived from a range of primary and secondary sources, including interviews with country-level stakeholders involved in the compact development process and desk reviews of compacts, board allocation documents, a review of previous and current education sector plans, enabling factors assessment and ITAP documents. In some case study countries, documentation, and discussion around the effectiveness of the prioritization process itself was limited.

1.3.1 Prioritization of reforms

The focus on prioritization within system transformation was generally valued by stakeholders across the case study countries, in particular the participatory, multi-stakeholder reflection and dialogue around pressing issues in education systems (**El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan** and **Tanzania**). In the case of **Tajikistan** this was considered to have supported clear discussions on the diversification of education financing. However, there is no standard conceptualization of ‘adequate prioritization.’ Therefore, looking at prioritization from the perspective of these country case studies provided an important insight into how prioritization was viewed and operationalized in each context, and how decisions were made.

With regards to prioritization, the real value of GPE’s model depends crucially on whether the decisions lead to a coherent priority reform (or reform areas) beyond a general set which have been derived by consensus through the partners. Evidence from the case study countries suggests countries are navigating between these two decision-making approaches (broad education sector planning versus prioritization) but are shifting towards more coherent priority reforms. Priority reforms were often broad and still very wide-ranging (e.g., in **Democratic Republic of Congo**, as discussed below), but they were still narrower than education sector plans and framed more specifically than reforms set out in the sector plans. There is a more granular overview of the way in which the reforms will be addressed presented in the compacts.

There were examples where compromises were made which may hinder implementation. This is particularly evident in countries which appear to subsume a number of priorities into the compact. **Nepal’s** priority reform brings together three large sub- areas of teacher quality, early childhood education and gender equality under “putting teachers at the center.” In **Tanzania**, the main priority reform of teacher workforce planning and management, referred to as the Teacher Support Programme (TSP), is reported by stakeholders in interviews to be disconnected from the other two priority reforms of inclusive student-based teaching and the school teaching and learning environment (funded primarily by other donors) with linkages between their respective priorities not clear. In **Uganda**, the reform was considered well-defined and cohesive across educational levels. However, the weighting of actions was less clear and there were concerns of priorities shifting, in part at the government’s behest, towards secondary education and the focus on improving access to pre-primary education and improving foundations for numeracy and literacy being de-emphasized.

Although **Cambodia’s** priority reform seemed broadly formulated, stakeholders generally agreed that improved quality teaching through teacher training was the focus. Stakeholders in **Cambodia**

indicated that the priority reform may be trying to **gain buy-in from a range of stakeholders** who were not in full agreement with learning outcomes as the high-level ambition, through the focus on teacher training. However, the enabling factor assessment implemented in a context historically struggling with reform prioritization, may have unintentionally expanded the compact's scope rather than aiding the country in prioritizing effectively, in an effort to address the broad range of gaps identified across the four enabling factors – however further exploration during the implementation process would be required to substantiate this hypothesis.

Sierra Leone through the priority reform “improving children’s school readiness and foundational learning” took significant steps towards prioritization, through a more staged approach to tackling the education challenges facing the country. **This has been the most distinctive difference between the new and old operating model for Sierra Leone.** The stakeholders indicated that, compared to the education sector plan, the priority reform allowed for a greater degree of prioritization and a more holistic approach to improving foundational learning. Respondents in some interviews described it as “thematic more than a priority”.

Similar perceptions were found in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where, although stakeholders agreed the compact development process had resulted in a greater degree of prioritization than in the broader education strategy, it was still seen as very wide-ranging and also referred to as a “theme.” The area of “improving teaching-learning conditions at school and classroom level and preparing children, particularly girls, for successful schooling” encompassed the review of legal and regulatory frameworks, substantial investment in infrastructure and facilities, the introduction of a new salary payment system, promoting pre-schooling programs and more.

El Salvador appeared to have a distinctive and focused priority reform of early childhood education which formed part of a wider new reform program ‘Mi Nueva Escuela’ introduced in 2022. The reform was specifically framed to diagnose the underlying causes, which was a departure from previous reforms in education which focused on approaches which only addressed the symptoms of poor learning outcomes, rather than truly surfacing the barriers to learning.

Countries reported it was unclear from GPE guidance what would qualify as a sufficient level of prioritization. Country team leads reported that in some countries, development partners found it challenging to align around one or two areas, particularly if it did not fit with their own strategies and current areas of work.

Tensions were therefore evident between selecting well-defined priority reforms, reaching consensus across stakeholders, and aligning with the principles of transformation. Interviews with the GPE Secretariat also noted that subsuming a number of priorities under the umbrella of a priority reform can be seen as a compromise emerging through multi-stakeholder dialogue, particularly during the prioritization and alignment stage. The risk is that the reform is not aligned to the government capacities to implement (in cooperation with others) or is too ambitious to achieve.

1.3.2 Learning from past reforms

Overall, the priority reforms in the eight countries were well aligned with reforms set out in countries’ past and present education sector plans.⁸ The objectives, goals and priorities of the education sector plans were often formulated in very broad terms, which means that the priority reforms fit the plans’ priorities relatively well, as shown in **Table 9, section 6. The extent to which countries have incorporated learning from successes and failures of past reforms when designing their priority reform is relatively limited. Uganda, Tanzania, Tajikistan, and Sierra Leone** made efforts to build on previous reforms (albeit to a varying degree of clarity) in their compacts, but little evidence was found in the remaining case study countries of lessons learnt from past reforms being drawn on to informing the design transformative priority reforms as part of the compact development process. Furthermore,

⁸ The current education sector plans were prepared for different time periods in different countries, and do not share the same start year across the eight countries. Therefore, the previous sector plans are included in the assessment of the comparison with past reforms.

most current education sector plans do not offer adequate lessons learnt from the implementation of their predecessors.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the current priority reform remains aligned with the broader education strategy and the focus on quality teaching remains the same as in the past; however, despite benefitting from a greater degree of prioritization and inclusion than previous reforms, it is still seen as very wide-ranging. In **Nepal** and **Tajikistan**, the priority reforms are continuations of previous efforts, but both contain a stronger focus on teacher development. In **Nepal**, the reform now focuses on ensuring a more effective delivery within the existing scope, rather than an expansion, and in **Tajikistan** the reform still focuses on competency-based education but now includes goals which are more specific and is expected to be better institutionalized and firmly based on national development policy documents, which was not the case previously.

2 Is GPE support helping countries to identify transformative reforms and align partners and resources to them?

In this section, we assess the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and coherence of GPE support to partner countries to identify priority reforms and align partners and resources to them.⁹ In this report, we focus mainly on the processes related to compact development, concluding with the GPE Board's approval of the initial allocation and strategic parameters for GPE support.¹⁰

This section has six sub-sections and is organized as follows:

- In **section 2.1**, we focus on the enabling factors assessment process and the effectiveness and efficiency with which it supported partner countries to identify key bottlenecks to system transformation.
- In **section 2.2**, we examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the role of ITAP to support the enabling factors assessment process.
- In **section 2.3**, we examine the relevance and coherence of GPE support to partner countries, with regards to the alignment of the operating model with countries' own processes and policy cycles and whether the operating model is tailored or adaptive to country contexts.
- In **section 2.4**, we examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the top-up portion of the system transformation grant (STG) to address gaps in the enabling factors.
- In **section 2.5**, we look at the effectiveness and efficiency of GPE support to align partners and resources around priority reforms.
- In **section 2.6**, we focus on the effectiveness with which GPE has learned and adapted in response to lessons learned during the rollout of the operating model.

2.1 The enabling factors assessment

This section focuses on the enabling factors assessment as a process to support partner countries to identify key bottlenecks to system transformation. We examine the extent to which partner countries were able to identify key bottlenecks, and the extent to which policy actions were being planned or put in place to address bottlenecks.

Key findings

- Countries found value in the enabling factors assessment as a mechanism for identifying potential bottlenecks to priority reforms, and were able to identify problems more robustly than in the past.
- The scale of the problems identified through the enabling factors assessment were vast and wide-ranging and countries lacked a clear understanding of how to identify, prioritize and sequence actions to address the more urgent gaps.

⁹ This section corresponds to **Leading evaluation question 2** in our evaluation matrix. This section also covers **sub questions 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7** as well as **sub question 1.7 and 1.8**. We have moved **sub question 2.8** to **section 3.2**.

¹⁰ In some cases, we are able to go beyond this as part of our country case studies, to include GPE's grant-making processes. However, at the time of the start of data collection for this study (July 2023), only three case study countries had received approval for their grant fund allocation (El Salvador, Nepal, and Tanzania), while four case study countries received approval during the time of the write up of case studies (Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan).

- Partner compacts, education sector plans, and grant documents across the case study countries reflected efforts to address gaps in the enabling factors, but it was unclear whether actions were overall adequate and sufficiently sequenced and prioritized.
- The system capacity grant (SCG) was relatively well cited as supporting the closing of gaps identified in the enabling factors, but there was a discrepancy between the amount of funding available and the magnitude of some of the identified gaps.

Strength of evidence



Findings are supported by multiple sources of primary and secondary data. This included interviews with a range of country level stakeholders across all eight case studies, including government stakeholders, development partners, civil society organizations, non-government organizations. Findings were further corroborated with a desk analysis of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, SCG and STG applications and documents (where relevant and available), and GPE Board documents the allocation and strategic parameters for STG.

2.1.1 The use of the enabling factors assessment to identify system bottlenecks

One of the first steps towards compact development is for stakeholders in partner countries to undertake a screening questionnaire of the country's status against the four categories of enabling factors. This context-sensitive self-assessment helps them gauge their status against each category, culminating in a categorization of each enabling factor as high, medium, or low priority¹¹, based on the **scale and impact** of the issues identified, and the **gaps in terms of support** to address them. **Table 11 in section 6** provides a summary of priority ratings assigned by each partner country for enabling factors.

The enabling factors assessment supported the sampled case study countries to identify a diverse range of potential gaps in a country's enabling factors that may act as bottlenecks to their priority reforms (summarized in **section 6, Table 12, and in more detail in individual case study reports**). Most case study countries identified gaps to the enabling factors related to the **volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic finance**, and this was rated as high priority in six of the eight case study countries. Particular challenges were identified with financial management and financial data. The enabling factor of **data and evidence** was rated as a high priority in five case study countries with many citing a lack of data systems, poor quality, timeliness, capacity, and accessibility of data. Although **gender-responsive sector planning, policy and monitoring** was a high priority in only three countries, the lack of gender-responsive planning was noted as directly linked to stubborn trends in inequalities in educational outcomes and therefore important to address. **Sector coordination** was reported to be the enabling factor least in need of attention by countries, but the need to maintain ongoing engagement with community stakeholders downstream was acknowledged.

The enabling factors assessment was perceived by interviewed country stakeholders to **support the identification of challenges** which would affect the design and implementation of the priority reform **more systematically than in past problem identification exercises**. Identification of challenges is seen as an important part of system transformation by countries and therefore the enabling factors assessment process supports these ambitions well. For example, it provided an opportunity to dig deeper into issues raised by the education sector analysis in some countries (**Nepal** and **Sierra**

¹¹ **High priority:** achieving progress in the priority reform is deemed impossible or extremely unlikely unless significant reforms are undertaken in the enabling factor area. The education authorities and development partners are either not actively working in this enabling factor area or engagement is insufficient to make meaningful improvements.

Medium priority: achieving progress in the priority reform during the duration of the partnership compact will be significantly delayed unless issues in the enabling factor area are addressed.

Low priority: the enabling factor area could benefit from minor adjustments to help accelerate progress in realizing the priority reform.

Leone). In these cases, country-level stakeholders saw value in collectively thinking about bottlenecks and cross-cutting obstacles to reform. The approach was considered “innovative” by respondents in **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Sierra Leone**. Congolese stakeholders commented that it was a useful way of instilling a more transversal systemic way of thinking.

Box 1. El Salvador’s enabling factors assessment

The enabling factors assessment was seen as an important contribution to the identification of bottlenecks, something which was not done previously by the MINEDUCYT in **El Salvador**. Based on these analyses, an initial planning of costs to address the enabling factors was undertaken by the ministry. In early 2023, the ministry proposed an overall educational reform “Mi Nueva Escuela” (with six pillars, one of them ECE) based on a new educational and pedagogical model, which addresses several challenges identified in the diagnosis.

Although the results of the exercise were broadly viewed as positive and valuable, stakeholders across several countries also reflected that the process could be time consuming (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Nepal, Uganda**), complex (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania**), or in some cases perceived as duplicative of previous efforts (**Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania**). For example, stakeholders in **Sierra Leone** and **Nepal** indicated that several of the steps had already been covered in their process for developing the education sector plans (although, as noted above, there was also perceived value in digging deeper into these issues). In **Tanzania**, the concept of ‘enabling factors’ was not clear; the line between the enabling factors assessment and the education sector analysis – the basis for development of the education sector development plan (ESDP) – was considered blurred. Some Tanzanian stakeholders felt that the education sector analysis had already sufficiently identified bottlenecks and that the enabling factors assessment was therefore perceived as somewhat redundant; similarly. Congolese stakeholders suggested that the results of the enabling factors assessment did not reveal anything which was not already known.

Box 2. Tajikistan’s enabling factors assessment

Tajikistan was the first country to perform the self-assessment in May 2021. The government and partners expressed the value of collaborative discussion of the bottlenecks and answering the given questions. However, Tajikistan completed the process so quickly that the guidelines were not yet finalized, which resulted in an unclear relationship between the enabling factors assessment and the compact. The process also required the technical support of a consultant to explain certain concepts, so it was uncertain whether the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) fully absorbed these concepts and their implications for the compact.

2.1.2 Addressing identified bottlenecks to ensure pre-conditions for the priority reforms are in place

The steps to address the bottlenecks identified through the enabling factors assessment were incorporated to varying extents in priority reforms or in other policy actions or grants (identified in the compact). **Table 13** provides an assessment of the extent to which the gaps in the enabling factors identified appear to be addressed as part of the priority reform or through other specified policies described in the partnership compact. A more detailed analysis can be found in the individual case study reports.

Countries demonstrated efforts to address gaps in the enabling factors in compacts, wider education sector plans, and through GPE grant funded activities, , but they lacked holistic approaches to sequencing or prioritization. In many cases, actions to address gaps in the enabling factors were not fully discussed in the compacts, and there was often only limited evidence of concrete policy actions intended to address gaps.

In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, relevant policy actions were identified to address bottlenecks, but these were not prioritized or sequenced, and were considered to be very broad in scope (e.g.,

adequate sector budget; or *carte scolaire transparente*) and ambitious, and the concrete actions needed to implement them were not explicit (either in the compact or in other documents).

In **Sierra Leone**, the compact identifies policy intentions aimed at addressing identified bottlenecks in the coordination of planning for domestic financing, and identified two triggers to support gaps in the equity and efficiency of domestic finance. However, in-country stakeholders expressed uncertainty about the feasibility of these proposed actions and indicated that further work to define actions would occur as the reform entered into the implementation phase.

Uganda identified numerous pressing issues for data and evidence, with the lack of a currently functioning government EMIS, including that even if a system were developed, there would be challenges in capacity to operationalize the system due to limited resources (both human and financial). This was significant for Uganda as the priority reform included the reformulation of capitation grants which are incumbent on schools having robust and detailed data reporting.

In **Tanzania**, several persistent systematic bottlenecks have not been clearly addressed, such as the competitive institutional arrangements for education data management. An important ESDP III objective for Tanzania would be clear ownership, management, and use of existing data systems (a recommendation made in previous evaluations in 2018 and in 2021).

In **Tajikistan**, the assessment helped to improve the understanding of the current status of enabling factors, but the effective identification and integration of appropriate policy actions into the compact may have been hindered by the limited capacity of MoES to effectively use findings for decision making, and reduced buy-in from national stakeholders due to the consultant-led approach adopted for the enabling factors assessment.

In **El Salvador**, the constraints identified across the enabling factors assessment were largely reported to be incorporated into the planning for the priority reform, and the priority reform included actions aimed at closing the existing gaps in the enabling factors. However, these gaps will be addressed through the reform, not prior or as a precondition for the reform and this may have consequences for the speed of the reform.

We also examined the ways in which countries used the SCG as funding for policy actions to address gaps in enabling factors. In several countries, (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda**), the SCG helped to close gaps identified in the enabling factors. However, there was a discrepancy between the amount of funding available and the magnitude of some of the identified gaps.

A preliminary review of SCG grant documents (see **Table 14**) indicates that the **programmed SCG activities are broadly aligned with the designated purposes of the SCGs stated in the compacts**, almost all of which aim to directly support the enabling factors, although the purpose of the SCGs and specificity of activities differs between countries. As part of **Tanzania's** SCG, grant funding will also support activities not explicitly designated for the SCG in the compact, but which do enable the priority reform – with significant allocations for gender and disability sensitivity and disaggregation in data and support systems. For **Cambodia**, the SCG will support the government policy planning cycle directly, with less explicit reference enabling factors and ITAP recommendations. For **Tajikistan**, the planned activity areas mirror the compact closely, and are directly related to enabling factors to support the reform.

There were a significant number of identified gaps which were not addressed across all countries, and there are a number of instances where there was a lack of clarity on where the financing will come from, or how the funding will work together (**Cambodia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda**). To some extent, this has been dealt with through the top-up triggers (see **section 2.3**). There remain concerns in some countries about the inclusion in dialogue of the range of stakeholders or accountability (**Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Cambodia, Tajikistan**) and how this will affect the roll out of the priority reform.

A concern raised by country-level stakeholders was the **magnitude of the challenges identified that need addressing** and the ability of countries to respond to all gaps is affected by the availability of sufficient resources and capacity. Many of the enabling factors were considered pressing and there

was no clear understanding of how to prioritize these and when they should be addressed. It is also unclear whether stakeholders discussed possible linkages across enabling factors which need to be explored. In **Uganda**, for example, the enabling factors assessment process highlighted that even with a functioning EMIS (flagged as a high priority to address), there would be capacity challenges for robustly operating the system. Several stakeholders noted human capacity (and skills) issues (in **Nepal, Tanzania, Tajikistan, Sierra Leone**). Interviews with GPE Secretariat staff also corroborated concerns about the extent of the bottlenecks identified through the enabling factors assessment. In particular, Country Engagement and Policy Team members interviewed reinforced that the work required to address issues identified through the enabling factors assessment could be considerable.

2.2 Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP)'s review of the enabling factors assessment

The ITAP conducted independent reviews of the self-assessment of enabling factors led by the local education group. This review aims to support partner country dialogue during the compact development and prioritization process, and informs GPE Board decisions on the strategic parameters for GPE support. Based on this review, ITAP can pose alternative priority ratings which differ from country self-assessments if deemed necessary. Enabling factors which are categorized as high priority by ITAP are linked to top-up funding (up to 40% of the total allocation of the STG), requiring the partner country to propose targets, or 'top-up triggers', which need to be met before top-up funds are released.

Following from an analysis of the enabling factors assessment, in this section we focus on the effectiveness of the specific role of ITAP to support the identification of bottlenecks and to ensure that enabling factors for system transformation are in place.

Key findings

- ITAP was viewed positively in its support to validate and further advance thinking on findings from the enabling factor self-assessments.
- The ITAP has helped countries identify and respond to gender and equity related challenges in the enabling factors assessments.
- Further prioritization was made possible through the ITAP recommendations.

Strength of evidence



Findings are supported by multiple sources of primary and secondary data. This included interviews with a range of country level stakeholders across all eight case studies, including government stakeholders, development partners, civil society organizations, non-government organizations. Findings were further corroborated with a desk analysis of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, SCG and STG applications and documents (where relevant and available), and GPE Board documents the allocation and strategic parameters for STG.

Across the eight sampled countries, ITAP ratings were not substantially different from the country self-assessment ratings and largely validated country self-assessments. A full list of ITAP ratings, alongside the original self-assessment ratings, can be found in **Table 11**. ITAP ratings differed from country self-assessment ratings in four of the sampled countries. The ratings for gender-responsive education sector planning and sector coordination in **Nepal** were increased (for both, from low to medium) while in **Tanzania** and **Uganda** sector coordination ratings were downgraded (from medium/low to low, and high to medium respectively). Ratings for domestic financing increased in **Cambodia** (medium to high) and decreased for data and evidence in **Tanzania** (high to medium).

The uptake of ITAP recommendations was demonstrated to some degree in six of the eight sampled countries. For example, ITAP recommendations were incorporated into the design of SCG activities in **Tajikistan** and **El Salvador**. In **Tajikistan**, this included linking across different identified factors,

recognizing the importance of interdependencies between actions. For **El Salvador**, the ITAP review enabled the planning for funds for the Multiplier and the girls' education accelerator grants, placing a greater emphasis on the gender gaps identified in the sectoral plan's diagnosis.

Only the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Cambodia** did not clearly take on board recommendations from ITAP. **Cambodia's** partnership compact addressed some of the ITAP's recommendations but did not take advice in relation to increasing civil society organization engagement or increase the focus on domestic finance in the compact despite the high priority rating designated by ITAP; however, the compact did incorporate an ITAP recommendation related to efficiency of domestic financing. The partnership compact for the **Democratic Republic of Congo** appeared to have addressed almost none of the recommendations in the ITAP report, in spite of acknowledging the usefulness of the ITAP assessment. To a certain extent this may have been the result of all of the enabling factors being high priority and the sheer number of actions which would need to be taken. As noted in the previous section, this was a concern voiced by stakeholders in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**; as a result, stakeholders were provided with additional time and opportunity to revise and identify top-up triggers following the GPE Board's approval of their initial allocation and strategic parameters, as part of the design and implementation of the STG to support the priority reform.

Country stakeholders mostly described the ITAP as **helping them to advance their thinking on their self-assessments** and all countries took note of and agreed with the assessments. For example, the ITAP report for **Uganda** reinforced its identified challenges relating to the EMIS and how, without addressing these, the priority reform will be difficult to achieve. In addition, equity and efficiency of domestic public expenditure was highlighted as missing and there was strong consensus from the stakeholders that this needed to be addressed.

ITAP reviews were found to have been particularly useful to **identify gaps in gender and equality-related issues** in the enabling factors assessment for five countries (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda**). ITAP provided comprehensive recommendations for enhancing gender responsive policies and initiatives in **Tajikistan**, for example. In the case of **Tanzania**, gender mainstreaming was revisited and the focus shifted to disability as well as gender inclusion. In **Cambodia**, the ITAP identified the under utility of evidence which risked further widening the gaps between boys and girls and would be a missed opportunity if better data were not used to support gender responsive planning.

Further prioritization was made possible through the recommendations of the ITAP. This was seen notably in **Nepal, Tajikistan, Cambodia, and El Salvador**. In **Nepal**, the analysis provided by ITAP fed into the alignment of reform prioritization across the sector plan and the compact.

Only **Tajikistan** reported any concerns over the timing and perceived rigidity of the process. However, **Tajikistan** was the first country to go through ITAP and as such the process was still evolving. The recommendations arising from the ITAP assessments were seen as valuable to the countries and were further discussed and incorporated into the compacts or the development of the grants.

2.3 Alignment and adaptiveness of GPE support with the countries own processes and policy cycles

In this section, we assess the extent to which GPE support (and related processes, including the partnership compact development process) aligned to countries' policy cycles and policy making processes.

Key findings

- GPE support was generally well aligned to country policy cycles and processes, although some variance across countries was identified.

Strength of evidence



Sources of evidence included interviews with government stakeholders, development partners, civil society organizations, and INGOs. Findings are further supported through a desk review of relevant documents including partnership compacts and education sector plans.

Table 19, we provide our analysis of the degree of alignment of the operating model with countries' education sector policy cycles and policy-making processes.

There are good examples of GPE support aligning well with countries' policy cycles, particularly where the compact development process coincided with ESP development / publication (**Cambodia, Nepal, Tajikistan**) or when applications started at the beginning of current and new administrations (**El Salvador** and **Sierra Leone**). In some of these countries (e.g., in **Sierra Leone** and **El Salvador**) major elections had either taken place recently or were planned in the near future, but the likelihood of policy discontinuity is relatively small. In **Tajikistan**, the compact development process was considered an example of good practice to follow in the future. In **Uganda**, the timelines for the National Development Plan and the GPE support were out of sync, as the National Development Plan (NDP III) ends in 2025 while GPE support for the reform is intended to run to 2026, however it was noted that due to the disruption of Covid-19 many of the initiatives planned under NDP III will be carried forwards into NDP IV.

There is also evidence of a certain degree of misalignment in some countries. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, it was not fully clear what the interaction between the partnership compact and the education sector plan was expected to look like. Although the participatory nature of the compact development process (see **section 2.5** on stakeholder alignment) was positively perceived in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, it was not that well aligned with other relevant processes in education policymaking. The GPE operating model was perceived by international and national stakeholders as very centralized, which was not fully aligned with the country's highly decentralized education system.

In **Tanzania**, there was only a very low degree of alignment of GPE support with the national policy cycle, because the compact development process started in the middle of the education sector plan timeline, and a new sector plan was currently in the process of being drafted. In Tanzania, there had already been some relevant preparatory and planning work done before the start of the compact development, however, this was not taken into account by the compact development process (indicating the support is not adaptive). This was similarly the case in **Nepal**, indicating that despite the alignment with the policy cycle, there remained some misalignment with country processes. In **Cambodia**, the compact development process was well aligned to the timing of the publication of the ESP, but the process was not readily adaptable to the country's processes and context because the compact guidelines were difficult to understand for country-level stakeholders.

2.4 Results-based incentives through the top-up to address gaps in the enabling factors

This section explores the role of the top-up portion of the STG to incentivize countries to address gaps in their enabling factors. Further details and analysis on the triggers related to domestic finance is included in **section 4.4.2**.

The STG is divided into two components, a minimum allocation and a top-up portion (up to 40%). Under certain conditions, a country may be allocated the full allocation upfront or have the top-up portion withheld or partially withheld. Access to the top-up allocation is linked to triggers, which countries could select to define their progress against agreed policy actions identified to address gaps in enabling factors rated as high priority. This approach aims, in part, to ensure context-driven requirements and incentives for countries to ensure that enabling factors are in place to support their priority reform.

Key findings

- The process of identifying appropriate top-up triggers was challenging for some countries, particularly where multiple enabling factors were rated as high priority, or where results-based financing mechanisms were in place. The GPE Secretariat support to identify triggers was key.

- The defined top-up triggers contained varying degrees of detail and ambition and did not always contain clear indicators. This resulted in mixed views of the extent to which the incentive is adequate, and may lead to difficulties tracking progress against the achievement of the trigger.
- At the time of analysis, it was not possible to confidently assess the extent that top-up triggers will act as a sufficient incentive to address gaps in the enabling factors. This will need to be explored further as the top-up triggers are operationalized.

Strength of evidence



Findings were informed by stakeholder interviews with government officials, development partners, local education group members, triangulated with a desk review of Board decision documents on initial allocations and strategic parameters for GPE support and STG program documents. Data sources used to support the findings are credible and complete, however, as top-up triggers had not been fully operationalized at the time of analysis, it is not possible to robustly assess the extent that that will sufficiently incentivize countries to address gaps in the enabling factors.

We provide a summary of the proposed top-up triggers and top-up allocations across the case study countries in **Table 15**. Top-ups were allocated for five of the eight case study countries and were not required for **El Salvador** (which was not eligible for a STG), **Nepal**, and **Tajikistan**. For the remaining five countries, all included triggers related to **domestic financing**, while **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Uganda** also included triggers related to **data and evidence**. Some of the reasoning behind the use of the top-ups is that, if the challenge is related to a **technical or financing capacity / program-related gap**, then use of other GPE (or government/partner) assets may be better suited to address the gap. Such gaps may include sector plan development, education sector plan gender analysis, or EMIS / learning assessment strengthening. However, if the challenge has a strong **institutional, service delivery or political element**, then there may be a stronger argument for using an externally financed top-up to incentivize change.¹² Such challenges may include persistently low (or inequitable) domestic financing, severe aid fragmentation or political interference in the areas of data and evidence.

Country-level stakeholders reported varying degrees of understanding about the triggers, how they might work, and why GPE has introduced them. The support of GPE Secretariat was noted as key to the identification of appropriate triggers (**Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Cambodia**). However, the process of agreeing the triggers was considered challenging in some countries, such as **Tanzania** and **Democratic Republic of Congo** in particular. In **Tanzania**, the process of agreeing on top-up triggers was viewed by government stakeholders as unnecessary. The notion of ‘triggers’ was also confused in Tanzania with Education Program for Results foundational disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) / triggers (i.e., pre-financing for other more challenging DLIs). It was assumed that once achieved the trigger would lead to an immediate release of funds, but this is not the case. Therefore, it was unclear about how the additional 20% would be used.

In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the local education group faced difficulties in identifying a reasonable number of relevant indicators in a context with four high priority enabling factors. Initially 10 top-up indicators were defined related to domestic financing, providing incentives for actions on precise measures related to public financial management and efficiency of expenditure.¹³ These were

¹² As outlined in a GPE Secretariat note, *STG Top-Up Guidance for use with country pilots*.

¹³ Among them: By 2024, at least 50% of funding for the independent commission on the evaluation of learning (CIAS) is executed; from 2025 onward, at least 25% of the provincial education departments have a triennial budgeted action plan, 10% of which should be funded through the provincial budget; support of the government to provide adequate offices to SPACE in 2025; by 2024, all sectoral coordination bodies work on the basis of operational budgeted action plans; by 2024, at least 80% of public primary schools receive subvention for operating costs aligned with a funding breakdown based on the socio-economic characteristics of schools and the profiles of pupils; in 2025, the share of

later reduced to three that mainly covered domestic finance and touched on data and evidence and sector coordination, in response to GPE Board feedback that there were too many indicators and these were not sufficiently aligned with the key gaps identified in the country analysis and ITAP report. The iterations and time needed to design a manageable number of relevant trigger indicators illustrates some of the difficulties faced by the pilot status of the country with a high number of challenges to address

Triggers were identified with varying degrees of detail or ambition, but some were less clearly defined, such as the case when associated with more qualitative triggers such as the redesign of a plan or institutionalization of policies. This may make it difficult to track or assess progress against the achievement of the trigger. Indicators were sometimes highly ambitious or difficult to achieve, which may unintentionally disincentivize countries if the perceived reward is not sufficient.

Cambodia and **Sierra Leone** stand out as having defined granular triggers (modules of a financial management system, learning outcomes in teacher allocation). For example, **Sierra Leone** has two top-up triggers for efficiency and equity of domestic public expenditure for education, to be achieved by December 2024. The efficiency trigger focuses on increasing the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) budget execution rate from 78% (2019) to 85% by the end of 2023. The equity trigger focuses on allocating more qualified teachers to disadvantaged districts, particularly those serving high numbers of children in radical inclusion groups and those with below-average learning outcomes. In **Cambodia**, the top-up trigger's actions to improve domestic financing reflect the measures identified through the enabling factors assessment. However, there were concerns about the effectiveness of the selected indicators, particularly the trigger "Two consecutive years of 'year-on-year' proportional increases in school grants relative to non-wage expenditure" in bringing about substantial improvements in equitable funding levels, particularly in the short term.

In the case of **Uganda**, the top-up trigger linked to data and evidence ('Functional Education Management Information System: a functional EMIS with EMIS policy approved, annual census conducted, and annual statistics published') was viewed by the GPE Secretariat as adequate and ambitious in the country context, but there is no detail on how 'functioning' is defined, which may make it difficult to assess whether the target was met. As shown in **Box 3**, the level of ambition for one of its defined triggers related to domestic finance ('Domestic financing increased by two percentage-points from current 17% to 19%') as compared to the value of the top-up, also meant that stakeholders did not always feel that the incentive was adequate. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, stakeholders argued that the allocated funding (USD \$50 million¹⁴) would not be sufficient to incentivize some of the difficult change needed, given the scale of the system.

Box 3: Stakeholder perceptions of top-up incentives in Uganda

Some stakeholders in **Uganda** were skeptical about the effectiveness of the \$25 million top-up allocated in the compact to incentivize actions to increase the share of domestic financing (excluding debt) from the current 17% to 19%. This amount was not considered to be a significant incentive given that the government budget is approximately \$14 billion and (though disputed) spending on education is several percentage points below the target. In the current design of the STG in particular, incentives are effected through a payment by results model.

Given the early stages of implementation for most of the case study countries, we believe it is too early to make further assessments on the effectiveness of the top-ups as an incentive to address gaps in enabling factors, as this is reliant not only the coverage with which the triggers cover gaps in the enabling factors, but also on the effectiveness with which the triggers have been defined, the

budget allocated for the education sector increases by at least 1% compared to 2020 (20.2% to 21.2% minimum increase).

¹⁴ Note that in this report, all subsequent figures reported as \$ indicates USD (unless otherwise specified).

beginning of the implementation of the reform, and the successful monitoring of progress against the triggers.

2.5 Aligning stakeholders and resources around priority reforms

This section examines the extent to which stakeholders (and their related resources) are aligned with the priority reform. This looks at both the outcome of alignment (i.e., degree to which stakeholders and their resources are aligned with each other), as well as GPE's support to the alignment process through the operating model (most notably, through the compact development process). This also includes an understanding of the extent to which stakeholders perceived that compact development dialogue was led by the national government, was inclusive and promoted mutual accountability.

Key findings

- The operating model has supported the first steps towards stakeholder partnership and alignment by facilitating a government-led and broadly inclusive dialogue around the identification of priority reforms.
- There was limited involvement of ministries of finance in the compact development process, which is an important gap given their role in making allocation decisions, and the level of participation by non-government groups (such as civil society organizations and teacher unions) varied across countries.
- There are emerging concerns around low or unsustainable levels of stakeholder engagement and accountability beyond the compact development process, which may adversely affect the rollout of the priority reform.
- There is limited evidence that the operating model is contributing to alignment of resources around the priority reforms, which was still at an early stage in the case study countries, although there are some examples of progress, particularly in countries where existing alignment mechanisms are in place.

Strength of evidence



Findings are informed by multiple sources of primary and secondary data, including interviews with government stakeholders, donor partners, INGOs, NGOs, and civil society organizations, and a desk review of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, and Board allocation documents. Limitations in some country case studies included limited availability of evidence to confirm the level of alignment of stakeholders and resources, lack of existing data or mapping of partner contributions to the priority reform, and inconsistencies in perceptions around the level of alignment.

2.5.1 Alignment of stakeholders around the priority reform and levels of inclusion of policy dialogue

The operating model supported inclusive, government-led dialogue during the compact development process as a first step towards improved stakeholder alignment. The compact development process across the case studies was led by ministries of education, with roles taken as leaders, co-chairs, or coordinators of the local education groups. In **Tajikistan**, for example, MoES took the role of leader and co-chair of the local education group and chair of the Development Finance Platform. In **Sierra Leone** the coordinator was based at one of the two ministries in charge of education (MBSSE) and as well as leadership, the ministry included a strong delivery team. In **El Salvador**, dialogue leading to the selection of the priority reform was led by the MINDEDUCYT with the Office of the First Lady planning a key role in identifying the priority reform, and reflecting the President's political campaign for greater educational outcomes.

The overall process of identifying the priority reform was broadly inclusive, with all eight country case study countries reporting policy dialogue that included a wide range of stakeholders in the local education groups and associated committees. ‘Stakeholders’ mostly include those that belong to the local education groups (or equivalent). **Table 16 (section 6)** sets out the composition of the local education groups, and associated working groups or equivalents and, where available, additional evidence on inclusive ways of working (or absence of inclusive ways of working). The compositions of the local education groups were notably diverse, with varying levels of engagement by type of stakeholder. There was evidence that civil society organizations and other organizations such as teacher associations and unions were actively engaged in some countries (**Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tajikistan**), but was less pronounced in others (**Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda**). In **El Salvador**, engagement with stakeholders in early childhood education (beyond governmental entities) as well as with women, student, and educator groups in general was limited. Country-level stakeholders in three countries (**Sierra Leone, Cambodia, and Tanzania**) perceived there to be limited or insufficient involvement of civil society organizations.

There were low levels of engagement with ministries of finance, who are crucial stakeholders involved in making allocation decisions, and the main reasons for this are unclear. In **Tajikistan**, while information was shared with the Ministry of Finance, there was no engagement within the local education group meetings. Their engagement was mostly absent in **El Salvador** and **Sierra Leone**. Although the Ministry of Finance in **El Salvador** expressed interest to engage, they were not involved in the compact development process.¹⁵ In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, although the compact was signed by the Ministry of Finance, formal engagement with the local education group was absent. The Ministry of Finance was present on the local education group in **Cambodia**, but engagement was inconsistent, raising concerns over the allocation of domestic finance. In **Uganda**, the Ministry of Finance showed more consistent engagement, though not always through the local education group. Finally, in **Tanzania**, although the Ministry of Finance participated in the local education group and committed to increasing the education sector’s budget share to 20% by 2025, they were notably absent from the Education Sector Development Committee, which holds responsibility for addressing domestic finance issues related to the reform efforts.

The significance of stakeholder engagement varied across countries. The ways that the local education groups operated ranged from collaborative with active participation and cooperation among those involved (**Tajikistan** and **Cambodia**) to consultative whereby stakeholders’ input and advice was sought before decisions were made (**El Salvador, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania**), exhibiting various degrees of inclusivity in the process. The way in which the local education group operated affected the extent to which civil society organizations, in particular, felt their voices were heard and accounted for in the operating model process. There were numerous reasons given for the variable levels of engagement of different types of stakeholders. One common feature was a lack of consensus on the definitions and practical implementation of systems transformation, which had implications for how partners understood, bought into and engaged with the process, as well as their commitment of resources.

In **Tajikistan**, for example, some stakeholders explicitly recognized that previous efforts of reform suffered from a lack of shared vision among partners, that more collaboration was imperative in this process and that joint agreements on competence frameworks needed to be taken forward. The process of priority reform selection was mostly harmonious within the local education group, however, due to the diverse representation of stakeholders there were instances when different ideas were presented by stakeholders that were later regarded as less strategic by the group. Additionally, some donors reportedly attempted to influence the open deliberation process in favor of their interests and

¹⁵ It is noted that there were concerted and important efforts to engage with the Ministry of Health due to links with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) within the priority reform. There was an agreement with the Ministry of Health to adopt a unified approach providing care, education, health, and a protective environment to children, and with the Ministry of Public Works (*Dirección de Obras Municipales* -DOM), to improve education infrastructure.

agendas. The early stages of reform design in **Tajikistan**, were dominated by the MoES with the support of the coordinating agency, UNICEF, and an external consultant. The Alliance of Civil Society Organizations in **Tajikistan** became more engaged during the compact development process, although there were concerns from civil society organizations overall that their voices were less heard.

In **Sierra Leone**, the broader local education group took a more consultative approach due to its size and the task team more closely collaborated with the delivery team at MBSSE. There were difficulties in coordination between the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) and the MBSSE which resulted in some delays, with buy-in from MTHE being difficult to attain due to the lack of full-time civil servants and it being regarded as an external department. The local education group did not include any members of civil society organizations beyond the Education For All – Sierra Leone coalition, and representatives appeared to be less familiar with the overall compact development process. However, teachers were consulted as part of the extensive consultations held nationwide. This has included schoolteachers, school administrators, students from teacher training institutes, as well as teacher unions.

In the case of **El Salvador**, the themes and priorities were strongly steered by the current government to align with the current political agenda, with other stakeholder groups playing a validation role.

Uganda recognized that some stakeholder groups such as teacher unions and civil society organizations were concerned about their influence in engagement. The consultations in **Uganda** tended to take place within formal processes with the government which may have reduced the influence of outside stakeholders.

There is some evidence that maintaining momentum into implementation may prove challenging, and that sustaining stakeholder engagement and maintaining clear communication with different stakeholders will require renewed effort from organizations overseeing the process. In some of the sampled countries, stakeholders interviewed explicitly indicated concerns about low or unsustainable engagement and accountability of stakeholders who were necessary to the success of the priority reform (**Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Cambodia, and Tajikistan**). For example, local education group members in **El Salvador** reported a high engagement in the earlier parts of the operating model (diagnosis and enabling factors assessment) and lower levels of engagement during the selection of the priority reform (undertaken by government), standards setting and learning. Overall, there is a need for improving and systematizing alignment mechanisms to allow effective planning and implementation of priority reforms. Going forward into the next stage of this work, it will be important to look at the extent to which the wide range of partners stay engaged in the priority reform. Readiness for transformation requires engagement of local partners and change in culture. This type of shift can be challenging, in particular in unstable political situations, with changing leaders or changing funding priorities.

Ownership of the implementation process and accountability for both coordination and delivery are key conditions for supporting alignment of resources and the implementation of the priority reform.

As highlighted, leadership for reform has been taken by ministries of education across many partner countries. However, this does not translate to there being accountability structures and processes across the local education groups and through to other non-government stakeholders, which would support resource alignment behind priority reform. There are many reasons for this, including systemic issues (**Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, and Uganda**) which have the potential to undermine accountability, often linked to political agendas. Thus far, GPE's operating model has had a limited impact on improving accountability mechanisms. **El Salvador** and **Uganda** are the only exceptions. In **El Salvador**, the improvements to accountability and ownership within the technical units of the ministry have been attributed to GPE's involvement. In **Uganda**, the adoption of a payment by results model has potential to improve accountability which will flow through to non-government stakeholders who provide funding.

2.5.2 Alignment of resources

There is limited evidence that countries have systematically identified and are working to leverage and align either GPE or additional resources to fully support all of the facets of their priority reforms, but progress is being made on costing, mapping funding, and aligning resources with reforms.

Table 18 (section 6) provides an overview of the information available on sources of funding to support the priority reforms. Information in partnership compacts on the costing and financing of priority reforms for Phase 1 is inconsistent. There is no complete overview of how all resources are aligned around the priority reforms in countries. Five countries have made progress on aspects of costings and/or budgets for the reforms, although producing realistic budgets remains challenging. Most countries did not develop a costing of priority reform implementation during the compact development process – and these were not a requirement of the compacts.

Tajikistan, Nepal, and **El Salvador** were the examples which showed progress in aligning policy instruments and administration around the priority reform, which should in turn support the alignment of financial resources through a combination of domestic financing, GPE grants and external funding sources. **Tajikistan** also has alignment mechanisms within the Academy of Education, and development partners are organized through the donor coordination committee, a cross-sectoral donor coordination mechanism aimed to ensure that delivery partners work with the government in a harmonized manner (going wider than the priority reform).¹⁶

Nepal uses a sector wide approach (SWAp) to coordinate donor support. This includes, amongst other things, a highly functional coordination mechanism to engage the local education group in overall sector planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. However, evidence suggests there remains some misalignment between national and sub national level policies, policy-making bodies and implementing agencies responsible for operationalizing the priority reform. Both governments and development partners indicated a strong preference for pooled budgetary support through a Joint Financing Agreement. Interviewees indicate that GPE support has been an important factor in helping **Nepal** identify reforms and align partners and resources to these reforms.

In **El Salvador**, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank contributed technical support to policy development in El Salvador through the space created by the operating model and the local education group. The Government has also pledged to redirect additional resources from MINEDUCYT to other entities to fulfil its ambitions for the new educational infrastructure.¹⁷

From the above examples of instrument alignment, **Tajikistan and El Salvador** have also begun to make progress towards aligning financial resources. **Tajikistan** has a map of all partners' funds for education which predates the GPE operating model but as new funds have also come on stream for the priority reform these have been added. This was first prepared with MoES leadership and UNICEF in support in May 2021 and remains a live document.¹⁸ New funds have also come on stream for the priority reform from UNESCO, which previously had limited involvement in CBE area in **Tajikistan**, and have launched a new CBE-related project.¹⁹ UNESCO staff underlined that engagement during local education group and compact discussion meetings helped to prepare and start the project within six

¹⁶ There is a donor coordination committee working group in Tajikistan that focuses on promoting synergy, joint advocacy, discussion of priority policy agendas and reforms, collaboration in joint sector reviews and capacity of education authorities.

¹⁷ The transfer of resources is expected to be higher than \$400 million and is expected to benefit 1,000 schools.

¹⁸ First version is in the Annex 1 of the Partnership Compact. Its subsequent updated version was shared with the evaluation team by UNICEF, the coordinating agency.

¹⁹ UNESCO, with financial support from the European Union is implementing the “Competency-based, ICT-enabled, STEM education in Tajikistan 2022-2026” project.

months.²⁰ In **El Salvador**, the Inter-American Development Bank, which has approved a project focused on early childhood education and the World Bank loan were restructured to align with the priority reform.

The other case study countries have much weaker evidence of resource alignment to date. **Tanzania** strongly advocates for resource alignment behind the priority reform and has welcomed the operating model approach to identify priority reforms and its focus on changing the ways in which partnerships respond collectively to challenges of education financing. However, there remain challenges regarding coherence in implementation and oversight and accountability structures and processes are not yet fully established. For **Sierra Leone**, while there is evidence of coordination efforts among development partners in their funding approach, it is not yet clear whether these intentions will lead to alignment of resources to support implementation. In the compact, the government details a plan to draw resources from donors in alignment with projects contributing to the attainment of the five pillars of the priority reform; however, these plans were not confirmed.

For **Democratic Republic of Congo**, while there is evidence of coordination efforts among development partners in their funding approach, it is unclear if the alignment of intentions around the compact shared by development partners will reflect an alignment of resources. **Democratic Republic of Congo** country stakeholders also expressed a degree of frustration over the fact that little is done to trigger additional commitments and alignment behind the priority reform and a few stakeholders (international and national) highlighted the fact that there weren't enough incentives built into the model and that international money was still paying for some essential nodes/mechanisms of the system, threatening sustainability (such as SPACE, the joint sector reviews or the yearly annual statistics for example). **Uganda** used to use SWAp which has left a legacy of coordination to support resource alignment. There is evidence of partner resources in **Uganda** being aligned around the fast tracking of the redevelopment of the EMIS, but no other information is available apart from the overview of where partners are planning to focus their efforts across the reform priorities in the compact.

2.6 Learning and adaptation of the GPE operating model

This section examines lessons learned during the GPE 2025 operating model rollout, and adaptations made to the operating model over time. We map out the lessons identified during the rollout of the operating model, adaptations made in response to those lessons, and whether those adaptations were evidence based and appropriate to address the identified shortcomings. We also reflect on feedback provided by country-level stakeholders in case study countries on the compact development process and support provided by the GPE Secretariat, to understand whether identified shortcomings have since been addressed by adaptations to the model.

Key findings

- Adjustments to the operating model were informed by evidence from multiple sources generated through the Secretariat's learning framework, including the experiences of stakeholders involved in the rollout.
- Adjustments addressed most of the shortcomings identified, at least to some extent.
- Some of the issues and shortcomings identified in this report have already been addressed through GPE adaptations; however, it is not yet possible to definitively assess whether these shortcomings were sufficiently remediated.

Strength of evidence

²⁰ KII with UNESCO staff.



Findings are primarily informed by a detailed desk review of program documents, including GPE Board documents, reports and presentations published between June 2020 and December 2023, ITAP provisional terms of reference (June 2021), deep dive presentations on different aspects of the operating model conducted in 2022, partnership compact and enabling factors assessment guidelines and templates published between 2021 and 2023, ITAP lesson learning reports. Findings are further triangulated with interviews at country-level across the eight case study countries, and GPE Secretariat stakeholder interviews.

2.6.1 Operationalizing the GPE 2025 strategy and generating learning from the rollout of the pilot

Since the rollout and launch of the operating model in January 2021, the GPE Secretariat has implemented a continual process of refinement and adaptation of the operating model processes and support. This included operational changes and refinements implemented incrementally from late 2021 and throughout 2022, with more substantial strategic adaptations requiring GPE Board approval in 2023. These changes are summarized in **Table 21 (section 6)**.

To support the identification of required adaptations, a learning framework was developed to generate lessons from the pilot to inform improvements in the design and implementation of different elements of the model, to build country capacity for system transformation, and to strengthen learning across the partnership. Evidence was collated from each stage of the operating model as it was being rolled out, drawing on multiple sources of data, including country-level surveys, focus group discussions, Board consultations and a desk-based review of documents between October 2021 and October 2022. Based on these learnings, changes were applied to subsequent cohorts of partner countries undertaking the compact development process.

Table 21 summarizes the adaptations made in response to lessons generated through the learning framework exercise. We found that both operational and strategic adaptations made to the model were implemented in response to clear evidence on the need for the adaptation. Lessons learned and proposed adaptations most often focused on streamlining, simplifying, and clarifying the operating model, in response to ongoing GPE concerns around high transaction costs and longer than expected timelines associated with completing the compact development process.

Case study countries made very little explicit reference to costs incurred by country-level partners during the compact development process (and other GPE-related processes). However, the relevance of adaptations to streamline the operating model was evident in case study countries, with stakeholders reporting that the process was more complex and time consuming than expected. Stakeholders in **Sierra Leone** and **Tajikistan** reported that the perceived complexity of the compact development process risked discouraging ministry staff or overshadowing other important issues in the education system. In **Tanzania**, stakeholders felt the rationale for the new operating model was unclear, that the process was complex and that it was more time consuming to complete than expected or planned for. This was often coupled with a perceived lack of clear guidance from GPE.

The majority of adaptations identified were rolled out after the sampled case study countries had started the compact development process, and therefore it is not possible to assess clearly at this stage whether adaptations made since have been successful in effectively addressing shortcomings. However, a number of changes directly relate to issues or challenges raised by the sampled case study countries, and may therefore have since been addressed by the GPE Secretariat. Some examples are discussed below.

The timing and process for grant agent selection contributed to increased transaction costs and delays due to the requirement for the compact to be finalized before the grant agent is selected. Interviews with GPE Secretariat staff noted that this was quickly identified as an area for potential improvement during the rollout of the operating model. Challenges with the grant agent selection process was similarly reported by stakeholders in case study countries, for example:

- In **Nepal**, the timing of the grant agent selection was not seen as appropriate, with stakeholders arguing that this should have been completed prior to the compact development process, with part of the SCG being made available in advance to allow for better planning.
- In **Sierra Leone**, the selection process led to reported disputes among development partners.
- Stakeholders in **Cambodia** reported that they would have benefited from more guidance from the GPE Secretariat during the grant agent selection process.
- In **Uganda**, some stakeholders perceived the grant agent to have played a potentially heavier role in determining how grants would be used and the same stakeholders thought that the GPE Secretariat could have stepped in more to ensure accountability of the grant design process.
- In **Tajikistan**, the Multiplier grant's 3 to 1 investment formula restricted the number of applicants who were ready and willing to apply as grant agents due to its strict eligibility criteria (e.g., only entities with certain budgetary planning capacities are eligible to apply).

In response to some of these challenges, the grant agent selection process was updated in June 2022 to allow selection once the draft compact is available (as opposed to requiring the compact to be finalized), and the GPE Secretariat increased the available support provided during the process as needed, supporting a more streamlined and well-timed process.²¹

The understanding of the concept of system transformation, and the need for it, was not always clear. GPE documentation reflected that although the concept of system transformation was a useful way to frame discussions and identify bottlenecks, ensuring there was a common understanding of system transformation and conveying what this means in practical terms required further efforts to communicate concepts clearly across different stakeholders (including government and development partners), and to strengthen country capacity for systems thinking. This is reflected in the evaluation findings presented in **section 1.1** of this report. The GPE Secretariat took steps throughout 2022 and 2023 to respond to this lesson by increasing efforts to conduct trainings and webinars to generate a common understanding of system transformation across partners.

The need for refined, simplified, and clarified guidelines and templates was clearly reflected in GPE lessons learned and across the case study countries. Feedback from stakeholders collected through the GPE learning framework exercise highlighted issues with the language, logical flow, and user-friendliness of the operating model guidelines, tools, and templates, particularly for those working in a second language. This was also reflected in our case study countries. For example, **Tajikistan** and **El Salvador** reported challenges with proceeding with the compact development process before completed guidelines were in place, while others reported that the available guidelines were difficult to follow (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Cambodia, and Tanzania**). In particular, concepts such as prioritization could have been more clearly articulated.

However, it is noted that the limitations with the availability of clear written guidelines was compensated by the availability of the country team leads and wider GPE Secretariat staff support. **Table 21** in **section 6** summarizes these findings in a tabular form. Across the countries, there was a high level of satisfaction with the support provided by the GPE Secretariat throughout the compact development process, with stakeholders remarking on the GPE Secretariat's commitment, availability, technical support, and guidance, as well as to the supportive environment the GPE Secretariat had created.

In response to feedback and lessons learning on the availability of clear guidelines, the GPE Secretariat implemented refinements to the partnership compact and enabling factors assessment guidelines and templates, rolled out in February 2023.²² These aimed to streamline the steps in the

²¹ Board document: Report from the Acting CEO, December 2022; Presentation on the grant portfolio status, June 2023.

²² Further refinements to guidelines have since been published in January 2024, but due to the timing of these being published, it was not possible to include them in the desk review.

compact development process, offer clearer guidelines on timelines and the level of detail recommended in compacts, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, and using clearer and more user-friendly language. Updated compact development guidelines also emphasized the need to facilitate inputs from relevant stakeholders, including teachers and civil society organizations, a potential gap highlighted in [section 2.5](#). Finally, the revised guidance more clearly outlined the support available from GPE, which includes in-person support from country team leads.

Feedback from countries and partners highlighted the **need to clarify and streamline the variable and top-up funding portions of the STG**. GPE's lesson learning activities identified that the additional layers of results-based financing (variable part plus top-up triggers) added complexity to the model. Additionally, concerns were raised about the cost of programming additional funds upon the achievement of top-up triggers. [Section 2.4](#) further confirms the confusion reported by some country-level stakeholders around the top-up triggers, including how they work, why GPE had introduced them, and the requirement to program additional funds if the top-ups were achieved.

In July 2023, GPE responded by further streamlining the STG by phasing out the mandatory variable part (results-based financing), which will be made optional going forward. This is expected to minimize additional layers of negotiation with grant agents already using a results-based financing mechanism, or where a grant agent is unfamiliar or unable to do results-based financing, and therefore reducing transaction costs. Additionally, partner countries will now have the option to apply for 100% of their indicative allocation, with top-up funds released upon the achievement of the triggers at mid-term review. For partner countries who choose to continue to only apply for the indicative allocation only, they have the option of requesting a deferral of top-up funding to their next allocation under the GPE 2026-2030 program.

3 Are the transformative reforms prioritized in partnership compacts ready for implementation and how is GPE supporting them?

The third evaluation question looks at countries' resourcing and readiness for implementation of the priority reform. All eight countries in the phase one sample have their compacts approved and are working on implementation. Although this evaluation comes at an early stage in the implementation process, we prospectively assess the mechanisms and resources that are already in place to support implementation, what risks may threaten implementation, and what other support may be necessary to support partner countries as they proceed towards the implementation of their priority reforms.

This section covers:

- The theories of change of the priority reforms and whether they will be sufficient to guide implementation of the priority reform and support countries to monitor, evaluate and learn.
- Whether the necessary capacities, resources, and mechanisms for implementation of the priority reforms are in place.
- Which factors support the implementation of the transformative reform in the country.
- The potential for success of the partnership compacts in achieving the priority reforms.

3.1 Priority reform theories of change

This section contains a review of priority reform theories of change which are included in partnership compacts.²³ The process of developing a theory of change can support organizations, governments, or partnerships to think through how something will be done and reveal assumptions within the logic and should engage a range of stakeholders in the process to ensure buy-in and rigor. If the process by which a theory of change is developed includes consideration of context, different stakeholder perspectives, the wider system, learning, adaptation, and change, then it can serve to support a systems transformation approach.

In this section, we examine the attributes of the priority reform theories of change in order to assess the robustness of the theories of change to guide implementation of the priority reforms and to monitor, evaluate and learn from implementation

Key findings

- All countries included theories of change to support their priority reforms, but the robustness of these varied. This includes varying levels of details to outline pathways of change and clear linkages between components. These shortcomings suggest that the theories of change as they currently stand do not fulfil their potential as tools to support the implementation of the priority reforms.
- The results frameworks that accompany the theories of change have also varied in detail, where only two countries have provided results frameworks with levels of detail adequate to support their use in monitoring progress of the priority reform going forward (such as baseline and target values).
- While many of the partner countries have built their proposed results frameworks from existing monitoring frameworks to support education sector plans, there is not yet enough evidence to suggest whether the indicators and mechanisms proposed are well suited or adequately tailored to monitor the priority reform.

²³ This section covers **Leading evaluation question 3, sub questions 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4** as well as **sub questions 1.5 and 1.9** with information on implementation.

Strength of evidence

High

Findings are supported by a desk review of partnership compacts across all eight case study countries, and further corroborated with country-level stakeholder interviews. Data sources are complete and credible.

All eight partnership compacts include country-level theories of change in a diagrammatic form, complemented with narrative text. There were significant differences and varying degrees of detail across case studies in both content and form (such as graphic depiction) of their theories of change, which poses challenges to a comparative analysis of their robustness. Our detailed analysis can be found in [Table 22](#), which provides an analysis of the presence of various features and quality criteria for the theories of change and [Table 23](#) supports our comparative analysis to support our analysis of their robustness.

First, we assessed the extent to which the country-level theories of change could be considered as **robust**. Overall, the theories of change showed shortcomings in this respect. Many of them lacked key components, notably well-articulated and distinct inputs, activities, and outputs, which limits the internal coherence and credibility of the theory of change. The shortcomings in the theories of change complicate and possibly reduce their future usability as a tool to support the implementation of the priority reform.

In the theories of change for [Sierra Leone](#) and [Uganda](#), pathways to change were clear and obvious. It was possible to move along the pathway across the intervention chain and understand what the interventions intended to achieve across the various measures and how. However, in the case of [Uganda](#), activities were not articulated as part of the theory of change, limiting our understanding of the distinct planned activities contributing to outcomes.

For the other six theories of change, the linkages between the various components were often not very clear, and sometimes, the theory of change included a considerable 'leap' along the intervention chain, which was not properly explained. For example, [Cambodia's](#) theory of change lacked linkages between activities (which were often confused with outcomes) and the intervention chain was lost among the large number of proposed measures. This served to provide little or no indication of which measures intended to produce which outcomes. In the theory of change for [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), it was not clear what the proposed measures were which will lead to the intended outcomes.

Some GPE countries are now starting to implement their priority reforms. The current state of preparedness of each country for implementation is discussed in the following section. Theories of change have a major role to play in this process: having a theory of change which strongly articulates the priority reform and its plans for implementation is critical to support progress monitoring and the ability to learn and adapt. Nevertheless, due to the identified shortcomings, the theories of change do not currently fulfill their potential as tools useful for the implementation of the prioritized reform.

Another major challenge in relation to monitoring, evaluation and learning is the identification and development of appropriate indicators to monitor the progress of the priority reform. Clear and measurable indicators can also help indicate a feasible priority reform, in terms of its focus and prioritization. Across our case studies, six countries included results frameworks or varying levels of detail for indicators, while [Tajikistan](#) only included a description of indicative indicators and [Uganda](#) did not provide further details in its compact. Of the six, [Cambodia](#), [Nepal](#), [Sierra Leone](#), and [Tanzania](#) have included indicators which are aligned with or included as part of the monitoring and evaluation frameworks or sector plans, while [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) and [El Salvador](#) appear to have developed new indicators to support the priority reform.

We found that where results frameworks were included, only [Cambodia](#) and [Tanzania](#) have included clear baseline and endline target values. Baseline and endline values were included non-systematically for [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [El Salvador](#), [Nepal](#), and [Sierra Leone](#), although these were not always included for all indicators or values were not (yet) available.

It is less clear as to the extent to which the focus, relevance and precision of these existing indicators had been assessed to ensure they could effectively monitor interventions which support the priority reform and measure success.

3.2 Necessary capacities, resources, and mechanisms for the implementation of priority reforms

This section examines the extent to which countries are sufficiently prepared to implement priority reforms. The analysis compares case study countries' levels of preparedness, to identify wider trends or patterns and specific country-level challenges. As already noted, many countries had made limited progress on implementation at the time of the evaluation, which meant that the evidence related to certain activities was limited. Where relevant, evidence ratings are provided to indicate the level of confidence in findings (see Table 26 in section 6).

A critical assumption in the GPE model is that the compact is not intended to replace national planning instruments, including costed education sector plans. Instead, countries were expected to integrate the operational elements for the implementation of priority reforms into their regular planning and monitoring processes. Therefore, partner countries were not required to provide details for the full costings, implementation plans or monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the priority reform at the time of compact development. However, examining the extent to which countries have readiness for implementation, in terms of the presence of costings, implementation plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, remain key indicators with which to assess the potential for transformation of a country's priority reform.

Key findings

- Documentation and information on the costing and finance is lacking in consistency and the majority of countries have not fully costed or budgeted their priority reform (as it was not a requirement), but there were positive signs that progress is being made on costings mapping funding and aligning resources with reforms, which may imply implementation plans are developing.
- Various arrangements for monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) are in place but further work is needed to ensure that they are adequate and cover all key aspects of the priority reform and there is currently a lack of clarity around a number of mechanisms and conditions for MEL.
- A major challenge in relation to monitoring is the development of indicators for the priority reform. Several countries need to improve the focus, relevance, and precision of their indicators, so that these can effectively monitor interventions and measure their success.

Strength of evidence



Sources of data used to inform the findings include a desk review of documents including partnership compacts, grant applications, ITAP reports, education sector plans. Findings were triangulated with interviews with country level stakeholders including government stakeholders, development partners, and civil society organizations. Limitations in some case study countries included limited availability of implementation documents due to the timing of the case studies, limited access to relevant government documents or internal policies and planning to corroborate data, or stakeholder interviews yielding limited reflections on the capacity to implement priority reforms.

3.2.1 Status of costing and financing of the priority reforms

Presently, the information available on the costing and financing of the priority reforms is inconsistent. Table 24 (section 6) summarizes the status of costing and financing of priority reforms in the eight sampled countries at the time of Phase 1 of the evaluation. Given that detailed information on financing and full costing was not required as part of the compact development

process, interviews with stakeholders were a further source of evidence concerning progress on budgeting activities.

Although at the time of the compact development process most countries have not conducted a full costing of the implementation of the priority reform (as it was not a requirement for partner countries), **there are positive signs that progress is being made on costings, mapping funding and aligning resources with reforms** (as noted in [section 2.5](#)).

Five countries (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Tajikistan, Uganda**) have **made progress on aspects of costings and/or budgets for the reforms**, although producing realistic budgets remains challenging as capacity and resource limitations, particularly at a local level, remain a significant challenge for conducting the reform costing exercises.

Nepal's education sector plan (2021-2030) includes a 5-year costed plan for the priority reform, which is accounted for in the national budget. However, there is not enough evidence from the desk review and interviews to confirm whether the budgeting exercises for the priority reform have been carried out and therefore it is not possible to assess whether the resources allocated are adequate. While **El Salvador** has yet to produce any budget documentation, the Ministry of Education has taken proactive steps towards developing a realistic budget for the priority reform. For instance, the Ministry of Education has benefited from the support of Summa Lab (through KIX LAC), which has conducted several studies on the estimated costs of the reform, including a risk assessment. This approach is also likely to encourage further focusing and adjustments to the reform, to ensure it can be delivered effectively.

Tajikistan did not include a full costing of the priority reform in its compact and, instead, focused on updating the costs of the national strategy (NSED-2030) that is aligned with the compact. A few national stakeholders noted that, in general, it is not unusual for costings in policy documents to be inaccurate when they are perceived to be fundraising tools. Developing realistic budgets remains challenging because there is a centralized budgetary system, which lacks transparency, and MoES has limited control over the use of budgets. Similarly, **Cambodia** did not include a detailed budget for the priority reform in its compact, but its applications for SCG and STG include detailed budgets for some of the priority reform activities. The ITAP report includes concerns around whether national financing allocated to the sector was realistic. Given the concerns about domestic financing and the costing for limited activities, this suggests that on whole, the costing of Cambodia's priority reform remains incomplete. **Cambodia** will use SCG funding to improve overall budget processes.

Uganda's compact lacked budget details, and funding for key elements of the priority reform does not appear to be fully costed. There was no access to other national documents containing costings related to elements of the priority reform. The draft of **Uganda's** STG was fully costed and detailed.

At the time of the evaluation, **three countries had made minimal progress on costings and budgets for their priority reforms**, primarily due to weak capacity and workflow issues within and across relevant government departments. There is strong evidence, from both documentation and interviews, that neither **Democratic Republic of Congo** nor **Sierra Leone** have developed a budget or costings for the priority reform. In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, progress on budgeting and resourcing has been significantly hampered by a lack of capacity in SPACE, due to a funding gap, which possesses the expertise to cost the reform. **Sierra Leone** plans to use SCG funding to employ staff responsible for budgets and liaising with the Ministry of Finance, however. Stakeholders from MBSSE stated that they were waiting for grants to be approved before addressing the financing of the reform. As of yet, the Ministry of Finance has not been involved in discussions about the reform, further adding to the uncertainty about the exact cost of the reform and whether realistic budgets can be developed.

There does not appear to be budget for the priority reform in **Tanzania**. However, it is difficult to reliably assess this due to gaps in the evidence around financial planning in the country and the evaluators' lack of access to national documents.

3.2.2 Status of implementation planning for the priority reforms

While all countries have made some progress towards implementation planning for GPE grants contributing to the compact, there is little evidence of progress towards implementation for aspects of priority reforms not funded through GPE grants or those already being implemented as part of previous plans/policies. Further details can be found in **Table 25 (section 6)**. More broadly, most countries have started to make some progress towards planning for implementation for the priority reforms, but few have fully developed plans in place.²⁴

Nepal and **Tajikistan** are the two countries that had more specific implementation planning for the reform in place during the evaluation. Both countries are from cohort 1 (pilot). In **Nepal**, the Center for Education and Human Resource Development has drafted a Program Implementation Manual for approval by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). The manual guides authorities at the central, provincial, and local levels on grant use and on how to use additional funds from other grants and local revenues. In **Tajikistan**, implementation plans are in place through the National Roadmap for the Implementation of CBE with roles and responsibilities, budget and work plans which build on existing structures, clearly defined at a country level.

Five countries (**Cambodia, Uganda, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Tanzania**) have made progress on elements of implementation planning specifically for the GPE grants. However, both **Cambodia** and **Uganda** still need to clarify their organizational and coordinating mechanisms (including roles and responsibilities) for implementation of the priority reform. While **El Salvador** has yet to produce implementation planning which covers the priority reform, MINEDUCYT has made some progress, with support from Summa Lab (through the knowledge and innovation exchange, Latin America and the Caribbean - KIX LAC), on implementation plans for goals relating to gender inequality, an area which has been highlighted as critical through its work on identification of the priority reform and through the enabling factors assessment and ITAP. In **Sierra Leone**, MBSSE and the MTHE held an event focused on clarifying stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, but there is still a need for more detailed implementation planning. **Tanzania** has developed plans for some development partner supported projects and programs, but not others, such as their STG-funded teacher support program.

The only country for which there was no evidence of implementation planning, or progress on this, was **Democratic Republic of Congo**. Limited aspects of implementation have been addressed in the STG application, but significantly more detail and clarity is needed, particularly in relation to roles and responsibilities.

Although all partners need to make further progress in their implementation planning, it is nonetheless evident that countries have taken some steps towards identifying and mitigating risks to implementation of the priority reforms. To some extent, the progress made so far in this area is linked to GPE's operating model, which provided the impetus for partners to discuss and reflect on issues during the compact development process. The work undertaken by countries through their enabling factors assessment provides the richest evidence to identify issues, and thereby risks, that have the potential to affect their implementation of the priority reform.

3.2.3 Status of monitoring, evaluation and learning for the priority reforms

Countries are expected to have set out plans for monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks, in order to track progress in the priority reform area to support acting, learning and adapting, which in turn supports mutual accountability.

Various arrangements for MEL are in place or underway but further work is needed to ensure that they are adequate and cover all key aspects of the priority reform. At the time of the evaluation, we had evidence that seven out of the eight countries had progressed in the development of MEL frameworks to support the priority reform. **Democratic Republic of Congo** was the only country that

²⁴ When referring to implementation planning this could take many forms either separate for the priority reform or through enhancing existing plans to incorporate aspects of the priority reform (as appropriate).

had not yet outlined a detailed approach to MEL in either its compact or STG grant documents, beyond ten key indicators set out in its compact, and had not yet come to a decision on who will drive the MEL process for the priority reform. In **Table 4** below, we provide a summary of our analysis of the status of the MEL plans for priority reforms in case study countries and further details and analysis on the status of MEL mechanisms can be found in **Table 26 (section 6)**.

Table 4. Status of MEL plans for the priority reforms

Country	No MEL set out	MEL for some grants	Existing MEL to be used	In progress	Status, as described in the partnership compact
Cambodia		✓	✓		No specific MEL plan dedicated to the priority reform beyond existing MEL mechanisms in the ESP 2019-2023, SCG results framework, and broad high-level indicators in the STG application.
Democratic Republic of Congo	✓				No MEL plan and a lack of capacity to progress
El Salvador				✓	MEL consists of performance indicators for different levels, but MEL frameworks and mechanisms not yet developed
Nepal			✓	✓	Existing MEL mechanisms to be used, based on those developed for the school education sector plan (SESP). Enabled by SWAp and a strong EMIS
Sierra Leone	✓				No specific MEL plan set out for the priority reform, but plans to formulate this as part of the implementation of the priority reform,
Tajikistan		✓	✓	✓	Builds on existing MEL structures though the NSED-2030. Work on MEL ongoing, MEL frameworks included in STG grant,
Tanzania			✓		Existing ESDP III MEL mechanisms to be used, but the performance indicators developed for existing frameworks may not be sufficient to measure the success of the priority reform.
Uganda		✓	✓		No specific MEL plan set out for the priority reform, but good foundations in place, including joint sector reviews and bi-annual learning reviews. Results framework developed for the STG funded elements of the priority reform.

Source: Partnership compacts and primary data from country-level stakeholders

While MEL for the priority reform should build on existing country MEL processes, further work is usually required by countries to ensure that the MEL mechanisms are adequate and cover all key aspects of the priority reform. **Cambodia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and Tanzania** are using the MEL plans set out for their education sector plans as a starting point for development. Utilizing existing MEL frameworks, their associated monitoring systems and indicators have the potential to create efficiencies, compared to developing an entirely new MEL framework solely for the priority reform. However, potential challenges in taking this approach have been raised by countries, such as

the suitability and adaptation of indicators, clarity around the roles and responsibilities for the collection and analysis, and mobilization of data at the priority reform level. In multiple countries, stakeholders raised concerns about the government's ability to sustain existing MEL systems in before they could be used to support priority reforms. To illustrate this, for five of the eight countries (**Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and Uganda**), the final priority rating for the data and evidence enabling factor was rated 'high'.

Out of all the countries, **Nepal** appears to be in the strongest position when it comes to data collection and monitoring. As demonstrated in its enabling factors assessment, its EMIS is considered to be robust and comprehensive and there are established processes for monitoring and analyzing data on a national level. It is now actively integrating the MEL for the priority reform into its existing monitoring and evaluation processes and the country's processes for monitoring and reporting on data are already well-established and generally robust. **Tajikistan** has a documented comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation for the priority reform, which, as highlighted in the compact, also builds on existing structures, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.

More specific work on refining the MEL planning for the priority reform is already underway in **El Salvador** and **Tajikistan**. **El Salvador** has outlined performance indicators, but MINEDUCYT has not yet defined baseline or end targets, nor who will monitor these. **Sierra Leone** has proposed to finalize its MEL plans closer to implementation, due to the existing and ongoing investment to strengthen and unify data systems.

Uganda, Cambodia have also outlined MEL frameworks for specific grants (as did **Tajikistan** as part of their comprehensive approach). **Uganda** has a results-based grant design for the STG and Multiplier grant which has the ambition of further incentivizing improvements to wider monitoring and evaluation across the priority reform. As suggested in its compact, the SCG in **Uganda** would be used as investment in the data system to support monitoring.

While the majority of countries are taking steps towards developing MEL frameworks, **Democratic Republic of Congo** has faced significant challenges in this area. It is the only country that has not yet outlined an approach to MEL and it is unclear who 'owns' the MEL process. In addition to a lack of ownership and accountability, capacity constraints mean that significant progress is unlikely in the short-term. Unless these barriers are addressed, there are likely to be longer-term issues concerning the priority reform's MEL.

Uneven progress in developing MEL plans means that there is currently a lack of clarity around the mechanisms to support monitoring and evaluation in the sampled partner countries. This was previously highlighted in **section 1** on the enabling factors assessment. This in turn poses challenges to implementing MEL frameworks in a systematic and robust manner, which by extension, also applies to the monitoring of the priority reform.

Due to the fact that implementation plans and MEL frameworks are still being developed, it is difficult to fully assess the approach that will be taken to data collection and the assessment and analysis of data and reporting. The extent and nature of challenges relating to data collection varies significantly by country. The countries with the strongest pre-existing approaches to data analysis are **Nepal** and **Uganda**. **Nepal**'s data monitoring is frequent and comprehensive with periodic reports used to inform planning and reforms. While the country has a systematic approach to data monitoring, it has still acknowledged a need to improve its approach to mobilizing insights and learning. In **Uganda**, monitoring of certain interventions is regular and well-structured, but data analysis remains challenging due to capacity issues (and is being supported through the SCG). Demonstrating awareness of challenges in this area, **El Salvador, Tajikistan, and Tanzania** have all identified in their compacts and/or enabling factor analyses a need to improve their capacity to conduct meaningful and timely data analysis. At present, it is unclear how data will be used in **Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan** in order to develop and mobilize insights into the implementation of the priority reform.

GPE has provided support to countries to improve on their MEL plans and mechanisms. Through the compact development process, partners were required to reflect on data and evidence as a key

enabling factor and document their requirements in their enabling factors assessment. This has increased countries' awareness of the need to improve data collection in order to achieve their priority reforms and has supported them to identify their specific needs in this area. Countries have then used this knowledge to inform the design of their SCG. **Cambodia, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda** have proposed to use SCG funding to support filling gaps in data and evidence-related enabling factors. This includes using funding to improve their EMIS systems and to improve data integration (**El Salvador, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda**). Other uses include to train and support capacity building for data collection, analysis and reporting in all six countries. In all cases, MEL arrangements need to be developed further to ensure that they are adequate and cover all key aspects of the priority reform.

3.3 Factors that support the implementation of the transformative reform

This section reflects on other factors which may support or hinder the ability of countries to implement the selected priority reform. We first consider the extent that there are clear roles, responsibilities, and capacities in place to implement the reform. We then consider the importance of identifying and managing risks as a fundamental part of the planning, implementation and MEL processes that support the achievement of the priority reforms. Finally, we briefly reflect on other forms of support provided by GPE to ensure the long-term continuity of priority reforms.

Key findings

- Government capacity at various levels (national, regional, and local) and a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities to implement reforms in the case study countries may present a barrier to the successful implementation of reforms.
- The enabling factors assessments provided rich evidence to identify risks; however, most case study countries have not yet systematically identified risks and put in place mitigating actions when planning their priority reforms, and detailed risks assessments for implementation are not yet in place. However, several are aware of the need to do so.
- The lack of comprehensive implementation plans, budgets and finance plans for countries' priority reforms means that, based on the available evidence, it is not currently possible to evaluate the extent to which GPE's processes and support are adequate and sufficient for the implementation.

Strength of evidence



Sources of data used to inform the findings include a desk review of documents including partnership compacts, grant applications, ITAP reports, education sector plans. Findings were triangulated with interviews with country level stakeholders including government stakeholders, development partners, and civil society organizations. Limitations in some case study countries included limited availability of implementation documents due to the timing of the case studies, limited access to relevant government documents or internal policies and planning to corroborate data, or stakeholder interviews yielding limited reflections on the capacity or understanding of roles to implement priority reforms.

3.3.1 Stakeholder roles and responsibilities to implement the priority reform

Table 27 (section 6) summarizes the current extent to which:

- Stakeholder roles and responsibilities for implementation of the priority reforms are clear
- Stakeholders are aligned with their expected roles for implementation
- Stakeholders have capacity to fulfil their roles for implementation

To provide a synoptic view, we assigned each of these elements a value of low, medium, or high.²⁵ Where appropriate, distinctions have been made between central levels and regional/local levels, as some countries have made progress on alignment at a central level but have yet to fully clarify roles and responsibilities at other levels.

In summary:

- **The clarity of roles and responsibilities was only rated as high in one country (Tajikistan), and medium in three countries (El Salvador – central level, Uganda – central level, Nepal).** For all other countries (**Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Tanzania**) it was rated as low, and for **El Salvador** and **Uganda** were rated low at the regional/ local level.
- **Stakeholder alignment with expected roles** was rated as high at the central level in **Tajikistan**, medium in **Nepal**, and medium at the central level in **El Salvador**. The rating for all other countries (**Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda**) was low.
- **Stakeholder capacity to fulfil their roles was rated as low in four countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda),** and at the local level in **El Salvador, Nepal, and Tajikistan**, although medium at the central level. The rating was unclear in **Cambodia**.

A document review and stakeholder interviews suggest that there are particular challenges around the understanding of roles at regional and local levels in **Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and Uganda**. Without improvement, this lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities is likely to adversely affect implementation. This problem is particularly acute in **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where lack of prioritization and limited capacity for developing implementation plans within government (the education system is also highly decentralized) are proving to be significant barriers to operationalizing the compact. The degree of participation from stakeholders in the provinces was low and they did not have the resources to meaningfully engage (such as internet connection and printing facilities).

In **El Salvador**, the education system is highly centralized, and it is unclear how local and regional actors will be involved at an operational level. Engaging these local and regional stakeholders will be essential to the success of the priority reform and, therefore, further work is needed to clarify their roles in the implementation phase.

In **Nepal**, there were moderate levels of understanding and alignment of government (as well as non-government) roles, in part due to implementation arrangements building on existing roles and processes. Since adopting a federalized approach to education, Nepal has also faced challenges with coordination across different tiers of government. While the government has introduced a new Education Act that outlines the general roles and responsibilities of local governments, ensuring that there is clarity around stakeholders' roles in relation to the priority reform will be crucial. However, improvement plans are in place to build capacity for planning and delivery of the priority reform at a local level (the SESP provides a roadmap to strengthen school education across all government tiers),

²⁵ Stakeholder roles clear: Low – no clear indication of stakeholder roles in planning documents and/or stakeholders reported they did not understand their roles/responsibilities in the implementation process; Medium – certain roles and responsibilities have been assigned but further clarity is needed; High – all major roles and responsibilities have been mapped and communicated.

Stakeholders' alignment with expected roles: Low – stakeholder understanding and/or engagement is low; Medium – key roles have been assigned appropriately and most stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities; High – all roles are assigned appropriately and stakeholders understand their responsibilities.

Stakeholders capacity to fulfil their roles: Low – significant gaps in human resource and/or expertise; Medium – sufficient human resource and expertise to deliver key elements of the reform; High – good levels of human resource and expertise to deliver all major elements of the reform.

We have used the designation 'unclear' to acknowledge where it is not currently possible to evaluate this because of a lack of clarity around roles and/or evidence of alignment.

which will be crucial to ensuring the success of the priority reform. Other countries have yet to develop cohesive plans to increase capacity at a local level.

In **Tajikistan**, roles and responsibilities were clear. Coordination at a central level is relatively high, as implementation harnesses existing roles and mechanisms. However, rural areas face significant capacity challenges, which also affect stakeholder engagement and alignment.

In **Sierra Leone**, a lack of capacity to fulfil their roles at both central and local levels is a major problem and, based on current evidence, the operationalization of SCG and STG funding may not be sufficient to address shortfalls in capacity and additional resources have not been identified.

In **Uganda**, there are significant gaps in local capacity as well as differences between government and private schools, and a rural-urban divide. It is currently unclear whether the private sector, which has a significant role in education in Uganda, will have sufficient involvement in the coordination of reform efforts.

Tanzania also faces significant capacity issues at a government level and within the sector. The decentralized education planning tends to be driven by inputs (i.e., centrally allocated funds) rather than the priority.

3.3.2 Managing risks to the priority reforms

Based on the available evidence, **Table 28 (section 6)** provides an **overview of the risks linked to implementation**, which offers an indication of the impact²⁶ and likelihood²⁷ of risks and discusses whether any mitigation measures have been put in place and/or what progress has been made that will help to mitigate risks.

Countries' enabling factors assessments provide the richest evidence to identify potential risks to the implementation of the priority reforms. A summary of the issues and risks identified in the enabling factors assessment has been provided in **section 1** and **Table 12 (section 6)**. A number of key issues related particularly to information needs emerged which included **quality, timeliness, capacity, and accessibility of data**. The lack of **good quality education management information systems** also proved to be a key challenge across a number of countries (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan**). However, significant gaps remain in the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks related to the implementation of the priority reforms. All case study countries indicated risks associated with the equity and efficiency of domestic financing and some with the volume of domestic financing (**Sierra Leone, Cambodia**). There were also other challenges identified by stakeholders across the countries which would prove difficult to mitigate through specific actions within the priority reform or enabling factors. These include political ownership, generalized low sector capacity and ineffective governance.

While there are risks indicated which are specific to the design and implementation of priority reforms, there are more macro level risks, which countries will need to consider. For example, the **political context in partner countries** also creates potential risks to the successful rollout of reforms. In terms of national politics, the presidential elections in **Democratic Republic of Congo** (in December 2023) and **El Salvador** (in February 2024) may have an impact on those countries' political priorities. With regards to the policy environment, the lack of alignment of GPE support with **Democratic**

²⁶ Impact: Low – Sufficient pre-existing infrastructure, coordination and/or capacity to offset disruption to implementation if risk is realized; Medium – Some pre-existing infrastructure, coordination and/or capacity to offset disruption to implementation if risk is realized; High – Issues with pre-existing infrastructure, coordination and/or capacity could lead to severe disruption of implementation if risk is realized.

²⁷ Likelihood: Low – Process has already been completed and/or an adequate mitigation strategy is in place; Medium – Some progress has been made in the planning process and/or some mitigation measures are in place, but these do not address the risk fully; High – Little or no progress has been made in the planning process and there is no evidence of mitigation of risk.

Republic of Congo's, **Tanzania's** and **Uganda's** policy cycles, as discussed in **section 2.3** and summarized in **Table 9**, also presents a potential risk to the realization of reforms.

Although various risks and issues are identified in the enabling factors analysis, many of the case study countries had not completed a risk assessment yet. Detail on the risks to implementation is generally lacking in the compacts, as this was not explicitly requested in the compact development guidelines. The only country whose compact specifically included an outline of risks and mitigation strategies was **Democratic Republic of Congo**. The compact identified some top-level risks, namely: lack of political will; weak capacity; lack of stakeholder commitment; insufficient resources; unequal treatment, especially for girls; reticence and skepticism/resistance and opposition to change. Although they discuss steps taken to address issues identified through the enabling factors assessment, **Cambodia**, **Nepal**, **Uganda**, and **Tanzania** do not include specific reference to 'risks' or associated mitigation strategies in their compacts.

Despite this, several countries have demonstrated awareness of the need to assess risks to implementation of the priority reforms. **El Salvador** has not yet produced a risk assessment, but in the compact identified the need to "Work on a comprehensive list of assumptions and a risk analysis (implementation and political)" as one of six key actions to take place prior to implementation. The compact for **Tajikistan** stated that MoES will be responsible for managing risks and that MoES's operational framework includes a risk register, as part of its monitoring and evaluation process, although this is not elaborated on further. **Uganda's** compact noted, in the context of the enabling factors assessment, that there was currently a "lack of detailed risk and vulnerability assessments to address significant gender and social inequalities" but did not detail how this gap will be addressed.²⁸ Nonetheless, it was evident that these countries all recognize the need for further assessment of risks.

Further work needs to be undertaken by partners, as part of their implementation planning processes, to assess risks to the implementation of priority reforms and associated policies. At present, there are clear risks to implementation. The extent to which these risks are identified and addressed should become evident in the next phase of the evaluation as implementation begins.

3.3.3 Other support GPE provides for long-term continuity of the priority reforms

The lack of comprehensive implementation plans, budgets and finance plans for countries' priority reforms means that, based on the available evidence, **it is not currently possible to evaluate the extent to which GPE's processes and support are adequate and sufficient for the implementation.**

However, other sections of the report have reflected on the extent to which the support provided by the GPE Secretariat and GPE's operating model have **supported countries in taking key steps towards the implementation of reforms.** For example, GPE's support during the compact development process aligned well with five of the eight countries' policy cycles (see **section 2.3** for more detail). GPE's operating model has laid the foundations for improving alignment between processes and stakeholders: in all eight countries the priority reforms were well aligned with countries' education sector plans. Similarly, there is a high degree of alignment between reforms and countries' education policies and practices. However, how this will work in practice remains unclear.

As discussed in **section 2.5**, at present there is limited evidence that GPE's operating model is contributing to resource alignment. There are some examples emerging that suggest countries are beginning to consider how to fund projects and interventions, through a combination of domestic financing, GPE grants and external funding sources. However, there is **limited evidence that countries have identified and are working to leverage either GPE or additional resources to fully support all facets of their priority reforms.**

With regards to GPE's grant funding specifically, partners have built on outlines of policy actions in the compacts in the development of funding bids. As outlined in **Table 14 (section 6)**, which provides an

²⁸ See **section 5** for more analysis relating to gender.

overview of the use of the SCG by country, SCG proposals discussed how the grant funding will be used to address challenges that will affect the implementation of the reform. Moreover, **El Salvador**, **Sierra Leone**, **Tajikistan**, and **Tanzania** made explicit links to the enabling factors and **Uganda** created some links. However, explanations of how funding will be operationalized in specific terms and how this links to implementation appear to vary.

It will be possible to offer significantly more detailed and robust insights concerning GPE's processes and support for implementation during the next phase of the evaluation. By then, countries should have developed their implementation plans more fully and more robust evidence will be available.

4 Domestic Financing

This section examines the GPE 2025 approach to domestic financing, the current status of domestic financing across the eight sampled countries, how domestic financing related barriers to education were identified and addressed by partner countries, and the role of GPE in supporting these efforts.

This section is organized as follows:

- In **section 4.1**, we provide an overview of the critical role of domestic financing, and the evolution of the GPE approach to addressing domestic financing related challenges.
- In **section 4.2**, we explore the status of domestic financing across the eight case study countries.
- In **section 4.3**, we analyze the bottlenecks identified through the enabling factors assessments conducted in each country and the potential effectiveness of the corresponding policy actions to enhance domestic financing for education and support the enabling conditions for system transformation.
- In **section 4.4**, we consider if and how the GPE operating model and compact development process: enhanced the capacity of partner countries to identify and address domestic finance-related challenges; encouraged alignment of stakeholders; and supported advocacy efforts to increase the visibility of policy actions in domestic finance.
- Finally, **section 4.5** concludes by reflecting on the potential for countries to successfully implement policy actions to address domestic financing-related challenges.

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The importance of domestic financing in the education sector

An estimated annual education financing gap of \$97 billion across low and lower-middle-income countries highlights the urgent need to prioritize education spending in national budgets.

Prioritizing education sector spending in national budgets has the potential to result in significant returns on investment, by supporting economic progress and other social benefits, such as greater productivity, more innovation, increased support for pro-climate policies, greater social cohesion and reduced risks of conflict.²⁹ At the July 2021 Global Education Summit, Heads of State of GPE partner countries³⁰ renewed their commitment to SDG 4 and pledged to work towards the allocation of 20% national expenditure for education over the next five years.³¹ Additionally, 25 countries committed to prioritizing and protecting the volume of education financing and to improve the efficiency and equity of expenditure for education.³² Despite this, the achievement of SDG 4 targets is jeopardized by

²⁹ "Education brings a return of about 9-10%. This means that every year of learning generates about a 10% increase in earnings annually. But the value of education is much more than just the earnings it delivers. Education expands choices. It transfers social values between generations. It elevates consumption in the present – and in the future". <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/50-years-after-landmark-study-returns-education-remain-strong>; The analysis of 120 countries over 30 years found that countries with large numbers of young men were less likely to experience violent conflict if their populations had higher levels of education. Youth without an education can be nine times more likely to be recruited by rebel groups. UNESCO (2016). Global Education Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO. p.103 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf>.

³⁰ Heads of State Declaration on Education Financing, July 6, 2021. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news/heads-state-declaration-education-financing>.

³¹ As agreed at the Incheon Declaration Education 2030 at the World Education Forum in May 2015. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233137>.

³² <https://www.globalpartnership.org/what-we-do/domestic-financing>.

significant underfinancing.³³ Even after revising national SDG 4 commitments in 2019-2021³⁴ and establishing SDG 4 benchmarks on seven indicators,³⁵ UNESCO estimated an average annual financing gap of \$97 billion across the 79 low and lower-middle-income countries between 2023 and 2030 (21% of overall expenditure).³⁶ Sub-Saharan African countries account for the largest portion of this gap, with a deficit of \$70 billion annually on average. This affects the region's ability to meet the benchmarked global education targets, with 20% of primary school-age children and almost 60% of upper secondary school-age youth out of school.

Domestic financing gaps are exacerbated by a range of contextual factors that affect the achievement of global education goals. The COVID-19 pandemic, several economic crises over the last 20 years, climate change and natural disasters, and international conflicts have slowed economic growth, placing enormous pressure on national budgets and competing spending priorities and limited opportunities to improve effective education expenditure.³⁷ Slow progress between 2015 and 2020, further hampered by the subsequent COVID-19 pandemic, means that the world is not on track to achieve the global SDG 4 targets of universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education by 2030.³⁸

Domestic public financing accounts for the greatest share of financing for education, representing more than two-thirds of resources for education in low and lower-middle income countries.³⁹ In light of the above-mentioned financing gaps and overall long-term stagnation of official development aid to the education sector,⁴⁰ the achievement of SDG 4 targets by 2030 will demand substantial domestic resource mobilization.

4.1.2 The GPE 2025 approach to domestic financing (volume, equity, and efficiency)

The GPE 2025 model shifted from an approach primarily focused on volume, towards a more holistic and contextualized approach that considers equity and efficiency of domestic financing.

All previous and current GPE strategies have emphasized the importance of securing sufficient volume of domestic financing for education, mainly tracked as a percentage of public spending allocated to education. This has been monitored through corporate-level GPE indicators (see **Table 29, section 6**) and quality assurance-related processes, including more recently the Domestic

³³ UNESCO. April 2023. Can countries afford their national SDG 4 benchmarks? Policy paper 49. Source: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385004/PDF/385004eng.pdf.multi>.

³⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report, which share the mandate to monitor progress towards SDG 4 according to the Education 2030 Framework for Action, have helped countries fulfil their commitment to establishing national SDG 4 benchmarks. If all 79 low- and lower-middle-income countries achieved their national targets, then the participation rate one year before entry into primary school would increase from 71% in 2020 to 85% in 2030; out-of-school rate would fall from 12% to 5% among children of primary school age, from 21% to 11% in lower secondary school, from 44% to 26% in upper secondary school. Source: UNESCO. 2023. *Op. cit.*

³⁵ All seven indicators are presented here <https://geo.uis.unesco.org/sdg-benchmarks>.

³⁶ UNESCO. 2023. *Op.cit.*

³⁷ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/climate-change-threatening-education-financing-launching-joint-effort-identify-trends-solutions>.

³⁸ UNESCO. April 2023. Can countries afford their national SDG 4 benchmarks? Policy paper 49. Source: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385004/PDF/385004eng.pdf.multi>.

³⁹ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/financing-2025/case-for-investment>.

⁴⁰ The share of education in total aid among OECD DAC donors fell sharply from 14.7% in 2003 to 9.7% in 2013, where it has remained since with only several exceptions (10.7% in 2016, 10.6% in 2018, 10.9% in 2019), despite strong advocacy efforts to prioritize education in aid portfolios.

Financing Requirement Matrix. Following the Independent Summative Evaluation of the GPE 2020,⁴¹ the GPE 2025 strategy expanded the focus of domestic financing, and identified volume, equity and efficiency of domestic financing as one of the eight GPE priority areas, recognizing the need for a more holistic approach to domestic financing issues.⁴² This is reflected in the current results frameworks, which monitors equity and efficiency in addition to the volume of domestic financing for global and country-level goals (**Table 30, section 6**). The approach to measuring partner country progress in domestic finance has also evolved. The GPE 2016-2020 strategic plan measured the proportion of countries that increased expenditure or maintained expenditure over 20%, and the number of country missions that addressed domestic financing issues (**Table 31, section 6**). However, the process for identifying country level domestic financing challenges and the root causes of domestic financing gaps was unclear. In response, the GPE 2025 model placed a stronger emphasis on robustly diagnosing and identifying challenges to domestic financing, and monitoring the progress of efforts to address those challenges, as demonstrated by the inclusion of two new indicators outlined in **Table 31**. Progress under the 2025 strategy is assessed by GPE Secretariat in collaboration with local education groups under government leadership. The enabling factors assessment is intended to support a robust problem identification exercise, with domestic financing as one of the four key enabling factors, allowing countries to identify issues, prioritize among them and track progress against the identified challenges.

To assess financing **volume**, GPE examines national education financing against internationally agreed benchmarks⁴³ and supports countries to enhance their capacity to track the volume of domestic financing through improved data availability, budget transparency and accountability. Increasing the percentage of the domestic budget for education and reaching the 20% target has remained central to country-level dialogue under the 2025 model. GPE also employs other innovative activities to improve dialogue on domestic finance. For instance, The TaxEd Alliance, supported by Education Out Loud, promotes evidence-based solutions centered on implementing progressive tax policies for transforming education funding by facilitating dialogue among civil society, Tax Justice Network actors, and education stakeholders.⁴⁴ This initiative empowers members through research, budget tracking, and advocacy for gender-responsive public education. Additionally, GPE advocates for key domestic finance decision-makers, such as ministers of finance and presidents, to participate in local education groups.

Regarding **efficiency**, GPE aims to “ensure that minimum resources achieve the best educational outcomes.”⁴⁵ Efficiency of domestic finance is related to: (1) addressing issues that affect internal efficiency, such as high repetition and dropout rates; (2) other public financial management areas, including improved monitoring and financial planning, better data to track spending and results, and increased accountability for how funds are spent. GPE partner countries could potentially save up to

⁴¹ That evaluation showed that despite the efforts of the GPE to advocate for the importance of increasing domestic education budgets, its influence was limited “as domestic funding decisions are subject to many other considerations” (p.105) <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2020-06-GPE-Independent-summative-evaluation.pdf>.

⁴² The seven other areas are: access; learning; gender equality; inclusion; early learning; quality teaching; and strong organizational capacity.

⁴³ At the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, 160 countries agreed “to increase public spending on education in accordance with country context, and urge adherence to the international and regional benchmarks of allocating efficiently at least 4–6% of gross domestic product and/or at least 15–20% of total public expenditure to education.” https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf.

⁴⁴ GPE. May 2022. Thinking outside the ‘budget box’ for better education financing. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/thinking-outside-budget-box-better-education-financing>.

⁴⁵ GPE. Domestic financing. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/what-we-do/domestic-financing>

one-third of education budgets once they tackle inefficiencies such as high repetition and dropout rates, procurement waste and inefficiencies in teacher management and distribution.⁴⁶

To support **equity** of domestic financing, GPE believes that “public education expenditure should be focused on ensuring access and quality learning for the most marginalized”, where “in low-income countries, primary-school-aged children from the poorest quintile are over three times more likely to be out of school than children from the wealthiest quintile.”⁴⁷ By monitoring domestic financing through an equity lens, GPE seeks to ensure that equitable financing mechanisms are hardwired into education budgets, targeting funds to the most marginalized children, schools and regions.

4.2 Status of partner countries with respect to domestic finance

All eight sampled countries recognize the importance of education and have expressed political commitments to increase education spending.⁴⁸ All the constitutions and/or national legal frameworks in the sampled countries recognize the right to education as a human right or as a fundamental principle of state policy. Education sector plans, which provide an overview of national priorities and considerations of domestic financing in education, incorporate at least some domestic finance-related activities in all sampled countries. Most of the education sector plans in the sampled countries acknowledged system bottlenecks in financing and budgeting, and recognized the inadequacy of allocated funds to meet education sector needs, and committed to increasing the share allocated to education.

Although governments publicly commit to increase education expenditure, challenges persist in translating political will into feasible budget allocations in the sampled countries. Volume related concerns include slow or no increase in education allocations as a percentage of public expenditures and as a percentage of GDP. In 2022, the proportion of all GPE partner countries that met or exceeded the 20% benchmark, or at least increased government spending on education declined to 60% (as compared to 64.8% in 2021).⁴⁹ Three out of the eight sampled countries (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania**) reached the milestone of 20% of public expenditure allocated to education, and four countries (**El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan**) the milestone of at least 4% of the GDP to education in 2020 (**Error Reference source not found**, and **Figure 1**).

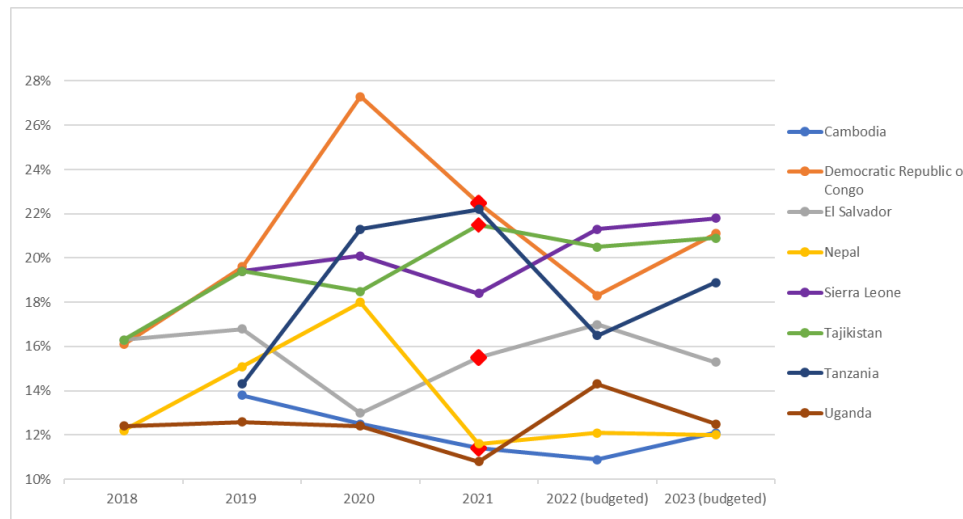
⁴⁶ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/raise-your-hand-case-investment>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/unequal-burdens-impact-shocks-household-education-spending#:~:text=In%20low%2Dincome%20countries%2C%20primary,children%20from%20the%20wealthiest%20quintile>.

⁴⁸ Mundial, G. B., & UNICEF. (2016). Education 2030: Incheon declaration and framework for action: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

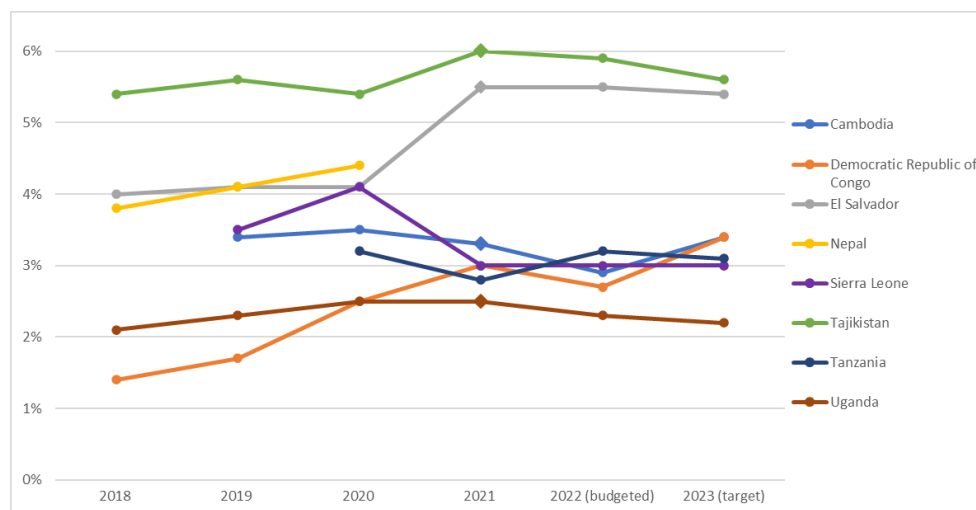
⁴⁹ GPE. Results Report 2023. [Results Report 2023 | Documents | Global Partnership for Education](#).

Error! Reference source not found. Government expenditure on education, as a percentage of total government expenditure⁵⁰



Source: GPE Domestic Financing Requirement Matrix.

Figure 1. Government expenditure on education, as a percentage of GDP⁵¹



Source: GPE Domestic Financing Requirement Matrix.

There have been significant declines in results against both of these indicators in recent years in four of the sampled countries. Concerns arise from trends in several countries, including **Cambodia**, **El Salvador**, and **Uganda**, where the volume of public expenditure on education has not increased in the last five years, despite overall economic growth. The decline in recent years could be related to the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, with approximately 40% of low- and lower-middle-income countries in 2020 decreasing the proportion of education spending within overall public

⁵⁰ Note: there are some disparities in the figures offered in the case studies because different sources have been used. However, those sources are often not indicated, and data are incomplete. Red points in 2021 indicate budgeted figures, not actuals.

⁵¹ Note: In this report, we have use the GPE Matrix for the eight countries, following the ITAP reports. Red points in 2021 indicate budgeted figures, not actuals.

expenditures⁵², and an average real spending decline of 13.5%.⁵³ As a general trend, lower-income countries witnessed a dip in the share of education spending in 2020, a slight recovery in 2021, and a subsequent decline in 2022. In these countries, 2022 expenditures persisted below 2019 levels (**Figure 1**). This was demonstrated in **Tajikistan**, where in 2022 the national expenditure on education as share of its GDP was 5.4%, slightly below the pre-pandemic level of 5.6% in 2019.⁵⁴

The likelihood of increasing education expenditure in the upcoming years is also uncertain. Ministries of Education face challenges due to competition for funding from other sectors, especially since education is already the largest sector in terms of government expenditure in most sampled countries' governments. Based on the data available, the evaluation team is uncertain if it is feasible for countries such as **Cambodia**, to meet their target for boosting the planned education budget.⁵⁵

In education sector plans of the sampled countries, issues of efficiency and equity in domestic finance received less attention compared to volume. Most sampled countries address efficiency of financing in their education sector plans (ESPs), but few include specific actions to enhance equity. The most common measure to improve efficiency highlighted in ESPs included better transparency and accountability of education expenditures, improved financial management, and enhanced monitoring and audit. Less frequently, ESPs emphasized the decentralization of education budgets (**Cambodia** and **Democratic Republic of Congo**), results-based financing and use of data for budget planning and reporting (**Uganda**), alignment between public priorities and expenditures (**Tajikistan**), and anti-corruption measures. Equity measures were less frequently and explicitly outlined in sampled countries ESPs. Some countries, like **Cambodia** and **Sierra Leone**, simply mention importance of mechanisms for equitable financing without specifying planned actions to address this. **Democratic Republic of Congo** highlights the need to decrease costs of education for poor and vulnerable groups of the population while **Tajikistan** focuses on need for strengthening per capita financing.

Efficiency concerns identified in the sampled countries included increasing the use of public debt for education financing, and low budget execution rates despite increases in government revenues. For instance, the growing reliance on public debt instead of additional tax revenue in cases of **Nepal** and **Democratic Republic of Congo** is concerning. Increasing public debt in **Nepal** could be partly explained by the long run consequences of the 2015 earthquake shifting a large share of government expenditure towards reconstruction costs.⁵⁶ As for **Democratic Republic of Congo**, government might face challenges in increasing education expenditures due to ongoing conflicts and the limited resources available being prioritized for national security, along with a low tax base increasing the reliance on public debt rather than tax revenue.⁵⁷ Low budget execution rates, which could be a sign of inefficient budget planning and management⁵⁸ and insufficient resources reaching schools,⁵⁹ is a worrying trend. In **Sierra Leone** the budget execution rate was 78% in 2019 despite significant increases in expenditures on primary and secondary education since 2017, signaling limited

⁵² Tanaka, N., Poulsen, T., Cerdan-Infantes, P., Vital, M. J. A., Antoninis, M., Murakami, Y., & Chanduvi, J. S. (2023). Education Finance Watch 2022.

⁵³ The World Bank. (June 28, 2022). Financing for Education Stagnant or Declining Despite Chronic Learning Needs Post-COVID-19.

⁵⁴ UIS Statistics. Tajikistan.

⁵⁵ The ESP anticipated reaching the target of 20% in 2025, while the share of total government expenditure in education has steadily decreased over the past years, dropping from 13.8% in 2019 to 11.4% in 2021, with a projection of 14,5% in 2025.

⁵⁶ Nepal - Country Analytics (Secretariat Internal Document).

⁵⁷ Democratic Republic of Congo Case Study Report

⁵⁸ Kadirov, Gurazada & Poulsen. (March 2023). Budget execution in the education sector and why it matters. World Bank Blogs. Source: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/education/budget-execution-education-sector-and-why-it-matters>

⁵⁹ Viola H. (November 2021). Supporting Country Progress Towards Better Health Budget Execution. Source: <https://www.lhssproject.org/news/supporting-country-progress-towards-better-health-budget-execution>

absorptive capacity of the government.⁶⁰ In 2019, **Sierra Leone** had low level of capital budget utilization, with no expenditure on infrastructure and rehabilitation of schools and office buildings.⁶¹

As for equity of domestic finance, high household expenditures among poor families and in low-income countries (even in countries where education is free by law) in comparison with higher income settings is also a worrying trend. Even where education is supposed to be free, households still bear a significant portion of education costs on uniforms, stationery, transportation. In **Tanzania**, despite fees-free policies of 2015, households are still expected to cover certain expenses, challenging the goal of genuinely free and equitable education. The compact has highlighted plans to expand on the ongoing student unit cost study to include a household contribution to such costs.

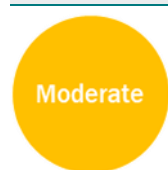
4.3 Domestic finance policy actions undertaken by partner countries

This section provides cross-country analysis of the domestic finance bottlenecks that the sampled countries identified during enabling factors assessments and the corresponding policy actions that they chose to prioritize to address the identified gaps. It also analyses the alignment and the potential effectiveness of the chosen actions in addressing the domestic finance bottlenecks.

Key findings

- Addressing identified volume gaps in domestic financing proved challenging for half of countries mainly given difficulties in increasing the volume and limited fiscal space.
- All countries planned some activities to improve efficiency in education spending as a more viable course of action.
- Addressing equity gaps was challenging since it often requires tackling broader societal and systemic problems. Equity challenges that remain unaddressed may limit the potential of system transformation for marginalized groups.
- Despite focus on efficiency and, to an extent, the equity of domestic finance among the sampled countries, the likelihood that domestic finance policy actions will support transformative change risks being undermined by the relatively modest size of GPE financial support, difficulties in finance planning processes, and limited availability of financial information.

Strength of evidence



Findings are supported by desk analysis of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, SCG and STG applications. Findings were also somewhat corroborated by the interviews with a few country level stakeholders across some of the eight case studies. Limitations in data collection included challenges with scheduling interviews with stakeholders able to discuss the topic of domestic financing in-depth, such as ministries of finance and education financing experts, and in some cases limited access to relevant country level documentation on domestic financing to corroborate findings.

4.3.1 Domestic finance in enabling factors assessment, corresponding policy actions and domestic finance activities

Volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic public expenditure on education is one of four enabling factors that GPE sets out as a key systemic condition required for the success of countries' priority reforms. As part of the compact development process, bottlenecks to the domestic financing of education are identified through the enabling factors assessment, and reviewed and assessed by

⁶⁰ The World Bank. (June 2021). Sierra Leone Programmatic Public Expenditure Reviews 2021: Primary and Secondary Education. Macroeconomics Trade and Investment Global Practice,

⁶¹ Ibid.

ITAP. The domestic finance enabling factor was assigned a “high” priority rating for all but two of the countries in the sample (**Nepal** and **El Salvador**) and more often than for any other enabling factor. In the enabling factor assessments and compacts, countries identified a mix of bottlenecks in volume, equity, and efficiency. One country did not identify any volume-related bottlenecks, and another one did not cite any bottlenecks related to equity.

Generally, sampled countries proposed policy actions to address several identified challenges. All the countries planned activities to address the identified efficiency bottlenecks, while volume and equity challenges proved to be the most difficult to address. **See Table 32 and Table 33 (section 6)** for a more detailed summary of the findings outlined below in relation to domestic financing bottlenecks and planned activities identified across all eight sampled countries.

Seven out of the eight sampled countries identified volume related bottlenecks to domestic financing, but only three outlined planned activities to increase the volume of domestic finance. For example, **Cambodia** aims to improve volume and efficiency of education sector non-salary recurrent expenditure by improving evidence-based funding and allocation, **El Salvador** planned to create a governance and monitoring and evaluation structure in MINEDUCYT to monitor funding utilization and accountability (**El Salvador**), and **Tajikistan** planned to update implementation costs in the education sector plan (NSED 2030) and transitioning to 12-year schooling. Four countries (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Tanzania** and **Uganda**) either did not identify policy actions to address identified volume bottlenecks, or these plans were not sufficiently developed, despite notable challenges identified in this area.⁶² For instance, although **Uganda** and **Democratic Republic of Congo** set top-up triggers to increase the proportion of education expenditure, they did not present a clear strategy to achieve this, and as discussed previously, there are doubts about feasibility given limited fiscal space.

Outside of the compact development process, GPE cross-country initiatives provided additional support to the sampled countries to develop innovative approaches to increase financing. For instance, through the EOL initiative, GPE encouraged innovative strategies to boost education budgets by advocating for evidence-based, progressive tax policies. The TaxEd Alliance, supported by EOL, fosters discussions between civil society, the Tax Justice Network, and educational stakeholders in various GPE partner countries, such as **Nepal**, to empower participants with research and budget tracking skills to advocate for improved taxation policies.⁶³

Three countries planned activities to address equity gaps with the main focus on revising capitation formulas (**Uganda**) and student unit costs for greater inclusivity (**Tajikistan** and **Tanzania**). Two countries planned activities which were not directly focused on equity but which have potential to lead to improved equity if implemented effectively. For example, **Nepal's** teacher rationalization and redeployment plan aims to contribute to more equitable teacher distribution. In **Cambodia**, the STG top-up indicator “Increased allocation of SOF relative to non-wage expenditure year by year” has a potential to enhance equity by enabling need-based financing at the school level, which, as noted in the ITAP report, might improve facilities and equipment particularly in disadvantaged regions.

Four countries did not plan policy actions to address the identified equity bottlenecks, even though domestic finance was assigned as high priority (with the exception of **El Salvador**, where domestic financing was rated medium priority), and despite the identification of significant and diverse equity related bottlenecks. For example, **El Salvador** did not address overall concerns about the equity of domestic resources for education, **Sierra Leone** did not propose actions to address inequalities in resource use for more equitable learning across gender, socio-economic status, geographical location, rural/urban and disability status. **Democratic Republic of Congo** did not specify actions to address disparities in provincial fund distribution, and **Tanzania** did not specify actions to address inequalities that emerge from favoring wealthier and urban populations in the allocation of domestic resources for teacher salaries and deployment. Activities related to equity are often complex and may

⁶² For some of these countries (Uganda), the program documents are yet to be finalized.

⁶³ GPE. May 2022. Thinking outside the ‘budget box’ for better education financing.

involve addressing broader systemic issues that are affected by deep-rooted social inequalities such as socioeconomic status, race, and geographic disparities. These issues require interdisciplinary approaches and long-term strategies to create meaningful change, making them more challenging to solve compared to the volume and efficiency bottlenecks.⁶⁴

Focusing efforts on the improvement of efficiency in education spending was more viable than actions to increase volume, due to limited fiscal space in sample countries and GPE's limited influence in this area. All the sampled countries demonstrated a focus on addressing efficiency challenges. Common efficiency measures included developing financial simulation models and projections (**Tajikistan** and **Tanzania**) to optimize resource allocation, updating costs of reform implementation (**El Salvador** and **Tajikistan**), and improving budget execution rates (**Sierra Leone**). Other activities include plans for improving the efficiency of ministry of education managing offices and designing or updating existing teacher redeployment plans or recruitment systems based on merit, transparency, and competition (**Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Nepal**) and producing data and conducting research (**Cambodia** and **Sierra Leone**).

In certain cases, planned activities built upon previous efforts within national policies to respond to the identified bottlenecks. In **Cambodia**, the Public Financial Management initiative launched in 2004 aimed to enhance budget reliability, fostering financial accountability, aligning policy and budget, and improving performance accountability. In the compact, MoEYS capitalizes on this reform, proposing activities such as diversifying funding sources, streamlining financial regulations, strengthening the MoEYS' finance department, and establishing equitable scholarship systems to address ongoing challenges. Table 32

4.3.2 Government and partner capacity to identify and address domestic finance system bottlenecks

Capacity to identify and address bottlenecks with respect to domestic finance varied across countries, depending on the division of financing responsibility and communication among different ministries, budget limitations, and availability of data.

The ability to address the identified bottlenecks is constrained by the division of responsibility at the country level. In all sampled countries, ministries of finance have the final authority over education budget decisions and budget size. The ministries of education propose their financial needs, which are reviewed and negotiated with the ministries of finance and the central governments during the national budget development, but in most countries the **ministries of finance have not played an active role in the compact development process** and local education group meetings. In the majority of case study countries, we were not able to interview stakeholders in ministries of finance. Where interviews were conducted, although ministries of finance representatives were informed about the compact and priority reform, they were not actively involved in the compact development process.

Box 4. Cambodia's challenges in planning and tracking domestic financing resources for education

In **Cambodia**, the Ministry of Finance oversees the overall budget allocated to MoEYS annually. MoEYS lacks awareness of the actual levels of domestic financing and the available resources for the upcoming years and has limited control over securing increases to address additional needs identified through strategic planning processes.

Infrequent communication between different entities, involved in education planning and financing, makes it harder to overcome bottlenecks. The coordination between ministries of education and ministries of finance is infrequent in all sampled countries, presenting additional challenges in countries with multiple ministries of education, as in the case of **Sierra Leone**. This challenge is

⁶⁴ Levine, M. R. (2021). Finance, growth, and inequality. International Monetary Fund. Research from Stanford indicates that addressing systemic racism in various sectors, including education, requires tackling historical and structural biases, which adds to the complexity of achieving financial equity (Source: <https://news.stanford.edu/2021/02/23/examining-systemic-racism-advancing-racial-equity>).

further exacerbated by limited effective communication between central and subnational authorities. Subnational government authorities often lack influence or decision-making power over education budget distribution and spending. The extent of this challenge varies, from the highly centralized government of **Tajikistan**, with local governments having limited influence over education budget allocation, to decentralized government systems such as in **Sierra Leone**, where local councils play a role in budgeting for education at the district level. In **Tanzania**, weak harmonization of legislation, budget credibility concerns and limited transparency, and overlapping mandates within the public financial management systems significantly hinder the capacity to address domestic finance bottlenecks.

Despite often forming the largest share of the government's budget, country-level stakeholders in most countries state that the education budget is not sufficient to cover all the education needs.

Global instability, limited fiscal space, and small tax bases in most countries mean that increasing the budget allocation for education is difficult. The lack of coordination and control over the budget often leads to funding gaps in the planning process, jeopardizing the achievement of desired outcomes, as seen in **Nepal** where government spending has exceeded tax and non-tax revenues. The increase of the volume of domestic finance is often limited by the country's ability to expand its tax base and/or tax collection, which has the potential to put a severe strain on the government's capacity to provide adequate funding for the reform.

Box 5. Small tax base in Democratic Republic of Congo limits available domestic financing resources

Democratic Republic of Congo, despite having increased the share of the budget allocated to education in recent years, is characterized by a small tax base and lower than regional average revenue-to-GDP ratio (less than 12% compared to an average over 20% for sub-Saharan Africa). This structurally limits the country's ability to finance its education system.

Limited scope to increase the volume of domestic finance underscores the need to improve efficiency and equity. **Efficiency and equity concerns are often tied to the lack of access to or use of reliable and consistent data on education budget and, broadly, on education outcomes.** Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS) and data collection are developed and utilized to varying degrees in the sampled countries. Some sampled countries have not conducted recent public expenditure reviews, which are crucial for more up-to-date analysis. In **El Salvador**, a lack of relevant data complicated adequate targeting of education expenditure, leading to persistent urban-rural and income quintile gaps in public spending equity. Limited capacity in **Tajikistan's** EMIS and inconsistent data on learning outcomes limits effective financial planning.

Data limitations also hinder equitable distribution of capitation grants/per capita funding. Better information availability and analysis of disbursements would hold governments accountable to obligations under these grants. In **Nepal**, ITAP recommended the government strengthen the equity index, but limited data on education resource allocations and examination data led to a ranking calculated only on the access and participation, limiting its credibility.

Sampled countries proposed activities to address some data and capacity issues which could positively contribute to addressing identified domestic finance challenges. In **Uganda**, planned improvements in EMIS and the provision of pertinent and aggregated data, if used to complement the government's revision of formula for capitation grants disbursed to districts and schools, could help increase equity in domestic finance allocation. Similarly, in **Sierra Leone**, the local education group aims to collaborate on monitoring budget execution to enhance financial accountability, aligning with the government's priority to improve the budget execution rate, as indicated by the first trigger for the top-up initiative (78% in 2019, according to the Public Expenditure Review, 2021).

Compacts and SCG and STG applications also planned activities that are not directly related to domestic finance but which have the potential for positives impacts in this area, such as capacity-building activities and sector reviews with analysis of education sector costs. For instance,

Democratic Republic of Congo proposes plans in its SCG application to conduct research, collect and consolidate financial data from various education sector stakeholders.

4.4 The relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence of GPE support to partner countries to design and align resources to their chosen domestic financing policy actions

This section assesses the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of GPE support to partner countries with respect to domestic finance. It analyses how GPE supports countries to **assess and diagnose** domestic-finance related bottlenecks through the enabling factors assessment, ITAP assessment and GPE Secretariat support; to **prioritize and align** chosen activities through GPE allocation mechanisms (variable part and top-up triggers) and stakeholder dialogue. It also considers how GPE helps countries to **act on evidence, learn and adapt** the chosen priorities in domestic finance through the SCG and global support mechanisms (KIX and EOL).

Key findings

- Enabling factors assessments helped countries to identify bottlenecks and foster discussions on domestic finance, but the continued use of this data in planning may be compromised by limited involvement of ministries of finance in the compact development processes.
- Top-up triggers were frequently linked to identified domestic financing related bottlenecks, but the relatively limited top-up amounts may not be sufficient incentive to meet the set objective and drive significant changes in the identified domestic financing challenges.
- It is too early to conclude whether or not the GPE's allocation mechanisms and incentives will encourage significant improvements in system bottlenecks related to domestic financing.
- There is little to no evidence of increased alignment among partners behind domestic finance policies.

SCGs were somewhat useful in addressing domestic finance bottlenecks by focusing on capacity building activities for ministries of education.

Strength of evidence



Findings are supported by desk analysis of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, SCG and STG applications, and EOL and KIX initiatives. Findings were very limitedly corroborated by the interviews with a few country level stakeholders across some of the eight case studies. Limitations in data collection included challenges with scheduling interviews with stakeholders able to discuss the topic of domestic financing in-depth, such as ministries of finance and education financing experts, and in some cases limited access to relevant country level documentation on domestic financing to corroborate findings.

4.4.1 GPE's support to assess and diagnose bottlenecks in domestic financing

The enabling factors assessment and ITAP processes added a necessary step of problem identification, which could have contributed to ensuring that the identified domestic finance measures are evidence-based and context-relevant. The GPE 2025 strategic plan set forth guidelines for the enabling factors assessment for volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic finance issues (through the assessments). This initiative requires partner countries to examine and understand the present condition of their domestic finance and pinpoint the key issues at hand.

Some countries recognized the significance of the enabling factor assessment and ITAP reports in outlining financial gaps and inefficiencies in funds allocation, but the limited involvement of ministries of finance in the compact development process may hinder the effective use of this data in budget planning. Some countries acknowledged that these exercises have the potential to help effectively

direct resources in the right place given compacts' endorsement by local education group members, however this will require further monitoring and assessment over time, as the finalization of grant program documents had not been completed in all countries at the time of analysis.

Some concerns about the efficacy of the ITAP rating system were noted. In particular, in **Cambodia**, despite an increase in the priority of domestic finance as an enabling factor (from medium to high), this change in prioritization by ITAP did not translate into higher prioritization of domestic finance issues (e.g., adding more activities on domestic finance in program documents or reprioritizing between different enabling factors). This could possibly reflect the lack of MoEYS control over the education budget.

ITAP has proved instrumental in supporting countries to refine domestic financing initiatives

proposed in the compacts or SCG/STG program documents. Most of the sampled countries proposed activities to address at least half of the bottlenecks in domestic finance identified by ITAP (**Table 33, section 6**). For instance, ITAP helped **Cambodia** to identify and include specific targets in the reform to improve funding equity (through indicators in the top-up part of the STG) and helped sharpen interventions proposed in SCG program applications of some countries (**El Salvador, Tajikistan, Uganda**) to address bottlenecks identified in the enabling factors assessment (**Table 32, section 6**). Crucially, ITAP's expressed recommendation led to the change of the investment amount into the plan for shifting to a 12-year education system in **Tajikistan's** SCG program, effectively reducing the initial allocated investment in the first years. Similarly, in **Uganda**, the reformulation of the capitation grant was adjusted based on ITAP's insightful recommendations.

GPE Secretariat support, particularly from Country Team Leads was valued by most countries for their assistance in promoting policy dialogue, clarifying queries, filling information gaps, and advocating for broad stakeholder involvement. The assessment process for enabling factors not only stimulated detailed discussions on domestic finance complexities, but the GPE Secretariat also played a key role in shifting the discussion on domestic finance beyond volume. The resulting emphasis on efficiency and equity varied across the eight countries. Countries acknowledged that the discussions on financial resources predominantly focused on GPE grants and external contributions rather than on domestic financing. The enabling factor assessment process successfully elevated domestic finance questions at different stages of partnership compacts development. However, the impact of the enabling factor assessment process, local education group meetings, GPE's guidance and Secretariat support were somewhat limited by the technical and financial constraints of ministry of education financial departments and, in most countries, by the lack of or limited involvement of ministries of finance. In addition, some sampled countries have expressed the desire for more guidance on the questions of equitable and efficient distribution of domestic resources in the education sector.

4.4.2 GPE's support to prioritize and align

Top-up triggers were frequently used to encourage actions to address domestic finance bottlenecks among the sampled countries. **However, the actual top-up amounts may not be sufficiently large to incentivize countries to implement planned activities and drive significant improvements** in the volume, efficiency, or equity of domestic finance.⁶⁵

Four of the five sampled countries which had top-up triggers used them to incentivize actions to address domestic finance bottlenecks. Triggers related to domestic finance, especially volume, might have mixed effects (consistent with the findings in **section 2.3**): they provide a positive stimulus for discussions on increasing the share of domestic finance expenditures, but the actual top-up amounts (that countries receive if they meet the goal that top-up sum is tied to) are relatively limited compared to the overall education budgets, the GPE grants and co-funding for Multiplier grants. For instance, in **Uganda**, a \$25 million top-up was not considered to be a sufficient incentive to motivate the

⁶⁵ As indicated by the Summative Evaluation of GPE 2020. Source:

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/independent-summative-evaluation-gpe-2020>

stipulated two percentage point increase in share of national domestic financing, considering the government's approximately \$14 billion budget. In **Uganda**, though the sector dialogue during compact development had a limited impact on the committed volume of domestic finance, collaboration between the government and some education partners in reformulating the capitation grant formula for schools was seen as an effective policy action within the reform.

Efficiency-related top-up triggers (in three sampled countries) have the potential to immediately contribute to improvements in domestic finance, as the related activities are specific, short-term, and achievable. This includes improving projections and simulations in the education sector development plan (**Tanzania**) and enhancing budget execution rates and internal allocations (**Sierra Leone**).

Equity-related top-up triggers (in three sampled countries) are likely having a limited contribution, at least in the short term. These include activities that do not directly relate to domestic finance, and therefore the potential effects on equitable distribution may only be observed in the long term. Examples include the incorporation of learning outcomes and learner disadvantages in teacher allocation mechanisms in **Sierra Leone** to allocate more equitable distribution of teachers to disadvantaged district areas or ensuring increased allocation of school operating fund relative to non-wage expenditure year by year in **Cambodia** to allow for need-based financing.

Two out of five countries (**Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo**) designated top-up triggers not directly related to domestic finance, but with a potential positive effect on efficiency. In **Tanzania**, one of the agreed top-up triggers involves the review of the ESDP, incorporating policy dialogues with key stakeholders, and enhancing projections and simulations. This strategic trigger aims to upgrade the ESDP and development of new financing modalities, with a specific focus on addressing issues related to the capitation grants. Tanzania's approach through this top-up trigger demonstrates a commitment to refining education sector plans and financial modalities for more effective and targeted impact. The top-up trigger in **Democratic Republic of Congo** aims to establish a unique identifier for all MEPST teaching staff funded by the national budget by 2025. This initiative is expected to enhance administrative and professional management and improve the efficiency of domestic financing expenditure by providing better control over the payroll.

In many countries, there is little to no evidence to conclude that the compact process contributed to increased alignment among partners behind domestic finance policies. In some cases, alignment pre-existed as seen in **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where one of the trigger indicators built on the ongoing reforms launched by the government with the support of development partners. Similarly, in **Tanzania**, results-based financing aligned with the ongoing Tanzania Education Program for Results Verification (the main vehicle for pooled funding for the sector), and incentivized efficiency and harmonization among education partners.

Only one out of eight country governments committed domestic finance resource to implement the priority reform. In **Tajikistan**, MoES committed an allocation of 8 million to support the implementation of the reform as a co-financing donor for the Multiplier grant. There was not enough evidence to conclude whether the extent of alignment among the projects and initiatives of international donors and NGOs, outside of those planned with GPE support (SCG, STG and Multiplier grants) . In addition, there were very few to no initiatives of other donors and partners in the countries targeting domestic finance issues identified in the enabling factors assessment and ITAP outside of GPE processes as per available evidence in the compacts and country analytics.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The information comes from Table 18 (section 6), which provides an overview of the information available on sources of funding to support priority reforms and policy actions in domestic finance. Information in partnership compacts on the costing and financing of priority reforms and corresponding policy action in domestic finance for Phase 1 is inconsistent. There is no complete overview of how all resources are aligned around the priority reforms in countries. The sources of data include grant applications, partnership compacts (finalized before or in 2022, or by March 2023 for Cambodia), the country analytics. In some cases, there were updated documentation at country level (for instance in Tajikistan, where the local education group chair shared updated documents on donor projects and funding mapping). Stakeholder interviews also provided some insights into the questions of resource alignment.

4.4.3 GPE's support to act, learn and adapt at country level

All sampled countries had SCGs, and half of the sampled countries leveraged the SCG to address domestic finance-related bottlenecks, mainly focusing on capacity building for ministries of education. SCGs typically addressed bottlenecks identified in the enabling factors assessment and ITAP reports directly. Many of the planned activities focused on capacity building for ministries of education in planning and budgeting; examples include creation of a Thematic Consultation Committee on education financing and reactivation of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Budget Preparation and Monitoring in **Democratic Republic of Congo**, and use of data and evidence such as strengthening central capacity to ensure systems development and ICT capacity in **Cambodia**. Other activities include the provision of technical assistance and expertise in supporting MoEs in financial simulations in **Cambodia** and **Tanzania**, and in sensitivity analysis based on the country's macro-fiscal framework in **Tajikistan**. These activities might improve long-term capacity, enhance budget planning capacity, and contribute to more efficient and equitable distribution of resources – but confirming this will require further analysis over time.

4.4.4 GPE's support to act, learn and adapt at global level

The evaluation found some evidence that the current GPE model's global mechanisms supported efforts of the sampled countries to improve domestic financing. EOL supports national coalitions in all eight sampled countries, and in two of these coalitions, there are activities related to domestic finance. For instance, there are capacity-building activities on education system budget analysis in **Cambodia**, and development of innovative responses to the issues of financing for education and tax justice in **Nepal**.

While KIX's primary aim was not to address enabling factors bottlenecks, KIX activities among sampled countries have at times been either directly or indirectly linked to domestic finance issues. In **El Salvador**, this link was direct: KIX is supporting the MINEDUCYT to estimate the cost of scaling the reform through KIX SUMMA Lab. In **Tajikistan**, KIX tackles an identified domestic finance challenge, which was not however outlined in the compact development process, by participating in a KIX regional project in the non-compact-related area of pre-primary education investment. KIX's ability to address specific compact-related domestic finance bottlenecks may be limited as initiatives are primarily regional or global, whereas the domestic finance issues that countries face are often context-dependent.

While all sampled countries took part in the Transforming Education Summit, where some of them presented the newly elaborated compacts, there is no evidence that those GPE mechanisms of global engagement have had any direct effects on domestic financing at this stage.

4.5 Potential for successful implementation of policy actions to address domestic financing-related challenges

Challenges in finance planning processes and limited financial information availability in ministries of education risks reducing the sustainability of impacts and fiscal scenario planning in domestic financing for education. Moreover, half of the sampled countries did not address crucial equity-related bottlenecks, limiting sustainable progress for disadvantaged groups.

Limitations in financial information availability and its infrequent updating also complicates the fiscal scenario planning process. For instance, in **Tanzania** it is difficult to address the questions of equity and efficiency in financing as no recent diagnostic exists. In the same way, the lack of a rigorous simulation model in **Tajikistan** hampers cost-effective policy planning based on the country's macro-fiscal framework. Limited data availability on crucial factors such as learning outcomes, repetition and dropout rates, and comprehensive information on various school inputs across all levels of education, hinder calculation of the efficiency of public resource utilization.

The governments of the sampled countries demonstrated limited financial commitment to invest in the priority reform. Because of the lack of leeway of MoEs to expand the education budget, it is likely

that the countries will rely predominantly on external contributions to fund the priority reform. To date, only in **Tajikistan** has MoEYS committed additional funding for the reform implementation, with \$8 million as a co-financing donor for the Multiplier grant.

Given that many sampled countries (**Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Democratic Republic of Congo**) spend a substantial portion of the education budget on teacher salaries, enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving management and teacher capacity (as planned within their grant programs) could significantly improve the system's efficiency, yielding a considerable return on the substantial investment in teachers.

5 Gender Equality

This section examines the GPE 2025 approach to gender equality, whether and how gender equality has been embedded into priority reforms across case study countries, and how the GPE 2025 model supported countries to hardwire gender throughout country processes.

This section is organized as follows:

- In **section 5.1.**, we provide an overview of the critical role of gender equality in education and the GPE 2025 strategy for hardwiring gender into country plans and processes.
- In **section 5.2.**, summarizes the current status of gender equality across the eight case study countries.
- In **section 5.3.**, we provide a cross-country analysis of how gender was embedded in country priority reforms. We also explore which gender bottlenecks were identified in sampled countries' enabling factor assessments, and which of them were addressed or unaddressed.
- In **section 5.4.**, we analyze how GPE assisted sampled countries in diagnosing bottlenecks through enabling factors assessments, ITAP reviews, and GPE Secretariat support. We also review how GPE helped better prioritizing and aligning activities through GPE funding mechanism and stakeholder dialogue; and contributed to learning and adapting gender priorities through SCG and global support mechanisms like KIX and EOL.
- Finally, in **section 5.5.**, we assess the factors contributing to potential for successful implementation of gender reforms and policy actions in the sampled countries

5.1 Background

This section introduces the crucial role of **gender equality** for the education sector and explores the **GPE 2025 approach** to gender hardwiring, including concepts of gender equality *in access to*, *within*, and *through* education.

5.1.1 Gender equality in access to, within, and through the education sector

Investing in gender equality is crucial to support poverty reduction, fostering resilient societies, and achieving sustainable development. It has the potential to reduce the likelihood of conflicts, enhance economic prosperity, and mitigate persistent inequalities across generations.⁶⁷ Access to education has significantly expanded over recent years and, generally speaking, GPE partner countries have achieved gender parity in access to primary education.⁶⁸

However, despite positive trends in global access to education, large disparities remain between regions, education levels, and groups. Notably, low-income countries and those experiencing fragility, conflict, and violence exhibit the largest in-country gaps, particularly for disadvantaged girls.⁶⁹ In countries affected by conflict, girls are more than twice as likely to be out of school than girls living in non-affected countries.⁷⁰ Conversely, in some countries, boys are at higher risk of dropping out or failing to progress through educational levels. Progress for marginalized groups, specifically girls, in basic literacy skill acquisition is slow, especially for those facing discrimination based on location,

⁶⁷ GPE. (2023) How GPE drives Gender Equality. Retrieved from <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2022-03-gpe-factsheet%20how-gpe-drives-gender-equality.pdf?VersionId=yKoLcf0lIXpy08l6l1Cb7vsalesKOARO>.

⁶⁸ GPE. Results Report. 2023. P.32. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/results-report-2023>.

⁶⁹ World Bank. (2023). Achieving gender equality in education: examining progress and constraints. Retrieved from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099503011032311205/pdf/IDU09e9110ff0456004aed08a580de5f758bbd1.pdf>.

⁷⁰ UNICEF. (n.d.). Girls' education. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>.

ethnicity, disability, migration, or Indigenous status, which intersect and contribute to gender-related disparities.⁷¹

Gender bias and discrimination persists in education systems, perpetuating inequalities. Inequalities in teacher engagement, expectations, and interactions with students, along with gender stereotypes in textbooks, contribute to this issue. Inadequate resources, unsafe learning environments, and inadequate policy frameworks threaten the achievement of the right to education. Cultural norms play a significant role in perpetuating disparities in educational attainment for both boys and girls. A range of barriers and challenges have contributed to an estimated 129 million girls worldwide remaining out of school, including harmful cultural norms, school-related gender-based violence (including physical, sexual, and psychological violence), and early or forced marriage.⁷² Gender roles and harmful gender norms also adversely affect men and boys, influencing their choices and behaviors: for example, prevailing ideals of masculinity that restrict career options or encourage the use of violence as a means of control or dominance.⁷³

5.1.2 The approach to gender under GPE 2025

GPE emphasizes **gender equality** as a conceptual framework for the comprehensive analysis of women and girls' experiences in relation to men and boys within the broader scope of social and institutional contexts. Gender equality is also a goal. Traditional strategies to achieve it may involve **gender equity-focused** approaches, short-term measures to balance opportunities, or targeted interventions supporting 'girls' education' where girls lag behind boys or the other way around. At the same time, GPE prioritizes focusing on longer-term, sustainable changes, looking beyond access and focusing on gender equality within and through education (not only access to education) through a system change approach.

Hardwiring gender equality into education systems, through an intentional and accountable approach, is key to this. GPE aims to embed the principles of gender equality in **access to, within, and through education** at a system level to create long-term, sustainable change, aligning with the SDG goals of gender equality (SDG 5) and quality education for all (SDG 4):

- **Access to education:** Addressing both the supply and demand sides of education by supporting improvements in facilities, teacher training, and curriculum reform for inclusive education, while also challenging gender and disability norms and addressing concerns such as travel distances and safety to ensure wider access.
- **Within education:** System-level reform aiming to mainstream gender-responsive pedagogy in teacher training, curricula, and textbooks to eliminate gender stereotypes. This includes policies to encourage girls to engage in traditionally male vocations and boys to explore opportunities beyond context-specific norms of masculinity. This approach is crucial for addressing violence in schools, bullying and other forms of harassment.
- **Through education:** Initiatives such as promoting women in leadership roles and providing comprehensive sexuality education contribute to challenging damaging gender norms and empowering individuals to shift societal expectations. Through education and schooling, students learn the roles they can play in preventing gender-based violence, early pregnancies, and the spread of HIV. Schools can serve as models for gender-inclusive environments, providing opportunities for individuals to thrive regardless of gender.

⁷¹ UNESCO. (2019). From access to empowerment UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019-2025. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000369000/PDF/369000eng.pdf.multi>. Yotebieng, K. What we know (and do not know) about persistent social norms that serve as barriers to girls' access, participation, and achievement in education in eight sub-Saharan African countries (2021).

⁷² GPE. Gender Equality. Retrieved from <https://www.globalpartnership.org/what-we-do/gender-equality>.

⁷³ GPE. (2023). Going further together. A Partnership Approach to Gender Equality.

Gender is expected to be hardwired into all GPE processes, including the enabling factors assessment, the design of the priority reforms and grant applications. For instance, the SCG systematically applies a gender lens and adopts a gender-equality perspective when identifying challenges and designing program activities. SCG guidance documents highlight the importance of addressing multiple forms of exclusion, including strengthening system resilience and ensuring the inclusion of displaced children. Moreover, the STG grant application process includes quality assessment criteria to check whether the proposed program supports gender equality, especially regarding gendered barriers to education.

GPE also provides grants targeting gender equality directly through the Girls' Education Accelerator (GEA). GEA grant applications require a robust theory of change, integrating 'girls' education as a key objective aligned with the partnership compact's priority reform. GEA grant funds must demonstrate added value for delivering outcomes in girls' education based on data and evidence collected through the enabling factors assessment, with clearly costed components or activities.

5.2 Status of partner countries with respect to gender equality in, within, and through, education

This section provides context for analysis across the three dimensions of **access to, within, and through** education across the sampled countries.

The current state of gender equality varies greatly across the sampled countries. In terms of **access**, disparities persist with notable variations in enrolment rates across different demographic groups. For example, **Cambodia** has made incremental improvements in early childhood education access for boys and girls, but challenges remain in achieving gender parity in higher education. In **Sierra Leone**, the Radical Inclusion Policy contributed to efforts to reach gender equity in access to education, particularly for marginalized groups. However, the country still faces persistent gender disparities in learning outcomes, with rural girls experiencing particular disadvantages.

Within education, gender-responsive pedagogy and curriculum reforms are present to varying degrees across the sample countries. In **El Salvador**, efforts have been made to integrate gender equity into the curriculum. In **Nepal**, gender disparities in achievement and subject choices persist, emphasizing the need for localized and targeted interventions. **Sierra Leone's** Radical Inclusion Policy addresses gender inequalities within education, promoting reform to barriers and a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Through education, the promotion of essential critical thinking skills and empowerment is a shared goal among sample countries. **Tanzania's** commitment to addressing gender-based violence through strategic plans aligns with broader efforts to empower young people through education. In **Uganda**, gender parity in access has been achieved at some levels but post-pandemic challenges have led to increased teenage pregnancies and early marriages, negatively impacting girls' retention in education.

Despite these recent efforts, challenges persist. Entrenched gender norms, societal expectations, and economic constraints all contribute to varying degrees of success in implementing gender-responsive policies and practices.

5.3 Gender equality in priority reforms, enabling factor assessments, and policy actions

This section provides a cross-country analysis of how gender equality challenges were explored and identified in the sampled countries' enabling factor assessments and the extent to which compacts provided additional gender equality analyses. The section further explores policy actions and priority reforms that sampled countries put in place to address the identified challenges.

Key findings

- All eight sampled countries integrated gender equality within their compacts to varying degrees, aiming to act on one or more specific entry points, including early childhood education, teacher training, and infrastructure improvements.
- Although all countries included, to different extents, gender equality considerations in priority reforms, there was frequently misalignment in the understanding of gender hardwiring that affected the identification of gender-related priority reforms.
- Most sampled countries planned activities to address gender-related bottlenecks identified through the enabling factors assessment.
- Readiness to implement gender equality related actions was supported by pre-existing mechanisms; availability and use of gender-disaggregated data for planning and assessment; well-defined implementation plans; and existence of national education policies that promote gender equality.

Strength of evidence

Moderate

Findings are supported by desk analysis of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, SCG and STG applications. Findings were also corroborated by the interviews with country level stakeholders across all the eight case studies, however there were some limitations in access to sufficient data, such as limited engagement with relevant gender focal points during primary data collection, limited reflections on gender issues during stakeholder interviews, and challenges obtaining relevant government policies and gender guidelines.

5.3.1 Gender-related content and design of the priority reforms (compact)

To varying extents, all priority reforms included gender equity or gender equality considerations and embedded actions that foster gender equality in access to, within, and through education. All sampled countries have integrated gender perspectives into the design, implementation plans, and/or monitoring of the priority reforms. Within the compacts and theories of change, gender components have been developed with different levels of depth across the sampled countries, as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

In half of the countries' compacts (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, and Tanzania**), gender equality is presented as a standalone thematic priority area,⁷⁴ with a dedicated workstream of activities within the theory of change solely aimed at enhancing gender equality or a specific goal. Moreover, there is evidence from **Nepal** and **El Salvador** of a clear identification of assumptions regarding gender inequalities in the education system. In countries where gender does not form a distinct pillar or focus area of the priority reform, gender considerations are still generally incorporated (**Democratic Republic of Congo, Tajikistan, and Uganda**), with gender-related topics appearing in theories of change to varying extents. For instance, in **Democratic Republic of Congo**, gender-related considerations are explicitly included in the core strategies of the theory of change, although the main outcomes are not specifically aimed at improving gender-related barriers in the education sector. In other countries, such as **Uganda** and **Tajikistan**, gender equality is mentioned in the theory of change as a general "enabler" and as an assumption, respectively.

In **Sierra Leone**, gender equality is not identified as a priority area in its reform and is not mentioned in the theory of change, but is addressed within the reform through the inclusion of gender-related activities. **Sierra Leone's** compact acknowledges gender as a "corollary" of its reform, emphasizing the need for its integration into the activities outlined in each pillar.

⁷⁴ Even with slight variations in how this is articulated across the compacts of Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, and Tanzania, gender equality is consistently portrayed as one of the "priority reforms," "prioritized policy areas," "priority reform areas," or "priorities" when presenting the priority reform.

Table 5. Gender considerations in sampled countries' priority reforms and theories of change

Gender considerations	Countries
Gender equality is presented as a thematic priority area, with a dedicated workstream of activities and/or a specific goal within the theory of change	Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Tanzania
Gender equality is not a thematic priority area, but gender-related considerations are integrated into the priority reform and appear in the theory of change	Democratic Republic of Congo, Tajikistan, Uganda
Gender equality is not a thematic priority area and gender-related considerations do not appear in the theory of change, but they are integrated into the priority reform	Sierra Leone

All countries' priority reforms aimed to act on one or more specific entry points to achieve the goal of gender equality in education. These include early childhood education (**El Salvador**), infrastructural reforms that foster better access to education for girls (**Tanzania**), and reform of government capacity for gender-responsive planning (including MEL systems) and enforcement of inclusive policies in schools, creating safe environments free from gender-based violence and harassment (**Nepal**). Other countries (**Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo**) include gender-related activities in their priority reforms to address the issue of school-related gender-based violence (SR-GBV) within wider policy actions and existing programming on safe schools and adequate infrastructures. **El Salvador** identifies high levels of SR-GBV as a significant hindering factor for gender equality, but the compact highlights the lack of effective mechanisms to systematically detect and monitor these issues.

To target gender inequalities within education, **Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda** foresee curricula reviews, book assessments, teacher training programs, and efforts to improve gender-equitable professional environments. Priority reforms including components aimed at improving gender equality through quality teaching focus on two main themes: providing gender-equitable support to education professionals' careers through dedicated policies (**Cambodia, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo**) and teacher training and improvement of teaching material (**Nepal, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tajikistan**).

5.4.25.4.3 Countries' understanding of gender hardwiring varied across the case study countries.

Although gender equity or equality considerations are included in all priority reform design and implementation processes, in five out of eight case study countries (**Cambodia, Tajikistan, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Tanzania**) there were common misunderstandings or misalignments with GPE's conceptualization of gender, and concepts of gender hardwiring and intersectionality. In some cases (**Cambodia and Tanzania**) 'gender equality' was interpreted as 'girls' education' specifically. In **Tajikistan** and **Sierra Leone**, stakeholders struggled to comprehend gender hardwiring as a construct. In **Nepal** and **Tanzania**, there were reservations around using the term "gender" and intersectional analyses of other factors affecting access to education have been conducted, but clear guidance on utilizing existing analysis is lacking, possibly hindering the inclusion of broader interventions based on their intersectional analysis in their priority reforms.

Box 6. Nepal's stakeholders' approach to gender and equity

Feedback from stakeholders in **Nepal** suggested that there was an opportunity to expand the focus on gender to embrace a broader intersectional approach. Local education group members pointed out that they planned to expand beyond a mandatory focus on 'gender' to include the intersectional concept of 'equity' in the compact. This perspective encouraged consideration of how factors such as income, geography, caste, and disability intersect with gender. Stakeholders in Nepal might have understood the priority on gender during the compact development process primarily in the context of initiatives related to girls. This might have contributed to missing out on considering the existing intersectional approach in favor of "meeting gender quotas" at the detriment of other dimensions of marginalization.

Box 7. Tajikistan and its conceptualization of gender hardwiring

In **Tajikistan**, stakeholders had difficulties understanding the concept of gender hardwiring or held a view that the concept of gender primarily revolves around girls and girls education outcomes. The traditional structure of society, which prioritizes reproductive and care work for women, is not seen as problematic and therefore the low transition rates of girls in upper-secondary school are not perceived as an issue. However, the priority reform identified gender-sensitive WASH facilities and school infrastructure as a measure to guarantee access to education for girls. In this country, GPE's approach was perceived as not completely culturally sensitive and not fully granting of country ownership of the program.

5.3.2 Gender issues, corresponding policy actions, and remaining gaps

To support the process of gender hardwiring, the GPE 2025 operating model encourages countries to identify gender related bottlenecks across all four of the enabling factors, as set out in partnership compact guidelines.⁷⁵ This section describes the extent of gender-related bottlenecks there were identified by the sampled countries in each of the enabling factors categories, the policy actions set out in partnership compacts and grant program documents to address the identified bottlenecks, and the remaining gaps and issues.

Countries identified a range of gender related bottlenecks and challenges across all four enabling factor categories. The below describes the various gender-related bottlenecks across the four enabling factors.

- **Gender-responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring:** This enabling factor category was highlighted as high-priority in the **Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, and Tanzania**. These countries identified significant challenges in mitigating gender inequalities and ensuring that gender issues are adequately prioritized in national education sector plans. All other countries rated this enabling factor as medium priority (in **Nepal**, the priority was changed from low to medium during the ITAP assessment).

The lack of comprehensive gender analysis in sector planning, policy, and monitoring is a significant bottleneck for **Tajikistan, Uganda, Nepal, and Tanzania**. Other hindering factors that emerged through the enabling factors assessments were the lack of specific plans for resource allocation, division of responsibilities, definition of indicators, and a monitoring framework for the Gender and Equality policy (**El Salvador**); lack of detailed plans on gender-sensitive activities for staff at Ministry of Education in grant documents (**Tajikistan**); and lack of gender-focused approaches for education (**Uganda**). The enabling factors assessments in **Cambodia** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, on the other hand outlined the need for specific strategies to address wide gender disparities and integrate gender issues comprehensively into grant applications and planning, while in **Sierra Leone**, the main hindering factor was the weak coordination and monitoring of the sector.

- **Data and evidence:** Several countries identified inadequacies in the collection, analysis, and use of gender-disaggregated data and evidence. For instance, the enabling factors assessment in **Cambodia** identified that analytical report writing capacity is low and existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms cannot effectively track gender disparities, particularly at the local level where schools have limited capacity for continuous gender disparity analysis. Setting indicators targets is also considered challenging. The enabling factors assessment in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** highlighted the fragmented information on student enrolment, dropouts, and performance due to weak EMIS infrastructure. According to country's gender analysis, **El Salvador's** SIGES (*Sistema Integrado de Gestión Educativa de El*

⁷⁵ Partnership compact guidelines state that “the enabling factors exercise should always be mindful of gender issues, considering the different needs of girls and boys and how each enabling factor promotes or impedes gender equality in the system. This means that gender should be considered not only in the gender-responsive sector planning and monitoring category of enabling factors, but in assessment of the other three enabling factors as well.

Salvador – integrated Salvadorean education management system) is not yet fully operationalized, leading to challenges in gathering gender-sensitive data, such as the cause of dropout, including early pregnancy. In **Nepal** and **Cambodia**, the enabling factors assessment identified challenges with low analytical report writing capacity, and overall weak institutional capacities for gender responsive planning and monitoring. **Tanzania** struggles with harmonizing data collection methods.

- **Volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic financing for education:** The enabling factors assessments across all countries identified inadequate (**Cambodia** and **Sierra Leone**) or inequitable (**Democratic Republic of Congo**, **El Salvador**, **Nepal**, **Tanzania**, and **Uganda**) domestic financing to address gender disparities in education. **Tanzania** and **Uganda**, for example, faced low domestic financing for gender-specific programs, and outlined inequitable resource allocation in education across different groups and characteristics, including gender. In **Sierra Leone**, gender analysis found that low budget for capital expenditure and disparities in resource distribution particularly affect gender equity in education. According to their enabling factors assessment, **Nepal** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo** also struggle with inequitable allocation of domestic financing expenditure in education by gender and geography, limiting the ability to address gender-specific needs.
- **Sector coordination:** Poor sector coordination among stakeholders on gender equality in education is a common issue. Enabling factors assessments in **Cambodia** and **Nepal** highlighted the need for better stakeholder alignment and coordination to effectively implement gender strategies in both countries. In **El Salvador**, there is no funding for a systematic approach to gender and comprehensive sexuality education; initiatives from national and international cooperation to support these processes are dispersed and coordination of efforts appears necessary. Enabling factors assessment of the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Sierra Leone** highlighted a general weak sector coordination.

Policy actions formulated by each country were overall consistent with the identified bottlenecks.

The information below summarizes some of the policy actions put in place to address the identified gender related bottlenecks across all four enabling factors.

- **Gender-responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring:** Gender considerations were broadly integrated into country planning and monitoring across the sampled countries. For example, **Cambodia** identified actions to address low school capacity for gender analysis through applied research projects focused on gender equality in secondary education,⁷⁶ funded by KIX. It will leverage the SCG to address weaknesses in national reporting structures to effectively track gender disparities and set proper indicators and targets, and improve the harmonization of gender-related policies and strategies under the MoEYS, and integrate a theory of change to identify exclusionary practices. Finally, it will implement efforts to enhance evidence-based planning and refine monitoring and evaluation systems with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to support sectoral planning through a national policy review.

Tajikistan is planning a comprehensive review of data collection methods in EMIS and will embed inclusive indicators in its monitoring and evaluation framework in MoES; however, no policy action was identified to address the lack of detailed plans on gender-sensitive activities for MoE’s officers identified through the enabling factors assessment. **El Salvador**, recognizing the need to strengthen the gender approach of its MEL system, established a Gender Management Unit to promote coordinated action across government, funded by the SCG and the Multiplier grant (initial funds for the unit in 2015-2020 were provided by Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) through FOMILENIO program).

Nepal aims to improve comprehensive gender-responsive planning and monitoring through SCG-funded capacity building activities for the Ministry of Education, Center for Education and

⁷⁶ “Analysis of Gender Parity in Lower-Secondary Education using Geospatial Data: A Case Study of Cambodia” (2022).

Human Resource Development, and provincial and local governments and through STG-funded contextualization of the TEACH classroom observation tool aimed to capture teaching practices and classroom culture, with attention to gender equality. **Sierra Leone** plans to enhance planning and monitoring capacities with a focus on gender, funded by the STG. The grant includes two distinct components addressing this area: one component focuses on providing gender-disaggregated data to educators, authorities, and communities. The other component ensures that the MBSSE is trained in gender-transformative planning and financing.

- **Data and evidence:** Countries are taking various steps to address gaps in gender data collection and analysis, supported mainly by the SCGs. To address the bottleneck posed by national reporting structures' inadequacy in tracking gender disparities, **Cambodia** is incorporating specific gender strategies in planning by using the data from the STG-funded Student Tracking System, which will allow to track student characteristics and learning progress, and diagnose retention factors. **El Salvador** is working on the full deployment of the SIGES system and capacity building. Similarly, **Tanzania** is enhancing its EMIS frameworks to include comprehensive and gender-disaggregated data, while **Uganda's** initiatives include supporting also non-EMIS data sources to provide a more holistic view of gender-specific issues.

To tackle the issues of poor quality of information on student enrolment, dropouts, and performance, the **Democratic Republic of Congo** is supporting capacity building in the Ministry of Education and improving EMIS capacity to support gender-responsive planning through the SCG. Moreover, the country is modernizing data collection systems and harmonizing databases to provide more comprehensive and integrated data. According to the compact, these are ongoing measures supported by different international donors (AFD, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, ACCELERE) and previously supported by KIX initiatives such as "Using data for improving education equity and inclusion – MICS-EAGLE (UNICEF)." **Nepal** is strengthening local government and school data systems, continuously improving the EMIS framework, and participating in global projects under the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) initiative to address weak institutional capacities for gender responsive planning and monitoring.

- **Volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic financing for education:** Policy actions to ensure that domestic financing for gender equality is adequate and equitably distributed were demonstrated in **Tanzania** and **Uganda**, through the development of strategies for equitable resource allocation. Tanzania is expanding on the ongoing student unit cost study with SCG funding, while Uganda is reviewing the capitation grant formula to address gender equality in funding allocation (though this is not framed specifically as a gender equality measure). **Cambodia** is ensuring equitable distribution of funds and strengthening financial monitoring with support from the STG. **Sierra Leone** is conducting an assessments of resource distribution and redistributing the existing education budget to prioritize tackling gender disparities, funded by the SCG. **El Salvador** is committing to increasing education expenditure (as a percentage of GDP) to 5.5% and to conduct a public expenditure review (funded through the SCG) to review more fully the equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of public spending on education.
- **Sector Coordination:** efforts to coordinate and align stakeholders on gender issues are underway in several countries. **Cambodia**, supported by the SCG, is enhancing stakeholder alignment on gender issues, aligning its Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan mid-term review and the 2026-2030 version with the upcoming ESP 2024-2028, and designing a National Education Policy Framework to harmonize policies and guide education transformation to 2050. The **Democratic Republic of Congo** is tackling weak sector coordination by improving system capacity and strengthening commitment to evidence-based policymaking through the SCG. **Nepal** is facilitating further alignment of financing with education sector plans and developing a common framework for coordinated efforts,

supported by the SCG. In **Tajikistan**, MoES and members of local education group are making efforts to enhance inclusion to engage diverse stakeholders and improve evidence-based policymaking, funded by SCG and EOL. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the compact outlines plans to support sectoral coordination and improve coordination between central and decentralized levels with SCG funding allocated to capacity.

Types of bottlenecks addressed and remaining gaps

As seen previously, sampled countries have developed different gender-related policy actions to respond to the identified bottlenecks. Below, we will summarize which bottlenecks were most commonly addressed and how, and which issues were not addressed and where gaps remain.

- **Gender-responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring:** There is comprehensive coverage of the identified issues, particularly in strengthening planning, monitoring, and institutional capacities. The most addressed bottlenecks related to a lack of comprehensive gender analysis (**Tajikistan, Uganda, Nepal, and Tanzania**), lack of specific action plans and monitoring for gender-related activities under compact (**El Salvador and Tajikistan**), and gender-related capacity issues (**Nepal and Tajikistan**). They were addressed by supporting applied research projects and improving the harmonization of gender-related policies (**Cambodia**), enhancing comprehensive gender-responsive planning and monitoring through capacity-building activities (**Nepal, Sierra Leone**), promoting coordinated action across the government (**El Salvador**), and improving EMIS and evidence-based policymaking (**Tajikistan**).

Despite these efforts, gaps persist. Specific plans for resource allocation for some gender-related activities remain less detailed in **El Salvador, Tajikistan, and Sierra Leone**. These countries need more concrete strategies and defined roles of financing gender-related activities to ensure effective implementation.

- **Data and evidence:** The actions taken to improve data collection and analysis are well-aligned with the identified issues, particularly in improving data collection and analysis capacities. Inadequate gender-disaggregated data (**Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania**), low analytical report writing capacity (**Cambodia, Nepal**), and operational challenges with data systems (**El Salvador**) were most commonly addressed by incorporating specific gender strategies into planning by using data from Tracking System (**Cambodia**), supporting capacity building in the Ministry of Education (**Democratic Republic of Congo**), fully deploying the SIGES system (**El Salvador**), and enhancing EMIS frameworks and other data sources (**Tanzania and Uganda**).

Nonetheless, the operationalization of new systems and the continuous improvement of data quality and usage need ongoing attention to ensure sustainability and effectiveness, particularly in **Cambodia, El Salvador, Tanzania, and Nepal**.

- **Volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic financing in education:** Most commonly addressed issued included inadequate domestic financing (**Cambodia, Sierra Leone**) and inequitable resource allocation (**Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda**), which were addressed by increasing education expenditure and conducting public expenditure reviews (**El Salvador**), strengthening financing mechanisms (**Nepal**), and developing strategies for equitable resource allocation (**Tanzania, Uganda**). However, long-term sustainability and securing consistent domestic financing for gender-specific programs remain challenges that need to be addressed, particularly in **Tajikistan, Sierra Leone, and Uganda**, to ensure ongoing support for gender equality in education.
- **Sector coordination:** Poor sector coordination (**Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Sierra Leone**) and lack of funding for systematic approaches to gender education (**El Salvador**) are most commonly addressed through enhancing stakeholder alignment on gender issues (**Cambodia**), improving system capacity and evidence-based policymaking (**Democratic Republic of Congo**), promoting coordinated action across the government (**El**

Salvador), and building capacity within the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (**Sierra Leone**).

However, some gaps remain and clearer action plans and budgeting should be put in place to ensure implementation of planned activities. In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, despite numerous policy actions, there are not always clearly defined plans to achieve them. In **Nepal**, there is a gap in the SCG budget and program documents in terms of alignment of funds from non-state actors with education sector priorities, including for gender-related activities. In **Uganda**, there is a lack of incentives to motivate education stakeholders to collaborate effectively, including on the gender-related questions, due to the absence of budget support.

Alignment with gender related reforms

Stakeholders' political alignment with gender-related reforms varied widely among sampled countries, often depending on how each country interpreted gender and whether this understanding was seen as locally relevant or introduced externally. In **Nepal** and **Tanzania**, the lack of a shared and agreed conceptualization of gender among stakeholders led to low political alignment or dialogue on gender. In these countries, stakeholders preferred broader terms such as equity or inclusion over gender, encompassing various forms of discrimination. Addressing this misalignment may require structured internal discussions on equality and gender hardwiring, along with robust support to contextualize and adapt these concepts to specific needs.

There is mixed evidence of the alignment of major education projects funded by other donors with the gender-related reforms and activities laid out in the compacts.⁷⁷ In half of the sampled countries (**Cambodia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan**), this limited evidence suggests that there is a generalized lack of donor-funded projects with clear gender activities mapped to the gender-related priority reform or policy actions. This makes it difficult to make an evaluative assessment of the alignment of in-country partners with compact gender-related priority areas. However, even the small number of existing programs in these countries do appear to be mostly aligned with the identified gender related bottlenecks or compact priority areas. For example, in **Nepal** and **Tajikistan**, there are many projects, which focus on overall inclusion topics, rather than targeting gender explicitly.

Some emerging evidence indicates that three countries are moving towards greater resource alignment behind gender activities. In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, five international donors (AFD, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, ACCELERE) have committed to investing in gender-sensitive teaching policy and the reevaluation of the teaching function to attract more women to the profession, aligning with pillar 1 of the priority reform. Many other donors committed to enhancing teaching-learning conditions at school and classroom levels (safer school environments, school nutrition), specifically preparing girls for successful schooling. These address numerous issues related to poor learning conditions for girls. However, we found no evidence of new program alignment beyond pre-existing initiatives that had been integrated into the compact.

Tanzania has reached a good level of resource alignment: 14 partners support 18 projects, improving student gender equality in education. Many donors programs respond to the identified gender-related bottlenecks by improving access and retention for girls, promoting safe and gender-sensitive school environments, improving education outcomes and quality of education, and girls'

⁷⁷ The information comes from Table 18 (section 6), which provides an overview of the information available on sources of funding to support priority reforms and policy actions in domestic finance. Information in partnership compacts on the costing and financing of priority reforms and corresponding policy action in domestic finance for Phase 1 is inconsistent. There is no complete overview of how all resources are aligned around the priority reforms in countries. The sources of data include grant applications, partnership compacts (finalized before or in 2022, or by March 2023 for Cambodia), the country analytics. In some cases, there were updated documentation at country level (for instance in Tajikistan, where the local education group chair shared updated documents on donor projects and funding mapping). Stakeholder interviews also provided some insights into the questions of resource alignment.

empowerment.⁷⁸ Several programs focus on quality education for girls such as Shule Bora by FCDO, Arithmetic and Inclusive Education by RTI International which focuses on inclusive education benefiting both genders. However, no partners are targeting the promotion of female representation in the teaching profession and school leadership, which is a crucial omission as this is one of the gender priorities in the compact.

In **El Salvador**, the survey conducted by the local education group found that **87% of main education interventions among in-country stakeholders were aimed at promoting gender equity**.⁷⁹ The identified gender-related projects in El Salvador aligned well with the bottlenecks outlined in the compact such as the need for integrating a gender perspective in education, addressing gender inequalities, creating safer school environments and improving gender data collection. The implementation of the Ministry of Education's Gender Equity and Equality Policy by Plan Internacional and UN Women directly support these goals by promoting gender equity policies and teacher capacity building. EDUCATECH provide STEM opportunities for girls, aligning with the compact's aim to deconstruct gender roles. UNICEF's project on preventing gender-based violence and Glasswing's Girls Club address the need for safe educational environments. FUSALMO's initiatives to empower girls through sex education and entrepreneurial leadership align with efforts to tackle cultural norms and gender-based violence.

5.4 The relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence of GPE support to partner countries to design and align resources to their chosen gender priority reforms and policy actions

This section assesses the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of GPE's support to partner countries with respect to gender equality. It analyzes how GPE supports countries to assess and diagnose bottlenecks through the enabling factors assessment, ITAP review and GPE Secretariat support; to prioritize and align chosen activities through GPE funding mechanisms (STG variable part indicators and top-up triggers) and stakeholder dialogue. It also considers how GPE helps countries to act on evidence, learn and adapt the chosen priorities in gender equality through SCG and global support mechanisms (KIX and EOL).

Key findings

- The perceived effectiveness of the enabling factors assessment and ITAP in identifying and diagnosing gender gaps in the education sector varied by country, depending on pre-existing levels of national policy dialogue on the issue, stakeholders' interest in and understanding of the issue, and integration of ITAP recommendations into grants and compact documents.
- GPE's allocation mechanism had a limited impact on motivating actions to address gender equality bottlenecks, and there is limited evidence of GPE's contribution to increased alignment among partners behind gender equality policies.
- The SCG and STG supported countries to build and strengthen capacity, to diagnose disparities and improve data collection with a gender focus, and to develop gender-responsive policies and train staff.

⁷⁸ For example, the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) by the World Bank, Keeping Adolescent Girls in School (KAGIS) by Canada Global Affairs/Plan International, Girls Retention and Transition Initiative (GRTI) Canada Global Affairs/HakiElimu aim to increase girls' access to safe and gender-responsive learning environments, improve retention rates.

⁷⁹ Conducted among local education group members to explore the alignment of priorities and resources with MINEDUCYT's strategic plan.

- The STG predominantly facilitated the promotion of gender equality in access to education, and some countries leveraged STG funding to strengthen systems and capacities for gender-responsive education analysis, policy, and planning, either at the central or local level.
- Only two qualified for the Girls Education Accelerator, and at this stage, the evidence on GEA is too limited to draw concrete evaluative conclusions.
- KIX and EOL mechanisms were useful to a certain extent in addressing gender equality issues though not always explicitly and in the areas related to compact and priority reforms.

Strength of evidence



Findings are supported by desk analysis of partnership compacts, enabling factors documents, ITAP reports, SCG and STG applications, and EOL and KIX initiatives. Findings were also somewhat corroborated by the interviews with country level stakeholders across some eight case studies, however stakeholders there were some limitations in access to sufficient data, such as limited engagement with relevant gender focal points during primary data collection, limited reflections on gender issues during stakeholders' interviews, and challenges obtaining relevant government policies and gender guidelines.

5.4.1 Support to assess and diagnose gender-related bottlenecks

The **enabling factors assessment** facilitated the identification of gender-related bottlenecks that could hinder the implementation of the priority reforms in most sampled countries. The usefulness of the enabling factor assessment process in identifying gaps varied by country, providing the most value where there had previously been the least evidence, awareness and discussion on gender and inclusion in the past. In some countries, such as **Tajikistan**, stakeholders greatly appreciated the enabling factor assessment process and ITAP's feedback on gender-related issues as gender questions had not been frequently discussed at the national level in the past. In other instances, such as in **Sierra Leone**, the enabling factor assessment added little value as many gaps were already well-known to stakeholders and most of the actions on gender seemed to be already addressed as part of the Radical Inclusion Policy. In other cases, such as in **Uganda**, the effectiveness of the enabling factor assessment in identifying gender issues remains unclear mainly because the compact focused on strengthening existing actions rather than creating new approaches to gender.

Stakeholders in most sampled countries described the usefulness of ITAP in identifying gaps, refining enabling factor assessment findings and designing the proposed initiatives. In **Tanzania**, following the ITAP review, the proposed gender mainstreaming approach was revisited, and the focus shifted to disability and gender inclusion. In **Tajikistan**, ITAP was reported to be extremely helpful in bringing gender into the discussion and refining enabling factor assessment findings. Education stakeholders in some countries (**Cambodia** and **Democratic Republic of Congo**) mentioned ITAP's usefulness, but noted the lack of integration of ITAP recommendations on gender equality into compact plans/grant documents.

5.4.2 Support to prioritize and align partners around gender reforms and policy actions

Among the sampled countries, GPE's grant funding mechanisms (top-up triggers and variable parts of the STG) were used in some countries to directly and indirectly incentivize actions to address gender-related bottlenecks. Among the five sampled countries that have top-up triggers, only one (**Sierra Leone**) has a top-up trigger that is related, though indirectly, to gender equality. In **Sierra Leone**, STG trigger 2 ("Incorporate learning outcomes and learner disadvantages in teacher allocation mechanisms") has a gender equality nuance, though is otherwise primarily focused on geographical disparities and ensuring better teaching mechanisms and learning outcomes in marginalized and rural areas.

In one country (**Democratic Republic of Congo**), an initially proposed set of top-up trigger indicators included a gender-related indicator, but this indicator was not included in the finalized list of triggers

following the quality assurance process by the GPE Secretariat. This change likely indicates that in **Democratic Republic of Congo** in-country stakeholders and the GPE Secretariat decided to address gender issues on a larger scale through the Girls Education Accelerator (GEA), rather than through GPE's other grant mechanisms. This may be because numerous other gaps were identified (all four enabling factors were assessed as high priority).

Two countries (Nepal and Tanzania) integrated some gender aspects into the DLIs for the variable part of the STG to incentivize actions related to gender equality.

Box 8. Integrating a gender focus into DLIs

In **Nepal**, a gender focus was included into DLI 3, the establishment of a teacher professional support system for basic education through a mentorship program. The system focused on gender and social inclusion, addressing gender stereotypes and biases in teaching practices and classroom observation tools. For **Tanzania**, some DLIs were used to encourage local government authorities to identify and tackle gender-specific barriers in education, while the teacher workforce forecasting initiative aimed to address gender disparities in STEM subjects and the secondary teaching workforce.

As for the alignment of partners behind gender equality activities, there is little or mixed evidence to conclude that the compact process contributed to increased resource alignment among partners or that it shifted the dialogue towards gender equality. As mentioned earlier, countries' interpretations of gender equality and hardwiring varied significantly which may have contributed to limited alignment or dialogue on gender issues. However, stakeholders in one country, **Tajikistan**, stated that the enabling factor assessment and ITAP process helped initiate a conversation on gender as it is a rarely discussed topic at the policy level, and other stakeholders in **Nepal** mentioned that the operating model contributed toward improved acknowledgement of the importance of including gender equality considerations in priority reforms, particularly at the local level.

In most sampled countries, there is a lack of evidence at this early stage of the reform process to determine whether GPE's support contributed to effectively aligning resources behind gender equality. Some existing challenges – capacity-building limitations, lack of stakeholder engagement and awareness, and a need for more context-specific interventions – might limit GPE's contribution to aligning resources for gender-responsive reforms. Some countries, such as **Tajikistan**, highlighted the importance of capacity building in gender sensitivity and inclusive education principles. The limited level of awareness and engagement of stakeholders in gender policies in **Sierra Leone** points to a potential gap in communication and alignment of resources. Several countries (such as **Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Tajikistan**) highlighted the need for interventions that are tailored to specific local contexts, especially in decentralized systems or areas affected by conflict.

5.4.3 Support to act, learn, adapt at country level

Six out of the eight sampled countries (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Tajikistan**) leveraged the SCG to strengthen capacity for integrating gender and inclusion perspectives into priority reforms. **Cambodia** and **El Salvador** focused on diagnosing specific contextual disparities and improving data collection, while **Tanzania** and **Tajikistan** emphasized broader data system strengthening with a significant emphasis on gender equality and inclusion. In addition, some countries (**Cambodia, Tanzania, Nepal, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tajikistan**) utilized the SCG for capacity building and improved planning, such as enhancing gender-responsive policy development and conducting staff training for gender-sensitive policy planning.

The use of the SCG to enhance sampled countries' abilities in gathering data and evidence and improving their gender-responsive planning capacities, aligns with the priorities outlined in the ITAP reports. These reports categorize both 'data and evidence' and 'gender-responsive sectoral planning' as medium to high priorities in all these countries.

Many countries used the STG to enhance measures and build capacity for promoting gender equality in access to education, employing diverse strategies. **Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo,**

Tanzania prioritized strengthening systems and capacities for gender-responsive education analysis, policy, and planning, either at the central or local level. In contrast, **Tajikistan** and **Uganda** focused on practical aspects like gender-sensitive and disability-friendly infrastructure to improve education access.

In several countries, the STG supports gender-related reforms within education, emphasizing gender-responsive pedagogy. This includes curriculum reviews aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes, biases, and discrimination in **Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tajikistan**. Some countries, such as **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Tajikistan**, offer specific teacher training modules on gender issues, while **Nepal** aims to challenge gender stereotypes in the classroom.

Furthermore, some countries aimed to enhance broader societal gender perceptions *through education*. For instance, **Uganda** implemented Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention activities, while **Cambodia** committed to advocating for access to professional development and equitable working conditions for teachers and education officials. **Sierra Leone** made efforts to recruit and retain more female teachers in primarily male-dominated primary education.

Out of the case study country sample, only the Democratic Republic of Congo and El Salvador qualified for the GEA. In 2022, **El Salvador** became the first eligible country for the GEA, securing \$15 million, comprising \$5 million from the GEA and a \$10 million Multiplier grant. These funds serve to bolster the girls' education initiative under the *Crecer Juntos* (Growing Together) early childhood education policy, championed by the local education coalition through their partnership compact. Selected as a policy priority to overhaul the education system, the initiative aims to enhance girls' access to quality education and is aligned with the priority reform and theory of change. For example, initiatives focusing on eradicating gender stereotypes in early childhood education directly align with the country's theory of change where such activities are aimed at developing a gender-sensitive curriculum. GEA's funded initiatives to facilitate gender analysis and data collection, as well as the reformulation of learning assessment questions and tests to ensure inclusivity, support the country's objective of enhancing evidence for decision-making.

The Democratic Republic of Congo was eligible for \$2.5 million grant from the GEA to support various programs on teacher effectiveness and conditions for girls' schooling. It is adopting a multi-dimensional approach, addressing persistent barriers to girls' education identified in the country. This approach enables the two grant agents (ADF and World Bank) to complementarily work on all three pillars of the priority reform: enhancing the status of the teaching profession, promoting teachers' professional development, and improving teaching-learning conditions. As part of the allocation of funds for the GEA, various activities will be undertaken to enhance the gender approach and promote gender equality. For example, among other activities, AFD plans to strengthen teacher effectiveness through a merit-based recruitment campaign to attract qualified female teachers in provincial areas, ensuring their integration into the education system. At the same time, the World Bank is focusing on strengthening critical management systems by financing gender-sensitive capacity building across 13 administrative provinces, to empower the Ministry's capacities to conduct gender-sensitive analysis, planning, and budgeting. A country-level theory of change aimed at promoting gender equality was developed to align with the program's overarching theory of change. This helped guide the selection of activities aimed at advancing girls' education. A gender analysis was integrated, emphasizing existing disparities between boys and girls.

5.4.4 Support to act, learn and adapt at the global level

Four countries (**Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, and Tajikistan**) **use KIX to address gender equality issues or have some gender approach within their KIX initiatives.** KIX initiatives have been instrumental in enhancing capacity building and promoting inclusive education, indirectly addressing gender equality issues in various countries. For instance, in **Cambodia**, KIX-funded projects have focused on improving the quality and inclusiveness of early childhood education, with a specific focus on considering gender-related aspects (for further details about other KIX-funded projects in the country, please refer to **Box 11**). Additionally, some KIX research projects have integrated gender

considerations as part of their broader objectives, as seen in **Tajikistan**, where a distance education initiative addresses gender disparities.

Box 11. KIX in Cambodia

In **Cambodia**, KIX has been instrumental in identifying challenges and shaping reforms for gender equality in education through various initiatives. Among those, since 2022, KIX-backed research projects, such as ‘Analysis of Gender Parity in Lower-Secondary Education’ (2022) and ‘Diagnostic Tools for Improving Education Policy and Planning’ (2023), focus on secondary education gender disparities, offering key insights for evidence-based policy planning. The studies contribute to a comprehensive diagnosis of gender inequalities, specifically addressing challenges faced by boys in secondary school retention and completion rates, aligning with the country's priorities.

EOL initiatives for 2024-2026 focus on gender equality in three countries (Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and Tanzania). Countries like **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Nepal**, while having broader programs, still include relevant gender components. In **Cambodia** and **Uganda**, the gender focus of EOL initiatives is limited. **El Salvador** engages with EOL, but the specific focus on gender in their EOL-supported activities is not clear.

There is no evidence on global advocacy and participation in global technical dialogue and coordination mechanisms contributing to promoting gender equality dialogue or activities at country level in the eight sampled countries.

5.5 Potential for successful implementation of the gender reforms and policy actions

The potential for successful implementation of gender reforms and policy actions in the sampled countries relies on political will, stakeholder alignment, capacity building, funding, cultural sensitivity, and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Countries like **El Salvador**, **Nepal**, **Cambodia**, and **Tanzania** show promise with their comprehensive gender policies and coordinated stakeholder efforts. **Uganda** also demonstrates potential through its efforts in enhancing its EMIS framework and commitment to addressing gender-specific barriers in education. **Tajikistan** and **Sierra Leone** face significant challenges due to cultural norms and inadequate institutional capacities.

To enhance the potential for successful implementation, it is crucial for countries to strengthen political commitment and stakeholder alignment for gender equality. Improving data collection and analytical capacities for evidence-based gender policy planning, ensuring adequate and equitable domestic and international financing for gender-specific programs, investing in capacity building and institutional strengthening, addressing cultural and societal norms through community engagement and culturally sensitive approaches, and developing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress and adapt gender reforms based on feedback are all necessary steps.

Political will and stakeholder alignment: The commitment of national governments to gender equality in education varies across the sampled countries. For instance, **El Salvador**, **Tanzania**, and **Nepal** exhibit strong political will, evident in their comprehensive gender policies and reforms integrated into national education plans. **Cambodia** also demonstrates a notable commitment to gender equality in education through the integration of gender-specific strategies into national education plans. Conversely, **Tajikistan** and **Sierra Leone** have faced challenges in achieving full political alignment on gender equality, partly due to traditional societal norms and cultural expectations that influence perceptions of gender roles and priorities.

Successful implementation hinges on the collaboration and alignment of stakeholders, including government ministries, local education groups, and international donors. **El Salvador** and **Tanzania** show high levels of stakeholder alignment, with coordinated efforts to promote gender equality in education. **Cambodia** shows promising signs of stakeholder alignment, with the coordination between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and various local education groups being instrumental in promoting gender equality. Efforts to enhance stakeholder

alignment on gender issues in these countries are supported by the SCG, which funds initiatives to harmonize gender-related policies and strategies.

However, full potential is sometimes hindered by fragmented stakeholder engagement and varying levels of commitment among local and international partners. **Nepal** faces challenges in achieving cohesive stakeholder alignment, partly due to differing interpretations of gender equality among stakeholders, which can impede coordinated efforts. The **Democratic Republic of Congo** struggles with fragmented stakeholder engagement, which affects the implementation of gender reforms.

The engagement of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank in gender-related education projects in countries like **Cambodia**, **El Salvador**, and the **Democratic Republic of Congo** demonstrates a positive trend towards greater stakeholder alignment. These collaborations aim to improve educational access and outcomes for girls, aligning with national gender priorities. However, countries like **Tajikistan** and **Sierra Leone** need to enhance community engagement and address cultural barriers through education and advocacy to achieve long-term gender equality in education.

Data collection and analysis: The ability to collect gender-disaggregated data is crucial for monitoring progress and identifying gaps. **Cambodia**, **Tanzania**, and **Uganda** have made strides in enhancing EMIS frameworks (or other data sources) to include comprehensive gender-disaggregated data. However, operational challenges and inadequate data systems in **El Salvador** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo** highlight the need for ongoing improvements in data collection mechanisms.

Analytical capacity is another critical factor. **Nepal** and **Cambodia** have focused on building institutional capacities for gender-responsive planning and monitoring, supported by the SCG. Conversely, **Tajikistan** and **Uganda** struggle with low analytical report writing capacity and weak institutional frameworks, posing a challenge to effective gender analysis and evidence-based policy planning.

Availability and equity of funding: Adequate and equitable domestic financing is essential for sustaining gender reforms. **Sierra Leone**, **Cambodia**, and **Uganda** faced challenges with inadequate or inequitable resource allocation. Efforts are underway in **El Salvador** to increase education expenditure and conduct public expenditure reviews to ensure equitable distribution of resources. However, securing consistent domestic financing for gender-specific programs remains a significant challenge in several countries.

Capacity building and institutional strengthening: Building the capacity of education professionals to implement gender-responsive policies is crucial. **Nepal** and **Sierra Leone** have invested in capacity-building activities funded by the SCG and STG. Teacher training programs focused on gender equality, as seen in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Tajikistan**, are essential for fostering gender-responsive pedagogy.

Strengthening institutional frameworks to support gender equality is equally important. **Tanzania** and **Cambodia** have focused on enhancing institutional capacities for gender-responsive planning and policy implementation. However, **Uganda** and **Tajikistan** need to address gaps in institutional frameworks and ensure that gender policies are effectively implemented at all levels.

Addressing cultural and societal norms: The success of gender reforms also depends on addressing cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequalities. **Tajikistan** and **Sierra Leone** face significant challenges due to entrenched cultural norms that prioritize traditional gender roles. Efforts to promote gender equality, however, must be culturally sensitive. Engaging communities in promoting gender equality is indeed crucial for sustainable change. **Nepal** and **Tanzania** have involved local education groups and communities in the dialogue on gender equality, fostering a broader societal commitment to gender reforms. The **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Tajikistan** need to enhance community engagement to address deep-rooted gender biases.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks are essential for tracking the progress of gender reforms. **El Salvador** and **Tanzania** have established mechanisms for gender-

disaggregated data collection and monitoring. **Cambodia** and **Sierra Leone** need to strengthen their monitoring frameworks to ensure the continuous assessment of gender equality initiatives.

6 Supporting Analytical Tables

Table 6. Judgment criteria and analysis of elements of speed, scale, and inclusion in priority reforms

The analysis for this table (which is also summarized in Table 3) is based on a rubric defined for the analysis of transformation criteria, agreed upon with the GPE R&P team. The rubric is included below, followed by Table 6.

The assessment of the criteria, and in particular of speed, scale, and inclusion, was undertaken by reading key documents (such as partnership compacts, M&E frameworks as part of compacts (where available) and looking for these key words and associated terms, specifically in relation to the roll out of the priority reform. We also used interviews to ask more directly whether these attributes were associated with the ambitions of the priority reform.

The judgments used in Table 6 and Table 3 are as follows:

- Y = strongly present, where both face value (explicit) and implicit intent is expressed, and some further evidence of the criteria present in the problem diagnosis and/or feasibility of the approaches/interventions described.
- (y) = to some extent present, where intent is implicitly expressed,
- N = not present, where there is no explicit or implicit mentions, or only vague references.

Table 6a. Judgment criteria to support the transformation criteria

Transformation criteria	Judgment criteria	Judgment sub-criteria				Data sources
		Face validity of the transformation reform	Intentionality of the transformation reform	Problem diagnosis as part of the priority reform	Feasibility of intention of the transformation reform	
Speed	There is evidence that the priority reform (as outlined in partnership compacts) endeavors to achieve improvements to learning with greater speed	Whether the compact includes explicit references to 'speed' or 'acceleration'/'accelerated progress' as an objective of the reform/as part of the reform design,	Whether the priority reform includes approaches or interventions or targets that imply or are intended to support greater speed of change (e.g. to achieve outputs sooner, outcomes sooner, to achieve change faster than what was achieved in the past) or looking at the intended M&E framework indicators which imply that change is intended to happen at a quicker rate (for instance, as compared	Whether the reform's targeting of speed is based on evidence that speed is a current problem	Whether the proposed approaches/interventions in the priority reform to achieve greater speed are likely to succeed.	<p>Compact: references to the way in which the priority reform aims to achieve impact with greater speed.</p> <p>M&E frameworks in compact: previous trends in this area (if information not available in compacts,</p>

Transformation criteria	Judgment criteria	Judgment sub-criteria			Data sources	
		Face validity of the transformation reform	Intentionality of the transformation reform	Problem diagnosis as part of the priority reform		Feasibility of intention of the transformation reform
			to previous data trends related to the relevant outcome).		see country political economy analyses).	
Scale	There is evidence that the priority reform (as outlined in partnership compacts) endeavors to achieve improvements to learning with greater scale	Whether the compact includes explicit references to how the priority reform purports to achieve impact at scale, or at greater scale than previous reform efforts.	Whether the priority reform includes approaches/ interventions or targets that imply or are intended to support impact at scale or maximize on scale (e.g. does it purport to achieve scale in a different way, or through a more cost-effective way) or the intended M&E framework indicators which imply that change is intended to happen at scale (for instance, numbers of outputs, targets reached, as compared to previous data trends related to the relevant outcome).	Whether the reform's targeting of impact at scale is based on evidence that the lack of scale is a current problem.	Whether the proposed actions in the priority reform to achieve impact at scale are likely to succeed, for instance by looking at costing and adequate financing for scale.	Compact: references to the way in which the priority reform aims to achieve impact with greater 'scale' or 'scope'. Q/A of strategic parameters: criteria 'There is potential for transformational impact at scale'
Inclusion	There is evidence that the priority reform (as outlined in partnership compacts) endeavors to achieve improvements to learning with greater levels of inclusion.	Whether the compact includes explicit references to how the priority reform purports to achieve impact with greater inclusion (including defining the groups the compact has specified for inclusion)	Whether the priority reform includes approaches/ interventions that imply or are intended to support impact with greater inclusion (e.g. does the priority reform seek to include particular excluded learners or a greater number of excluded learners, in a context-relevant way) or whether the intended M&E framework indicators which imply that change is intended to be more inclusive (for instance, data disaggregated by the respective excluded groups targeted).	Whether the reform's targeting of inclusion is based on evidence that inclusion is a current problem as concrete evidence of a focus on inclusion.	Whether the proposed approaches/interventions in the priority reform to achieve greater inclusion are likely to succeed.	Compact: references to the way in which the priority reform aims to achieve impact with greater levels of inclusion (particularly with reference to previous reform attempts). M&E frameworks in compact: previous trends in this area (if information not available in compacts, see country political economy analyses).
Evidence-based	There is evidence that the design of the reform (and its selected interventions or approaches) is based on or considers evidence on whether the elected intervention is the right approach (e.g.,	Whether the compact includes explicit discussion of or reference (e.g., citations) to the sources of evidence/best practice used to inform the priority reform, including references to what type of evidence (e.g., global	Whether the design of the selected approaches/ interventions include features that demonstrate a consideration of global evidence/best practice (or in the absence a global evidence-base, locally relevant data) and concrete engagement with the evidence.	n/a	n/a	Compact: references to an evidence-based approach to identifying solutions and the proposed approaches/interventions outlined as part of the priority reform.

Transformation criteria	Judgment criteria	Judgment sub-criteria				Data sources
		Face validity of the transformation reform	Intentionality of the transformation reform	Problem diagnosis as part of the priority reform	Feasibility of intention of the transformation reform	
	interventions addressing issues related to children's disabilities or competency-based reforms) to address the problem or objective	research/best practice, regional or national research).				
Multi-faceted approach to change	There is evidence that the design of the reform (and its selected interventions or approaches) is based on a problem-diagnosis that considers multiple-system constraints, or there is evidence that the priority reform (through its selected interventions or approaches) uses a multi-faceted approach to change.	Whether the compact includes explicit reference to whether the priority reform addresses multiple system constraints and through a multi-faceted approach to change.	Whether the approaches/ interventions use a multi-faceted approach to change (e.g., target the problem through multiple means or involve different subsystems). Note that a multi-faceted approach does NOT mean doing lots of different things (e.g., it does NOT mean doing teacher training + WASH interventions + early childhood interventions + textbooks), but refers to addressing multiple constraints that are holding back a single, prioritized outcome	Whether the priority reform was informed by a diagnosis of multiple system constraints (e.g., system constraints in a different areas of the system).	Whether the proposed approaches/ interventions are likely to succeed.	Compact: references to proposed approaches/interventions outlined as part of the priority reform
Alignment of subsystems	There is evidence that the design of the reform (and its selected interventions or approaches) includes an approach that aligns relevant subsystems, policies, or practices	Whether the compact includes explicit reference to whether the priority reform aligns subsystems, policies, and practices.	Whether the approaches/ interventions proposed in the compact are intended to align multiple education sub-systems.	Whether the priority reform was informed by a diagnosis of mis- or low alignment of relevant subsystems, policies, and practices.	Whether the proposed approaches/ interventions of the priority reform to align relevant subsystems, policies and practices are likely to succeed.	Compact: references to proposed approaches/interventions outlined as part of the priority reform
Alignment of incentives	There is evidence that the design of the reform (and its selected interventions	Whether the compact includes explicit reference to whether the priority reform aligns the	Whether the approaches/ interventions are intended to align the incentives of actors at the relevant levels.	Whether the priority reform was informed by a diagnosis of mis- or low alignment of	Whether the proposed approaches/ interventions of the	Compact: references to the proposed roles and responsibilities outlined to implement the reform, at

Transformation criteria	Judgment criteria	Judgment sub-criteria			Data sources	
		Face validity of the transformation reform	Intentionality of the transformation reform	Problem diagnosis as part of the priority reform		Feasibility of intention of the transformation reform
	or approaches) includes an approach that aligns the incentives of relevant actors, including at various levels and different aspects of the education system.	incentives of actors from the relevant levels and aspects of the education system	For example: For a reform focused on improving foundational learning, this might require plans to give teachers bonuses for learning improvements. Or we might expect to see plans to add learning indicators to EMIS systems so that inspectors are not just collecting data on enrolments and attendance but on learning as well. (In the “what gets measured gets done” sense.) Or we may see plans to publish assessment results more quickly which increases accountability and hence incentives for performance.	incentives of actors from relevant levels.	priority reform to align the incentives of actors from relevant levels are likely to succeed.	different levels (at the national level and also at regional, district level; frontline providers required for the implementation (including schools, school leaders, teachers, schools inspectors, etc.)

Table 6b. Analysis of elements of speed, scale, and inclusion in priority reforms

Country	Speed	Scale	Inclusion
Cambodia	<p>Overall: No</p> <p>Face value: No, no face value references to the concept of speed in the compact.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Some references to intention for speed in terms of references to time: Some reference to time in structured pedagogy being applied throughout Cambodia in the ‘medium term future.’ Makes reference to roll out timings – ‘grade literacy teaching to Grade 1 by 2026, grade 2 by 2028’ and plans to focus all priorities on this if not reached.</p> <p>Compact includes indicators with baseline and targets, but speed does not appear to be implied.</p> <p>Problem diagnosis: No reference to speed/time in descriptions of problem diagnosis.</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: Yes, includes face value references to the roll out of structured pedagogy to ‘all of Cambodia’</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Intention is present – makes reference to national rates of proficiency decreasing, includes targets to support proficiency at national level, and the importance of rolling out national curriculum. However, some stakeholders said that Cambodia should prioritize scaling up existing successful programs rather than initiating a new reform.</p> <p>However, while the compact includes indicators with baseline and targets, scale does not appear to be implied (modest percentage increases proposed).</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, includes explicit references to gender equality as stated as an objective of the reform and emphasized throughout the compact. There are also references to marginalized groups and to equity. However, it was not emphasized by stakeholders in interviews. Gender analysis is fairly extensive in relation to the enabling factors assessment.</p> <p>Intent: Yes, intention is present – gender equality and inclusion is embedded in planned activities and M&E framework calls for data disaggregation by gender.</p>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>Overall: No</p> <p>Face value: No, no explicit mentions (face value) to speed.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Includes some references to time scales – for example, priority reform is to be rolled out to primary education between 2022-2026, and then rolled out to the remainder of basic education from 2027-2030. The impact statement in the results framework also makes a reference to a ‘qualitative leap,’ implying an acceleration. Finally – some mention that the activities to support teacher retirement ‘accelerates the recruitment dynamic and enables the arrival of younger, more female staff.’ Interviewees said they did not believe the process would contribute to ‘speed’ as ‘this kind of changes need long and lasting efforts and investments.’ Compact includes some baseline and target figures for indicators, but not systematically enough to imply ambitions for speed.</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: Yes. In the compact, the intention for scale is explicit. There is explicit reference for the priority reform to be scaled by reaching all provinces, but will first be rolled out for primary education, and then to cover all basic education after years 7, 8. There are plans to sequence the rollout of the priority reform through to 2030 (and will include milestones).</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Some of the planned interventions are intended to achieve changes at scale due to the way they have been planned (e.g., centralized changes that will have effects more broadly): for example, the improvement of payroll management or the interventions targeting the pension system for teachers at the end of their careers. However, stakeholders are skeptical that it can be achieved, due to the history of challenges to achieving reforms at scale.</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, there is explicit mention of inclusion through the stronger emphasis on inclusion than in past reforms. This is made explicit through references to education in emergencies and the focus on the "securitization" of school spaces (for girls in particular).</p> <p>Intent: Yes. \$3.4 million via the STG and \$2.5 million via the GEA have been delegated to the grant agent AFD to manage the action on the "continuity and improvement on education in emergency situations", which will be implemented by UNICEF.⁸⁰ The aim of this action is to ensure continuity of learning for children affected by crisis and conflict, with a view to improving the equity and quality of the system. It is also intended to strengthen the resilience of the education system, through a humanitarian approach.⁸¹ The part of the STG delegated to the World Bank also integrates inclusion, notably through the following action: "newly constructed and equipped classrooms, including WASH facilities in most</p>

⁸⁰ Program documents – Annex 1.B – Detailed STG and GEA funds allocation AFD and World Bank.

⁸¹ Program documents – Annex 3.1 AFD.

Country	Speed	Scale	Inclusion
		<p>Compact includes some baseline and target figures for indicators, but not systematically enough to imply ambitions for scale.</p> <p>Problem diagnosis: Yes, intention for scale is clear in the problem diagnosis. Scale was considered a challenge to past reform attempts, due to size and complexity of the education system. Reforms tended to focus on few key provinces and generally failed to scale to the national level due to a lack of domestic financing for implementation (for example, through working on pension schemes and competitive recruitment of teachers at scale), whereas technical and financial partners could see the likelihood of transformative effects as scale through pay roll management or pensions (contradicting the views of the national stakeholders).</p>	<p>disadvantaged communities, in five focus provinces".⁸² A number of activities set out in the compact also aim to support female teachers.</p> <p>Some indicators in compact are disaggregated, but not always systematically to imply ambitions for inclusion.</p>
El Salvador	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: Yes. The compact includes explicit references to a more ambitious rate of change, with greater capacity.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Stakeholders interviewed expressed that they hoped that the current political will around ECE would improve the speed of the reform and that support from all local education group members would speed up the achievement of the objectives in the priority area. However, there are no further (concrete) details about how speed would be achieved and with what (financial) support.</p> <p>The compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for speed.</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: Yes. The compact includes plans to provide early education at a greater scale, and scaling up the transition from pre-school to basic education, while addressing gender inequality.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. However, it does not include a comparison with previous efforts or qualification of the scale of change envisaged, including references to levels of scale or targets in the theory of change or results framework. Includes some references to expanding curriculum (pre-primary to basic education) in reference to use of multiplier grant. The bottlenecks to scale, such as country size were not adequately addressed in reform plans.</p> <p>Results framework baseline references are zero and include targets, but does not include further details to infer if there are ambitions for scale.</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, the compact includes an explicit discussion of equity and equality, particularly for girls, and includes discussions on gender mainstreaming considerations.</p> <p>Intent: Yes, the compact demonstrates a strong intention for inclusion, as gender is featured prominently in the reform, as one of three results pillars. However, there are fewer references to gender in terms of the proposed activities (only references include: 'reducing gender bias in examination' and 'non-sexist material in textbooks'). During interviews, stakeholders underlined the centrality of gender as 'integral' to transformation and discussed gender and inclusion. However, in the past, gender-sensitive education has been controversial and interviewees expressed caution in addressing gender equality issues more explicitly, where there are not necessarily concrete actions to support intentions for inclusion.</p> <p>There are disaggregated targets/indicators for gender in the results framework. For disability inclusion, there is a discussion of the extent of the inequality issue (with statistics) and other references to 'vulnerable groups.'</p>

⁸² Program documents – Annex 3.3 World Bank.

Country	Speed	Scale	Inclusion
			suggesting that vulnerable groups were identified but not necessarily monitored or targeted explicitly.
Nepal	<p>Overall: No</p> <p>Face value: No, no explicit mentions in the compact – no reference to speed.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent: The compact sets out plans to better understand the nature of reforms that could “unlock accelerated progress” but does not provide further explanation.</p> <p>The compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for speed.</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: No, no explicit mentions of scale in the compact.</p> <p>Intent: Yes. scale is implied through priority reform aims to reach all 753 local governments in an effort to support decentralization, which was echoed in stakeholder interviews.</p> <p>However, the compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for scale.</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, respondents said a broader definition of inclusion, which includes a variety of marginalized groups, would be more useful than a narrower focus on gender.</p> <p>Intent: Yes, Nepal’s prioritized reforms cover areas on which previous reform efforts have focused, include greater levels of inclusion, particularly in terms of gender. However, wider dimensions of inclusion such as on the basis of income, geography or caste remains an area that requires focus, according to the majority of stakeholders.</p> <p>The compact describes several indicators which will be critical for assessing inclusion (National equity score, ratio of female teachers at basic and secondary level) but does not go into enough detail to understand the extent to which reported figures will be disaggregated.</p>
Sierra Leone	<p>Overall: NO</p> <p>Face value: No, no explicit reference to speed but includes reference to the fact that the selection of priority reform took into consideration its ability to “accelerate progress across multiple other policy areas.” However, there are no further details on how this would be achieved.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Intention is more evident as the compact includes time-bound descriptions in the data and evidence and domestic finance enabling factors priority actions. There is some mention of acceleration with reference to understandings of how other countries have used interventions to support ‘rapid gains’ in early grade learning/literacy.</p> <p>However, the compact does not include the necessary target values to infer if there are ambitions for speed.</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: Yes, the compact includes explicit references to scale in the description of the priority reform as being ‘full-fledged transformation that delivers foundational learning to <i>all</i> students.’</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. There are also references that imply scale as part of the problem statement: “One of the most significant of these challenges is ensuring that <i>all</i> students, from <i>all</i> backgrounds and <i>all</i> parts of the country, can achieve fluency in reading and basic competencies in mathematics coupled with socio-emotional development.”</p> <p>Intention for scale is also somewhat implied by baselines of zero and targets of ‘100%’ – 1.0 gender parity rating and 1:1 ratio of student learning material provision. Also includes narrative references – for instance, scaling OTPS to all primary schools. Several indicators seek to achieve ratios of 1 (material to pupil ratio, gender parity index), which implies scale.</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, inclusion is featured prominently as part of the priority reform and is frequently mentioned throughout the compact.</p> <p>Intent: Yes, there are strong implications for inclusion, in terms of the targets and activities proposed in the compact. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target of achieving a 1:1 gender parity - Developing a gender-based teaching curricula as part of its reform of in-service teacher training - Embedding of the Radical Inclusion Policy targets as part of the priority reform to ensure that the priority reform includes an equity lens - Clear reference to the importance of “improving foundational skills of girls and other marginalized groups” and importance of mainstreaming this. <p>Where relevant, indicators will also be disaggregated by gender.</p>

Country	Speed	Scale	Inclusion
Tajikistan	<p>Overall: No</p> <p>Face value: No, speed not explicitly mentioned in the compact.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. There is some implicit reference to speed with regards to the importance of ICT investment and building capacities for implementation as catalysts for outcomes.</p> <p>However, the compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for speed.</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, scale is explicitly referenced in terms of the ways in which roles for implementation and processes for reform governance will support national coverage and therefore achievement of the reform with greater scale than without these actions.</p> <p>Intent: Yes, the compact also includes references to ‘scaling up best practices; attention to system-level changes (curriculum) and influencing policy, systems and processes.’ Scale is also implied by the aim of the priority reform to expand existing efforts to support CBE curriculum to new levels (from primary to secondary), which is accompanied by documented plans for activities.</p> <p>The compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for scale.</p> <p>Problem diagnosis: Yes, the compact also implies scale through its problem statement, which cites population growth as a pressure.</p>	<p>Overall: Yes</p> <p>Face value: Yes, inclusion is explicit in the compact, as it is one of the strategic objectives of the priority reform.</p> <p>Intent: Yes, the priority reform includes clear references to supporting inclusion with attention to disability, gender and minority groups and expresses commitment to the generation of better evidence in this area. The priority reform also includes intent to hardwire gender into the activities such as gender-disaggregated WASH facilities and gender-sensitive learning materials.</p> <p>The proposed activities and theory of change/M&E framework include indicators and targets related to inclusion (including the need to have relevant KPIs for gender disparity, disability, and exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups.)</p>
Tanzania	<p>Overall: No</p> <p>Face value: No explicit references to speed in the compact or use of time-bound targets.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. The compact contains some implicit references to ‘accelerated education progress,’ but respondents expressed skepticism as this concept is at odds with the timeframe stakeholders reported would be required for reforms to be introduced and implemented at speed. This brings into question whether rapid improvement can be achieved or is desirable in the country. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of long-term planning and incremental and adaptive implementation of the reforms.</p> <p>Compact includes baseline and target values; rates of change from baseline (2020) to target (2025) and beyond (2030) do not appear to be consistently implying the achievement of speed between 2020 and 2025 (except for the rate of increase for STD II learners achieving national benchmark in reading and comprehension).</p>	<p>Overall: No</p> <p>Face value: Yes, the compact contains some explicit references to scale (for example: in identifying the scale of teacher shortages as a barrier).</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. Specific reform-related targets are not always given or appear to be inconsistent in the compact – where targets are cited (teacher recruitment), these appear to be greater in ambition than ESP targets.</p> <p>The compact includes baseline and target values, but they do not seem to imply scale.</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p> <p>Face value: Yes, references to inclusion are clear in the compact and at the high-level of the theory of change (“inclusive student-based teaching for quality learning” and outcome: “improved gender equality and inclusion”).</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. No further references are made to concrete activities.</p> <p>However, the compact does include baseline and target values disaggregated by gender where relevant.</p>
Uganda	<p>Overall: No</p>	<p>Overall: No</p>	<p>Overall: To some extent</p>

Country	Speed	Scale	Inclusion
	<p>Face value: No, there are no explicit mentions of speed in the compact.</p> <p>Intent: No. There are some weak implicit references to speed with regards to top-up triggers for DF (“quickly mobilize finance”) and to a lesser extent, gender.</p> <p>The compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for speed.</p>	<p>Face value: There are no explicit mentions of scale in the compact.</p> <p>Intent: To some extent. There are some references to vague scale with regards to ambitions to ensure that “every school going age learner in Uganda has an opportunity to access education as any other learner in Uganda.”</p> <p>The compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for scale.</p> <p>Problem diagnosis: There are some references to scale with regards to persisting issues with access to education, although more details are not provided.</p>	<p>Face value: To some extent. Some explicit references to inclusion - gender aspects appear to be well-covered in the compact.</p> <p>Intent: No, other aspects of inclusion have not been given due attention e.g., geographical aspects, refugee education etc.</p> <p>The compact does not include the necessary baseline or target values to infer if there are ambitions for inclusion.</p>

Source: Analysis of partnership compacts

Table 7. Extent to which partnership compacts include explicit discussions on the use of evidence to support the priority reform to be evidence-based

Country	Evidence-based	Information on evidence-base
Cambodia	To a large extent	Key pieces of analysis described in the compact includes the enabling factors analysis, the ESP-MTR, and the National Statement of Commitment to Transform the Education System in Cambodia. Key studies, such as "Analysis of Gender Parity in Lower-Secondary Education using Geospatial Data: A Case Study of Cambodia" (2022) and "Diagnostic Tools for Improving Education Policy and Planning: A Case Study on Dropouts in Early Secondary Schools in Cambodia" (2023).
Democratic Republic of Congo	Little or no discussion on evidence-base	An in-depth review of previous reforms and the reasons they might have not succeeded, and a thorough review of the issues hindering gender equality in the education sector in Democratic Republic of Congo were not conducted during the compact process
El Salvador	To some extent	Partners (e.g., UNICEF) provided the MINEDUCYT with studies they had conducted in the country. MINEDUCYT used data generated by other ministries (e.g., Ministry of Health) and international public sources. Proposed solutions are the result of the MINEDUCYT 's technical expertise, which was nurtured by observing international experiences implementing similar processes.
Nepal	To some extent	Informed by studies conducted by teams of experts mobilized through the ESPDG from GPE. This included the deployment of an overall educator sector analysis expert aimed at supporting a consolidation of inputs from different studies.
Sierra Leone	To some extent	The local education group engaged in an extensive process of document review and discussions to identify priority areas were facilitated by the delivery team sitting at MBSSE.
Tajikistan	To some extent	Needs assessments and review of the national policy objectives, and existing gaps in CBE were identified in the stock-taking exercise, which was thoroughly based on evidence from more than 150 studies and numerous discussions and workshops.
Tanzania	To some extent	Compact includes references to analysis of the previous education sector plan (e.g., ESA and ESDP III).
Uganda	Little or no discussion on evidence-base	The compact draws on the enabling factors analysis, which in turn draws on previous sector plans and analysis (Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2020/21 - 2024/25, the Education and Sports Sector Analysis (ESSA), Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan (NDP) III) as well as from consultations conducted between key education stakeholders e.g., development partners, ESCC members etc. However, the lack of functional EMIS puts into question the quality of national-level data. No further sources of evidence are provided in the compact development.

Source: Analysis of partnership compacts

Table 8. Proposed uses of evidence-based approaches in priority reforms

Evidence-based approach ⁸³	Search terms	Cambodia	Democratic Republic of Congo	El Salvador	Nepal	Sierra Leone	Tajikistan	Tanzania	Uganda
Targeting teaching instruction by learning level, not grade (in or out of school)	Teaching at the right level Targeted instruction	Yes				Some			
Supporting teachers with structured pedagogy (a package that includes structured lesson plans, learning materials and ongoing teacher support)	Structured pedagogy Instructional materials Teaching materials Learning materials	Yes	Some		Some	Some	Yes	Some	Some
Providing quality pre-primary education (for ages 3-5)	Quality pre-primary education	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes

Source: Analysis of country partnership compacts using Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP)-rated ‘smart buys’⁸⁴

Note: Yes = several clear references found against search criteria, or against multiple search criteria, some = minimal references found to criteria, or references not clearly linked the evidence-based approach although terms used.

⁸³ Approaches were selected from GEEAP’s ‘smart buys’, looking at approaches that were rated as having a strong evidence-base of their effectiveness and cost-effectiveness (e.g. those rated ‘great’ or ‘good’ buys).

⁸⁴ See Banerjee, Abhijit; Andrab, Tahir; Banerji, Rukmini; Dynarski, Susan; Glennerster, Rachel; Grantham-Mcgregor, Sally; Muralidharan, Karthik; Piper, Benjamin; Jaime Saavedra Chanduvi; Yoshikawa, Hirokazu; Ruto, Sara; Schmelkes, Sylvia. 2023 *Cost-effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning - What does Recent Evidence Tell Us are “Smart Buys” for Improving Learning in Low- and Middle-income Countries?* (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099420106132331608/IDU0977f73d7022b1047770980c0c5a14598eef8>

Table 9. Analysis of transformation reform criteria related to the use of multi-faceted approaches to change, the alignment of subsystems and the alignment of actor incentives

Country	Use of multi-faceted approaches to change	Alignment of subsystems	Alignment of actor incentives
Cambodia	<p>Compact contains some, but low evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>Although an analysis in terms of systems constraints is not explicit, evidence in the compact of a multi-faceted approach to change is demonstrated by the focus on barriers to transformational change falling under three areas: structured pedagogy, teaching at the right level, and remediation. The reform covers student disparities across multiple levels of the education system (primary and secondary). For each of the priority areas the multiple aspects of approach are justified with evidence. Implicitly, much of the diagnosis of system constraints was done through previous policy and planning work.</p>	<p>Compact contains little information related to the alignment of subsystems.</p>	<p>Compact contains little information related to the alignment of actor incentives.</p>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>Compact contains evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>Through its three axes of interventions, the priority reform addresses multiple dimensions of the education system that impact teachers and the quality of teaching. This includes teacher recruitment, the management of the teaching staff, initial and continuous training, salary, retirement and pension, teaching conditions, assessment systems and EMIS in particular.</p>	<p>Compact shows intent to align subsystems related to teachers and teaching. This includes: teacher recruitment, teacher professional development and end-of-career, payroll management, assessment systems and EMIS in particular.</p> <p>However, there are no further details to judge the effectiveness of this alignment, nor the feasibility of the proposed alignment.</p>	<p>The compact shows intention of aligning actor incentives with a focus on the incentives for teachers and teaching at the provincial level. However, it does not necessarily provide detail on whether alignment of incentives is being addressed across the multiple subsystems.</p>
El Salvador	<p>Compact contains evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>The compact includes a discussion of multiple system constraints with regards to access to ECE, education infrastructure, curriculum revision, the establishment of rigorous quality standards for education services, training of teachers and tutors and gender-sensitive teacher training</p>	<p>Compact contains little information related to the alignment of subsystems.</p> <p>There is some discussion about the need to support decentralization and the lack of alignment of subsystems at sublevels, but not much more information is provided.</p>	<p>Compact does not include mentions of the role or incentives of sublevel actors (local, regional levels). System is very centralized.</p>

Country	Use of multi-faceted approaches to change	Alignment of subsystems	Alignment of actor incentives
Nepal	<p>Compact contains some, but low evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>The compact contains references to three outcomes (teacher development, ECD development, and gender quality), which are each accompanied by multiple strategies to achieve outcomes; however, it is less clear that this approach was developed by applying a systematic diagnosis of multiple system constraints.</p>	<p>Compact includes strong intentions to align subsystems at the federal level, including pre-service training (HE providers); institutions supporting in-service training and professional development at provincial, local and school levels; data systems (local governments); local planning (local government); support to ECED centers themselves. The problem diagnosis suggests that in-service training is not aligned with pre-service, in that in-service training serves to supplement the gaps in teacher competencies left by inadequate preparation (rather than building on experience). The diagnosis also suggests that there is a need to address geographic imbalances teacher distribution and deployment.</p> <p>The priority reform implies that at the national level, subsystems are aligned, but the alignment requires extension to sub-levels.</p>	<p>The compact shows strong intention to align actor incentives at the sublevel (given its focus on supporting decentralization).</p> <p>The approach of working towards the phasing out of conditional grants in favor of providing local government-level autonomy over budgets also demonstrates intentions of (and progress towards) aligning the incentives of local government, albeit in a phased approach.</p> <p>However, current controversies over the Education Act, including discontent from teachers' unions, suggests that there is a need for further alignment of incentives with regards to the plans for the decentralization of teacher management.</p>
Sierra Leone	<p>Compact contains some, but low evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>Compact contains explicit analysis of the multiple system constraints related to ECE and the priority reform and includes some references to multi-faceted activities such as in-service teacher training and revised teaching and learning materials, development of gender-based teaching curricula to standardize quality teaching across the 16 districts through the TSC.</p>	<p>There is extensive evidence that the priority reform aims to align relevant subsystems, policies, and practices, such as teacher professional development, curriculum, assessment systems, education EMIS to achieve the intended outcomes. However, it is recognized that this is not easy to achieve, particularly at the local level.</p> <p>The government faces considerable constraints in ensuring quality education at the district-level. District-level activities are obstructed by a shortage of staff within the district, absence of infrastructure – transportation and school buildings – and connectivity issues.</p> <p>The priority reform asserts that greater alignment will be beneficial with regards to designing a harmonization of pre-service and in-service teacher training in Sierra Leone, which requires the cooperation and coordination among the existing TTIs, TSC, MTHE and MBSSE.</p>	<p>Much of the priority reform focuses on support to strengthen local governments to support the education system, with funding and capacity building. However, there are questions as to whether local governments are adequately supported to manage and administer teacher payrolls, data collection, and the planning, implementation, and monitoring of gender policies.</p>

Country	Use of multi-faceted approaches to change	Alignment of subsystems	Alignment of actor incentives
Tajikistan	<p>Compact contains evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change. This includes discussion to apply a ‘more holistic and global approach to CBE reform.’</p> <p>The theory of change describes aims to tackle multiple system constraints – strengthen governance, improve education quality, and create sustainable learning environment – to achieve student-centered CBE. This ensures an all-encompassing approach targeting the CBE outcome from different perspectives.</p>	<p>Compact includes strong references to alignment of relevant subsystems and practices. For example, the priority reform proposes to align the updated standards for the CBE curriculum with efforts to support continuous professional learning system for teachers.</p>	<p>Compact is limited on evidence of the alignment of incentives at all necessary levels within the reform. Compact includes some discussion about the importance of actors at the school-level, with plans to support teachers through attracting new entrants, providing quality pre-service training, developing continuous professional development, and institutionalizing mechanisms to support and mentor teachers.</p> <p>However, this is not comprehensive and evidence is limited on aligning incentives at all levels of the school system. The compact has a focus on institutionalizing changes and increasing alignment within the government, with the MoES playing a focal role in ownership and ensuring absorption of reforms and their outcomes. Stakeholders indicated that previously, some challenges such as outdated structures, insufficient coordination of projects and lack of MoES staff led to fragmentation of reform efforts and failure of the reform to stick. The SCG in particular aims to enhance the ministry's capacity to plan, coordinate, implement, and assess progress of the reform.</p>
Tanzania	<p>Compact contains some, but low evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>The compact includes a broad discussion on the constraints to the priority reform (teacher-pupil ratio, unfavorable teaching and learning environment, inequitable distribution of resources and shortage of teachers’).</p>	<p>The compact includes evidence of alignment of subsystems and there is clear intent expressed about the importance of engaging subnational levels as part of the priority reform, but there is less evidence to suggest due attention or proposed solutions for ensuring alignment at the local level. The compact describes the challenge of and constraints to ensuring quality education at the district level, where activities are obstructed by a shortage of staff within the district, absence of infrastructure – transportation and school buildings – and connectivity issues. The compact does not provide details on proposed solutions to this.</p>	<p>Compact contains little information related to the alignment of actor incentives, as there is not much information provided on any incentives to support inter-ministerial (across ministries) and intra-ministerial (across levels) cooperation, which would be required to support the priority reform.</p>

Country	Use of multi-faceted approaches to change	Alignment of subsystems	Alignment of actor incentives
Uganda	<p>Compact contains some, but low evidence of a multi-faceted approach to change.</p> <p>Compact demonstrates intention to use a multi-faceted approach to change, but does not provide further evidence of planned activities to support this.</p>	<p>Compact includes strong evidence to suggest that the priority reform will align relevant subsystems, policies, and practices, such as teacher professional development, curriculum, assessment systems and EMIS, to achieve the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>The compact includes recognition of the importance of incentives for teachers, but presently, there is not enough evidence to assess whether actors at regional and district levels will be adequately supported for the implementation of the reform.</p>

Table 10. Priority reforms and their alignment with education sector plans (and other policies)

Country	Learning from previous reform efforts	Priority reform area presence in the previous education sector plan / other policies	Priority reform area presence in the current education sector plan / other policies
Cambodia	No detailed analysis of previous reforms' limitations was provided in the compact. The compact does not rely on an extensive analysis of past interventions' drawbacks, as highlighted in the GPE Secretariat review of the strategic parameters of the draft compact.	ESP 2014 – 2018 Present until 2016 when the ministry reduced the number of objectives from three down to two, to be consistent with SDG 4, and to respond to various policies. Policy 2: Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning was removed. Also, the Teacher Policy Action Plan from 2015.	ESP 2019 - 2023 Present: 1) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Democratic Republic of Congo	The compact only superficially engaged with past reforms and solutions. There is very little mention of past reforms in the compact. Only the question of the alignment of stakeholders in past reform efforts is superficially addressed	ESP 2012 – 2014 Present: Program 2.2: Enhancing the teaching function Program 2.3: Provision of pedagogical supports	ESP 2016 – 2025 Present: Provide an educational environment conducive to learning; Strengthen the governance of the system by setting up standards and transparent mechanisms for resource management, new teacher recruitment system There are also more recent investments in the sector focusing on the professionalization of teacher training.
El Salvador	The priority reform in the compact is very different from the previous reform. The current reform focuses on underlying causes, rather than on the outcome. However, this assessment is based on stakeholder interviews only because there are no explicit mentions in the compact of past reforms	N/A	ESP 2019 – 2024 Present: Quality and meaningful learning throughout the life cycle, with relevant and inclusive pedagogy and curriculum The "Plan Cuscatlán" (National Development Policy 2019-2024) outlines three flagship projects as integral components of the strategy to operationalize education sector reforms: 1) Nacer Crecer; 2) Mi Nueva Escuela; 3) Proyecto Dalton. MINEDUCYT's Institutional Strategic Plan 2019-2024 (ISP) reflects these priorities, placing at its center the quality of learning throughout the life cycle
Nepal	Thematically, the priority reform remains unchanged from past reform efforts. The main difference between the current priority reform and past reforms is the focus: currently, the reform focuses on delivery, whereas in the past, the focus was on expansion	SSDP 2016/2017 – 2020/2021 Present: Quality: To increase students' learning through enhancing the relevance and quality of the learning environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning materials (including textbooks), teaching methods, assessment, and examinations	ESP 2021 – 2030 Present: To improve the relevance and quality of whole school education to enable all children to obtain minimum learning outcomes at levels appropriate for their age. ESP highlights addressing stagnation of learning outcomes and disparities.
Sierra Leone	Presents a lesson learned from the previous sector in terms of valuing a more focused approach versus the previous approach, which "was trying to tackle everything all at once." Discouraging Early Grade Reading Assessment / Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGRA/EGMA) results despite investments in education led to a more a targeted approach on literacy and numeracy	ESP 2018 – 2020 Present: Improved learning, demonstrated by at least a 10% increase in the share of primary and JSS students meeting minimum Learning Assessment standards in English and mathematics by 2020, and a 7% increase in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) English and mathematics pass rates by 2020 (both relative to a 2017 baseline)	ESP 2022 – 2026 Present: Every child, regardless of circumstance, should have the opportunity to access and complete quality education, whilst showing proficiency in all assessed areas... ...3. Reduce gender and other disparities in educational access, experience, and outcomes for the most marginalized
Tajikistan	The priority reform does not bring a new concept. It is rather continuation with a refined focus. The focus is deemed better than before by stakeholders, and it now	ESP 2012 – 2020 Present: - Modernization of the education system	ESP 2020 – 2030 Present:

Country	Learning from previous reform efforts	Priority reform area presence in the previous education sector plan / other policies	Priority reform area presence in the current education sector plan / other policies
	includes specific goals. The compact now recognizes the need for better institutionalization of the priority reform	- Structural changes in the education system	- Improving the quality and relevance of education and science at all levels NSED-2030 focuses on the provision of quality, professional skills, and competences. Given the integrity and alignment of the compact and NSED-2030, the focus of costing mechanisms and efforts were directed towards optimizing costing of NSED itself. One of SCG activities aims to update the cost of implementing the NSED-2030 and its mid-term operational framework.
Tanzania	The priority reform in the compact builds on previous reforms; although lessons learned during the first GPE-supported program introduced in 2014 were not explicitly considered in the compact	ESP 2016/2017 – 2020/2021 Present: 2. Quality of basic and secondary education 6. System Structure, Governance and Management	ESP 2021/2022 – 2025/2026 Present: • Quality and relevance of education and training; • Governance, management and accountability in education system and institutions The revised ETP included a policy statement on 10 years compulsory education as well as strategies for re-entry of teenage mothers to education. The status on operationalization of the Teacher Service Commission is not clear. There is also alignment between the priority reform and the sector's thematic priorities presented in the Draft ESDP III: access, participation, and equity; inclusion; quality and relevance; governance, management, and accountability; and Education financing.
Uganda	The priority reform in the compact builds on previous reforms. The principal novel aspect is the increased emphasis on quality, and a clearer focus	ESP 2017/2018 – 2019/2020 Present: (i) Achieve equitable access to relevant and quality education and training (ii) Ensure delivery of relevant and quality education and training	ESP 2020/2021 – 2024/2025 Present: (i) Achieve equitable access to relevant and quality education and training (ii) Ensure delivery of relevant and quality education and training

Source: Analysis of country partnership compacts and education sector plans

Table 11. Enabling factors priority ratings at the time of original country self-assessment and assessment through ITAP review

Country	Data and evidence		Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring		Sector coordination		Domestic Financing	
	Enabling factors assessment	ITAP	Enabling factors assessment	ITAP	Enabling factors assessment	ITAP	Enabling factors assessment	ITAP
Cambodia	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High
Democratic Republic of Congo	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
El Salvador	High	High	High	High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Nepal	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Sierra Leone	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	High
Tajikistan	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Tanzania	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Low	High	High
Uganda	High	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High	High

Bolded text and shaded cells identify where ratings have changed

Source: Country enabling factors initial screening requirement and requirements analysis templates or enabling factors assessment templates, and ITAP reports

Table 12. Issues identified through the enabling factors assessment

Country	Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing
Cambodia	(+) Enhance data disaggregation, incorporate health and nutrition, address QA, strengthen data collection, plans to connect systems and survey schools (-) Some data inconsistencies, EMIS, analysis tends to be donor led	(+) Intend to integrate theory of change into ESP, streamline policies, enhance gender monitoring (-) Absence of theory of change in ESP	(+) Facilitation of pooled funding, reducing transaction costs (-) Enhancement of local education group inclusiveness needed	(+) Increasing efficiency through evidenced based funding (-) Recurrent expenditure remains too low, Beyond control of the MoEYS
Democratic Republic of Congo	(-) Lack of functional EMIS, conflict sensitive analysis, need for decentralized data	(+) Transparent and inclusive (-) Poor on gender, too many implementation models	(-) Low level of government participation and other types of stakeholders, governance insufficient, scale and complexity of problems is high	(+) Clearer commitments to financing (-) Unclear on how funding will be allocated, its sustainability
El Salvador	(-) Better collection and use of data (coherence), slow deployment of integrated system	(+) Plans incorporate gender responsive strategies (-) No translation into reduced inequalities to date, need to analyze risks in coordinated way	(+) Commitment to working across sectors and representativeness (-) No indicators for progress on strategic objectives	(+) Plans to dedicate funding, costed sector plans (-) Unclear of realism of commitments, absence of public expenditure review
Nepal	(+) Strong data systems and use, functioning EMIS (-) Ongoing low learning outcomes; lack of capacity at local levels, challenge of sustaining and improving data at decentralized level	(+) Independent appraisal (-) Move to federal system will test sector planning	(+) Highly consultative. Strengthening financing across government (-) Alignment of local funding and capacity - skilled HR	(+) Increasing volume, reducing inefficiencies and inequalities (-) Ensure funding supports elimination of gaps and equitable deployment of teachers
Sierra Leone	(+) Planned actions to increase quality, accessibility... (-) Uncertainty on how the state will efficiently and promptly collect data across districts, development of EMIS, monitoring and managing education system	(+) ESP finalized (-) Financial and capacity constraints at local level, gender disparities in the system	(+) Effective communication between development partners and government (and faith-based organizations) (-) System is still evolving	(+) Sustained increased in domestic resources (-) STG not enough to fund priority reform and additional funds are not yet clear. Still challenges in equity and efficiency addressing disparities across localities

Country	Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing
Tajikistan	(+) Progress in broadening data collected by EMIS (-) Gaps in EMIS data continue, low capacity of staff to analyze data, low culture of evidence use	(+) Progress on planning, access of girls to education (-) Staff training on gender sensitivity, timing of the data for planning, need for more detailed implementation plans	(+) Progress coordination (-) Need for increased government engagement and ownership and non-state actors / other stakeholder types (including local voices)	(+) Increasing volume of finance (-) Lack of model or projection for financial planning, high spending plans
Tanzania	(+) Comprehensive and consistently produced data, learning assessments (-) Limited human capacity, inconsistency between types of data, gaps in rural / local	(+) Good plans, robust tools (-) Difficulty with hiring teachers to realize plans, accountability across ministries	(+) Coordination strong and inclusive (-) More inclusion of development partners contribution (including finance coordination), understanding partners	(+) Meets requirements in principle for volume (-) Challenges in equity and efficiency (particularly related to teachers, dropouts, transitions)
Uganda	(+) Data on learning outcomes (-) Non-functioning EMIS, data poor and inaccurate, delayed, data on learning outcomes not feeding into policy making	(+) Robust legal frameworks (-) Non robust systems for catch up post covid, national priorities without level of investment needed Outcomes unsatisfactory – poor trends and disparities across regions and characteristics	(+) Good sector wide approach in theory, development partners provide financing (-) Sector wide approach is non regular and participation uneven	(-) Difficult to calculate proportion of domestic financing. Lack of attention to equity and efficiency - gender disparities, lack of support in rural areas, exist in pockets which could be addressed through equitable finance options

Source: Analysis of enabling factors assessment templates and partnership compacts

Table 13. Extent to which gaps in enabling factors are intended to be addressed as part of the priority reform, SCG or feature in the compact

Country	Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing	Remaining gaps in measures to strengthen enabling factors, identified in country case studies (evidence from reviewed sources and interviews)
Cambodia	<p>Priority reform includes accurate data collected - a diagnostic analysis is planned through the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>SCG to be used to train staff and support implementation capacity.</p>	<p>SCG to be used to support the harmonization of planning and to integrate theory of change as well as policies and plans to identify multiple forms of exclusion</p> <p>National policy of Ministry of Women’s Affairs will support sectoral planning (midterm review in 2024). Education sector plan will improve its M&E and create a theory of change</p>	<p>Priority reform identified the coordination of financing from partners</p> <p>SCG to be used to strengthen sector coordination, pooled funding.</p>	<p>Priority reform identified improving the volume and efficiency of education sector non recurrent expenditure, evidence-based funding, simplifying financial legislation, strengthening Dept of Finance</p> <p>SCG to include strengthening budget processes and engaging with MoF</p>	<p>Learning outcomes data reported to remain outside of government</p> <p>No mention of compulsory education in sectoral planning</p> <p>The local education group to be coordinated is 128 organizations</p> <p>The proportion of education expenditure is declining</p>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>Priority reform includes: the development of EMIS; establishment of learning assessment system, improvement of decentralized data collection, survey of schools (independent and through ACCELERE project), Emergency Equity and Education System Strengthening project</p>	<p>Priority reform includes a more in-depth examination of issues of equity in planning, reinforcement of planning capacity and crises education plans</p>	<p>Priority reform indicates that faith-based organizations will be including in the steering group for the compact, improved collaboration with education cluster</p>	<p>Priority reform plans indicates increasing education expenditure.</p>	<p>No regular analysis of conflict sensitive equity and family matters included</p> <p>No interconnection between primary, secondary, and technical education data</p> <p>No accountability to the faith-based organizations (although planned inclusion)</p> <p>No local level collaboration with education cluster</p> <p>Only indirect implementation and monitoring of more equitable funds at the provincial level, no consideration for equitable formulas and allocations, no consideration for out of school children</p>
El Salvador	<p>Priority reform acknowledges the urgent need for better data and evidence in education</p>	<p>Priority reform aims to achieve greater equity by acknowledging the challenge of prioritizing</p>	<p>Priority reform includes clear links between the actions of various government portfolios</p>	<p>Higher priority to education spending as a share of overall domestic spending</p>	<p>No specific mention of the numbers of children out of school</p> <p>No specification of allocation of resources to the Gender and Equality policy, definition of</p>

Country	Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing	Remaining gaps in measures to strengthen enabling factors, identified in country case studies (evidence from reviewed sources and interviews)
	<p>policymaking through capacity building, assessment systems and gender inclusive approaches with targets set for dropouts, pregnancy, violence.</p> <p>SCG will support the improvement of SIGES</p>	<p>interventions for specific groups due to a lack of relevant data</p> <p>MINEDUCYT established a Gender Management Unit, initially funded by FOMILENIO</p>	<p>and the institutions leading efforts in different areas.</p> <p>Priority reform includes plans to create synergies amongst NGOs, schools, families, the private sector, and public institutions</p> <p>JSR planned</p>	<p>MINEDUCYT to create a governance, monitoring, and evaluation structure on the sources of funding, their uses and their adequacy to the priorities identified in each program</p> <p>Conducting a review of public spending</p>	<p>responsibilities, indicators, monitoring or dealing with lessons learnt</p> <p>The compact also identifies two major challenges in education spending equity: coverage disparities and universal provision of certain programs (such as school feeding and supplies) to students who may not necessarily require such assistance. Nonetheless, it does not establish how it will be made.</p>
Nepal	<p>Priority reform includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher competence framework to address learning outcomes validating the reported EMIS data and the local level and contextualizing results <p>Prior GPE funding supported a consolidated equity strategy which will be built upon</p>	<p>Priority reform includes a rationalization and redeployment plan, to support equitable teacher student ratio</p>	<p>Priority reform includes improvements to in service development, to align with local needs</p> <p>Priority reform refers to strengthening cofinancing</p> <p>TORs for the SWAp are being reviewed</p>	<p>Priority reform includes a rationalization and redeployment plan, to support equitable teacher student ratio</p>	<p>No indication of budget or interdependencies</p>
Sierra Leone	<p>Education sector plan sets out the establishment of an Education Data Working</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Priority reform proposes to establish a working group including the ministries of</p>	<p>Hiring of 210 QA officers to support data collection is not explicitly mentioned in the program documents.</p>

Country	Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing	Remaining gaps in measures to strengthen enabling factors, identified in country case studies (evidence from reviewed sources and interviews)
	<p>Group and there is a commitment to data harmonization. Data infrastructure needs are also addressed in the priority reform and through the FCDO and EU projects.</p> <p>SCG focuses on supporting the capacity (HR, training) for data as well as buying tablets to collect data.</p>			<p>education, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning and Economic development, alongside other education finance stakeholders.</p> <p>Priority reform includes two triggers associated with efficiency /budget spend and teacher allocation mechanisms.</p> <p>SCG will employ technical staff responsible for budgets and liaising with the MoF as well as additional expertise from international organization.</p>	Therefore, it is not clear where the budget will come from.
Tajikistan	<p>Priority reform addresses aspects of EMIS, improving annual statistics, digital access, analytical skills of staff in data management</p> <p>SCG used to create a strategic planning and coordination unit in the MoES to look at indicators and share</p>	<p>Priority reform plans a review of data and systematic collection, M&E framework to embed inclusive indicators.</p> <p>Planned study to look at determinants of dropouts</p> <p>Priority reform includes creating supportive infrastructure for marginalized children</p>	<p>Already expanded the local education group</p> <p>Stocktaking of the sources of financing will be undertaken</p> <p>MoES seeking access to financial system of Ministry of Finance (SCG funded policy coordination unit to be used to undertake work)</p> <p>STG to support multi stakeholder dialogue</p>	<p>Priority reform includes plans for financing scenarios and sensitivity testing and simulation modelling.</p> <p>Plans to update the cost of implementing the NSED and the midterm operational framework</p>	<p>Unclear on the financing for the reform of EMIS</p> <p>Staff gender sensitivity is not addressed, no indication of financing, focus on infrastructure for inclusion rather than other aspects</p> <p>Parent representatives are still absent, unclear on resourcing</p> <p>No expenditure plans for the SCG</p>

Country	Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing	Remaining gaps in measures to strengthen enabling factors, identified in country case studies (evidence from reviewed sources and interviews)
			and agree on competencies and integration pathways EOL support engagement of CSOs		
Tanzania	SCG used to complete EMIS and integrate all subsystem data Capacities to manage, use and regulate data	Priority reform includes: Improve teacher recruitment and deployment strategies Priority reform includes output associated with improved infrastructure and maintaining or improving the public financing.	SCG supporting the finalization of a portal to include partner information	SCG expanding on the student unit cost to include household contributions, review of simulation model, study on coordination and governance	Institutional arrangements for education data management remains unaddressed Accountability across the two ministries is not addressed No investment in time and resources for coordination of financing and funding No budgeting for teacher salaries and the deployment of teachers weighted to wealthier urban populations, no weighting for equity
Uganda	SCG will be used as a broad investment in EMIS data system. Top-up trigger for STG linked to this. Government also states a responsibility in the compact STG top-up trigger for Annual School Census	Priority reform includes a gender responsive pedagogy module for CPD for teachers Priority reform states issues of Covid in theory of change but no solution SCG indicated as being used to better understand system barriers	N/A	STG includes top-up trigger linked to increased education expenditure and capitation grant STG might be used for capacity building planning and budgeting Theory of change has a pillar on pre-primary education and input to roll out licensing and registration, professional development of teachers	Cost and time implications are not clear The theory of change lists gender equity as a global enabler but no mention of gender focused approaches for education outcomes No explicit reference to the participation of non-government actors, consultation or tracking of budget expenditure The partnership compact did not include a response to the learning assessment challenge identified in the ITAP report. The GPE Secretariat recommended GPE financing be used to respond to the learning assessment challenge if other resources are unavailable.

Source: Analysis of partnership compacts, ITAP reports, GPE Secretariat quality assurance of the strategic parameters; country-level stakeholder interviews

Table 14. Overview of the use of the SCG by country

Country	Purpose of SCG (as described in partnership compacts)	Types of activity proposed in SCG grant documents	Level of definition	Linkage to enabling factors
Cambodia	Support for the planning and policy cycle of MoEYS	<p>Data and evidence: SCG to be used to train staff and support implementation capacity.</p> <p>Gender responsive sector planning: Core support to existing planning processes and for support the harmonization of planning and to integrate theory of change as well as policies and plans to identify multiple forms of exclusion</p> <p>Sector coordination: SCG to be used to strengthen sector coordination, pooled funding.</p> <p>Domestic financing: SCG to include strengthening budget processes and engaging with MoF</p>	Specific	Not explicitly linked
Democratic Republic of Congo	Provision of capacity building; strengthening data systems and coordination; research on systems barriers and evaluations	Activities proposed for funding are not sorted by grant mechanism	Provisional indication	n/a
El Salvador	Strengthening ministerial capacity to generate quality data	<p>Data and evidence: SCG will support the improvement of SIGES and for capacity building; direct data collection and specific studies; revision of data systems to support gender disaggregation</p> <p>Domestic financing: additional support to cost effectiveness</p>	Specific	Explicit
Nepal	Setting up a support system under ministry to implement the common Framework for Technical Assistance; capacity building at local level	Not yet specified: "An institutional capacity assessment will identify needs and inform the development of an institutional capacity plan to improve the capability of all levels of government"	n/a	Not explicitly linked
Sierra Leone	Supporting data and evidence and domestic financing	<p>Data and evidence: SCG focuses on supporting the capacity (HR, training) for data as well as buying tablets to collect data.</p> <p>Domestic financing: SCG will employ technical staff responsible for budgets and liaising with the MoF as well as additional expertise from international organization.</p>	Areas of support indicated, sometimes specifically	Explicit (and SCG also supports pillars of the priority reform)

Tajikistan	Support to enabling factors (aim not further specified)	<p>Data and evidence: SCG used to create a strategic planning and coordination unit in the MoES to look at indicators and share. Specific reviews and development of EMIS;</p> <p>Domestic financing: Support to planning in specific areas, financial modelling, and planning</p>	Very specific	Explicit
Tanzania	Support to enabling factors (aim otherwise unspecified)	<p>Data and evidence: SCG used to complete EMIS and integrate all subsystem data and capacities to manage, use and regulate data</p> <p>Gender responsive sector planning: Development of specific management modules and analyses; policy development on gender</p> <p>Sector coordination: SCG supporting the finalization of a portal to include partner information</p> <p>Domestic financing: SCG expanding on the student unit cost to include household contributions, review of simulation model, study on coordination and governance</p>	Specific	Explicit
Uganda	System strengthening in the enabling factors in the compact theory of change, including ITAP high-priority areas	<p>Data and evidence: SCG will be used as a broad investment in EMIS data system. Also used for capacity building for system users in use of EMIS and data and evidence. Also to be used for evaluations.</p> <p>Gender responsive sector planning: SCG indicated as being used to better understand system barriers</p>	Indicative and not specific	Linked, but also supports enabling factors as incorporated into priority reform

Source: Analysis of partnership compacts and SCG documents (including grant applications, grant program proposals and grant review checklists)

Table 15. Overview of GPE initial allocations for system transformation-related grants

Country	Indicative allocation (\$ m)	Initial indicative allocation (\$ m)	Additional allocation (top-up) (\$ m)	Top-up triggers, organized by respective enabling factor			
				Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing
Cambodia	\$15.39m	\$9.234m	\$6.156m	n/a	n/a	n/a	1: Two consecutive years of “year-on-year” proportional increases in school grants relative to non-wage expenditure (\$3.078m) 2: Completion of two core modules for a new Education Financial Management System (\$3.078m)
Democratic Republic of Congo	\$162.5m	\$112.5m	\$50m	1. Government to support at least 50% of the cost of the data collection, publication, and dissemination process of the statistical yearbook on the national budget by 2025 (\$15m)	n/a	n/a	2. Establishment of a unique identifier for the Ministry of Education staff on the budget to improve control Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education’s payroll by 2024 (\$20m) 3. Effective retirement of 4,000 overaged teachers by 2025 (\$15m)
El Salvador	-	-	No top-up	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nepal	\$20m	\$20m	No top-up	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sierra Leone	\$22.47m	\$17.976m	\$4.494m	n/a	n/a	n/a	1. (Efficiency): Increase the budget execution rate by the MBSSE (\$2.247m) 2. (Equity): Incorporate learning outcomes and learner disadvantages in teacher allocation mechanisms (\$2.247m)
Tajikistan	\$10m	\$10m	No top-up	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tanzania	\$105.831m	\$84.6648m	\$21.1662m	n/a	n/a	n/a	1: A revised Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) based on robust data and credible [financial] projections on which government can make key policy and operational decisions (\$8m)

Country	Indicative allocation (\$ m)	Initial indicative allocation (\$ m)	Additional allocation (top-up) (\$ m)	Top-up triggers, organized by respective enabling factor			
				Data and evidence	Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	Sector coordination	Domestic financing
							<p>2: Institutionalization and annual implementation of nationwide equitable primary teacher posting policy (\$9m)</p> <p>3: Institutionalization and annual implementation of nationwide equitable primary Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) policy (\$4.1662m)</p>
Uganda	\$162.5m	\$112.5m	\$50m	1: Functional Education Management Information System: a functional EMIS with EMIS policy approved, annual census conducted, and annual statistics published (\$15m)	n/a	n/a	<p>2: [Increase education's share to] 19% of the domestic financing excluding debt: domestic financing increased by two percentage-points from current 17% to 19% (\$25m)</p> <p>3: Develop and implement the capitation grant formula for primary subsector: capitation grant at least maintained at UGX 20,000 in the compact period for primary level and equitable capitation grant formula approved (\$10m)</p>

Source: Board decision documents on initial allocations and strategic parameters for GPE support.

Table 16. Composition of the local education groups

Country (and name of local education group)	Year founded	Composition of the local education group	Status of inclusivity of dialogue
Cambodia Joint Technical Working Group for Education (JTWG-Ed)	2004	Chaired by the Minister of the MoEYS with three vice-chairs (UNICEF Representative, Permanent Secretary of State, Secretary of State). 39 out of 50 members are government representatives, including representatives of eight other ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Ten development partners (multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the national NGO Education Partnership (NEP).	There are task teams and wider consultations which are inclusive of relevant groups affected by the reform e.g., Teacher Association, NGOs and CSOs JTWG meetings are well attended and there are working groups of the eSWG at sub national level.
Democratic Republic of Congo Comité de concertation sectorielle (CCS)	2017	Convened and led by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (MEPST), and including representatives from the Ministry of Finance and other ministries. Confessional schools are also represented (managed by faith-based organizations), with several NGOs and CSOs, teachers' unions, and elected officials at the provincial level. The CONEPT coalition group represented within the CCS represents a diverse membership including women's and girls' groups (2 groups), marginalized or illiterate young people (7 groups), people with disabilities (3 groups), Indigenous peoples (1 group), discriminated nationalities/migrants (1 group) and people living below the poverty line (1 group). and technical and financial partners.	CSOs are actively participating. Coordinated by SPACE (Permanent Secretariat for Support and Coordination of the Education Sector) and included extensive consultations with education stakeholders, in particular the members of the CCS (Sectoral Consultation Committee) and the GTT, including teachers' unions, CSC, FENECO, and SYECO
El Salvador	2020	The Strategic Facilitation group within the local education group is led by a representative from MINEDUCYT, working with members from the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO. The wider group includes further members of the government (including the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the First Lady), multilateral and bilateral agencies, and several direct representatives from national NGOs.	A government-led process, inclusive of the members of the local education group, which includes civil society. There was ongoing dialogue and a parallel process to consult teachers' unions and organizations. There was limited engagement with teachers, students and women and there are several teacher unions, making it difficult to ensure inclusion.
Nepal Education Sector Local Education Group	2018	Convened by a Focal Point (not necessarily governmental), the composition includes (a) government (MoEST, education sector central agencies and other representatives including the Ministry of Finance); (b) development partners (both financing and non-financing) and (c) CSOs. CSOs are represented through two bodies: the Association of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Nepal (AIN) (with 29 members on establishment of the local education group), and the National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-N) - an advocacy platform with 80+ members, including INGOs, NGOs, teacher professional organizations. The Compact Working Group has representatives from all three sections of the local education group. An extensive set of working groups also exist, including for Equity in Access, Inclusion, and Safe Schools. These are chaired by government representatives (frequently from MoEST's Center for Education and Human Resource Development) and are otherwise mostly comprised of INGOs, NGOs, and bilateral agencies.	Overall, the development of the partnership compact included continuous consultation with the broader local education group consortium, including CSOs and teacher organizations. Endorsements were received by mail from joint financing partners, key other development partners, CSO partners and stakeholder representatives, including teacher professional organizations and organizations for people with disabilities, among others.

Country (and name of local education group)	Year founded	Composition of the local education group	Status of inclusivity of dialogue
Sierra Leone Education Technical Strategic Executive Committee (ETSEC)	2005	<p>The LEG/ETSEC is constituted to include high level representation from the MBSSE including Ministers of Basic and Senior Secondary and of Technical and Higher Education and ministerial directors. It includes a representative from each of the EDPs, the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union and two representatives from Civil Society on a rotating model.</p> <p>A smaller task force team also developed consists of seven members including ministries, UNICEF, WB, FCDO, CSOs.</p>	Limited engagement through ways of working with CSOs
Tajikistan Development Coordination Committee	2007	<p>Meetings of the Development Coordination Committee (which also functions as the local education group) are co-led by MoES, UNICEF and the EU. consists of the senior personnel from the MoES (typically around 50%) and a wider appointed group consisting of representatives from international donors, non-governmental organizations (INGOs), civil society representatives.</p> <p>A technical Working Group meets consisting of 24 members, MoES departments, national education institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and a national NGO lead.</p>	CSOs actively participate in working groups and professional associations are now members of the local education group including teacher organizations. After the GPE Secretariat's mission to Tajikistan, the teachers' professional union was also formally included in the local education group.
Tanzania Education Sector Development Committee (ESDC)	Unavailable	Includes CSOs.	The task force includes CSOs. Teaching unions are also part of the process
Uganda Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC)	2017 ⁸⁵	Chaired by the MoES, with 80% of members from government institutions (including the Ministry of Finance). There are also 11 EDPs represented, as well as six representative bodies: two for private sector, two for faith groups, two for NGOs, and the teacher's trade union (UNATU).	National NGOs and religious bodies are engaged in the local education group through umbrella organizations, but had no involvement in the Core Compact Group.

Source: Previous country-level evaluations, local education group terms of reference, partnership compacts and enabling factors assessment on sector coordination.

⁸⁵ In 2017, the ESCC de facto replaced the local education group which had been operating since 2012.

Table 17. Extent to which the GPE 2025 operating model supported inclusive policy dialogue, government leadership and mutual accountability

Country	Support to inclusive policy dialogue	Support to government leadership and mutual accountability of partners
Cambodia	<p>(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was overall inclusive</p> <p>(-) There was a limited involvement of CSOs in the process</p>	<p>(+/-) Mixed evidence on mutual accountability, with some stakeholders experiencing a competitive undertone in the process</p>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was inclusive, particularly regarding inclusion of faith-based delegations</p> <p>(-) Nevertheless, the inclusive dialogue appears to have been strongly tied to compact development process, and does not continue</p>	<p>(!) Little evidence of supporting mutual accountability towards the commitments made in the priority reform</p>
El Salvador	<p>(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was inclusive, especially regarding direct participation of national NGOs</p>	<p>(+) The government took a clear ownership of the process (e.g., they had a leading role to play in the local education group)</p> <p>(!) No clear mutual accountability mechanisms</p>
Nepal	<p>(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was inclusive, and increased as a result of GPE Secretariat intervention</p> <p>(+) The Joint Review Meetings and the Budget Review Meetings encouraged synergy in collaboration and provided a critical opportunity to reflect in a participatory way</p> <p>(-) The selection of the Grant Agent could have been made prior to the compact development process, with part of the SCG being made available in advance. This would have allowed for better planning</p>	<p>(!) Little evidence of supporting mutual accountability towards the commitments made in the priority reform</p>
Sierra Leone	<p>(+) Yes, most key stakeholder groups were involved in the dialogue</p> <p>(-) The only exception were CSOs (particularly faith-based organizations)</p> <p>(-) There was a dispute over the Grant Agent selection process, which led to friction between two main development partners</p>	<p>(!) Little evidence of supporting mutual accountability towards the commitments made in the priority reform</p>
Tajikistan	<p>(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was inclusive, with a wide range of entities represented</p>	<p>(+) The government ownership of the process was evident</p> <p>(+) All the stakeholders recognized UNICEF's strong capacity and positioning as a CA</p> <p>(-) However, country-level stakeholders were dissatisfied with the limited international donor presence in the country, which led to an inability to rotate the CA</p>

Country	Support to inclusive policy dialogue	Support to government leadership and mutual accountability of partners
Tanzania	(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was inclusive, particularly with significant direct involvement by national NGOs	(!) Little evidence of supporting mutual accountability towards the commitments made in the priority reform (not explicitly addressed in the compact)
Uganda	(+) Yes, the policy dialogue was inclusive (and historically well formalized through the Joint Sector Review process) (-) However, some felt national NGOs should have been involved more rigorously in the dialogue, particularly the core compact group (-) Information sharing and organization of meetings were seen as a challenge	(!) Little evidence of supporting mutual accountability towards the commitments made in the priority reform (-) The Grant Agent was seen as having played a potentially excessive role in determining the activities of the grant

Source: evaluators assessment based on country case studies

Table 18. Information on funding sources for the priority reform

Country	Evidence on additional funding for priority reform	Information on additional funding	Evidence of alignment of resources
Cambodia	Strong	There is a public investment program 2023-2025 which lists all of the donors Multiplier co funding from EU (\$43.9m), JICA (\$2m), and the World Bank (\$60m)	The compact includes a comprehensive table of aligned projects/resources from EWSG members, including from donors, multilateral agencies, and INGOs.
Democratic Republic of Congo	Weak	There is a pipeline of \$1.3b of current / future funding to support objectives prioritized in the compact.	The compact describes the total pipeline of funding and the ways in which different partners have aligned resources to support different aspects of the priority reform. However, the compact does not set out how much funding is provided by which partner in support of the priority reform.
El Salvador	Strong	Three loans totaling over \$350m from the WB, IDB and CABEL	Alignment is most strongly demonstrated by the fact that the priority reform is strongly aligned with wider policy efforts (Plan Cuscatlán, Plan Torogoz etc.), for which there is strong stakeholder alignment. It is assumed that resource alignment will follow as a result.
Nepal	Fairly strong	There is no clear indication of the total amount committed but over the past 10 years \$1,451m has been financed by the JFPs.	Alignment of resources was already strong in Nepal through the JFPs and the use of the SWAp.
Sierra Leone	Fairly strong	\$82m is already allocated from other partners for the 2022-2026 period The Multiplier has attracted a (yet) undisclosed amount of funds from LEGO	The compact includes a table that outlines the amount of resources made available by each partner and to which priority reform areas their funds are aligned.
Tajikistan	Weak	No information on amount of funding in the compact, but a map of all partner's funds for education (and a new project from UNESCO) For the Multiplier: IsDB: \$45m, OFID: \$8m, Government of Tajikistan: \$8m	The compact describes the alignment of existing programming across several partners (EU, USAID, IsDB, WB, UNICEF) given that CBE is not a new initiative in the country and has been supported by partners historically. However, the compact does not appear to explicitly outline whether there has been further alignment of resources as part of the new operating model.
Tanzania	Strong	\$1,457m contribution from partners	The compact includes a comprehensive mapping of partner funds to support the priority reform – through the map, Tanzania has identified that while there is support from partners in the areas of gender quality, teacher CPD, and improved teaching materials and school environment, there is less alignment of support on teacher

Country	Evidence on additional funding for priority reform	Information on additional funding	Evidence of alignment of resources
Uganda	Weak	No information on amount of funding aligned.	<p>workforce planning and professionalization, support for budget allocation, and teacher promotion and deployment.</p> <p>The quality assurance of the strategic parameters completed by the GPE Secretariat also highlights a question about sector coordination of this funding.</p> <p>The compact includes some information on the proposed areas of alignment for partners, but does not contain information related to the volume of funds aligned or available to support the priority reform. Furthermore, the compact states that alignment of resources persists from the existing alignment to sector plans, such as the NDP III, ESSP and Education Response Plan for Refugee and Host Communities.</p>

Source: Partnership compacts, grant program documents

Table 19. Alignment of GPE support with countries' policy cycles and policy making processes

Country	Alignment of GPE support with country's processes and policy cycles
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned well with Cambodia's existing policy cycle and processes, which coincided with the publication of the Education Sector Plan Mid-term Review (ESP-MTR). • The compact development process was not easily adaptable to the processes and context.
Democratic Republic of Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was not fully clear how the compact and the sector plan should work together and how the priority reform would impact ongoing programs. • Presidential elections in December 2023 may impact country's political priorities. • The model did not fit particularly well with the country context being too centralized. • The participatory nature of the compact development was perceived as well aligned with the country's processes
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned well with policy and planning processes. • The educational priorities were already defined, being stated in the Cuscatlán plan (Nayib Bukele's campaign proposal). • The country started its application to GPE at the beginning of the current administration • Presidential elections in February 2024 may impact country's political priorities.
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned well with existing policy cycle and processes, as it overlapped with the development of the SESP. • The compact development process did not take into account that countries start from different baselines in terms of what evidence already existed in the country. Low learning levels and poor teaching were already a focus.
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned well (the country started its application at the beginning of the current administration). • There has been a policy continuity following presidential elections in June 2023. • The selected priority reform is in line with education policies embraced by the GoSL.
Tajikistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned well with existing policy cycles and NSED-2023. • All the long-term outcomes of the compact align with Tajikistan's NSED-2030. • The priority reform process was demanding on resources and collaboration, but still appeared feasible for country-level stakeholders with the technical support from coordinating agency and external consultant.
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of alignment (a new sector plan is in the process of drafting) • The compact development process did not take into account that countries start from different baselines in terms of the maturity of Tanzania's existing education sector planning process

Country	Alignment of GPE support with country's processes and policy cycles
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="349 293 1995 349">• The compact development process was not fully aligned with the policy cycle (the National Development Plan runs until 2025, whilst GPE support is scheduled until 2026)<li data-bbox="349 373 1995 421">• The model was well tailored to Uganda's context, particularly in building on previous achievements in sector coordination, working with existing dialogue structures and avoiding replication.

Source: Analysis based on case study stakeholder interviews, partnership compacts, and review of education sector plans

Table 20. Country-level stakeholder feedback on GPE actors

Country	GPE actors fulfilment of their expected roles
Cambodia	(+) Effective interaction with the GPE Secretariat mitigated the lack of clarity in the Guidelines (+) GPE Secretariat’s support was highly valued (-) Some stakeholders would have appreciated a stronger lead from GPE in setting limitations and providing guidance for the Grant Agent selection process
Democratic Republic of Congo	(+) Widespread satisfaction with the constant and quality support provided by the GPE Secretariat in terms of commitment, availability, and technical expertise (-) Lack of clarity on expectations regarding the Girl’s Education Accelerator and gender hardwiring
El Salvador	(+) High level of satisfaction with the support provided by the GPE Secretariat (-) The templates were difficult to use
Nepal	(+) Process of compact development was reported to be highly collaborative
Sierra Leone	(+) Widespread satisfaction with the support provided by the GPE Secretariat throughout the process including commitment, availability, and technical support
Tajikistan	(+) Overall satisfaction with the support from the GPE Secretariat, particularly regarding transparency and focus on technical soundness of planning (-) Guidance documents were seen as long and country-level stakeholders required help from external consultants to follow the guidance (-) Frequent changes in the guidance led to inconsistency and frustration
Tanzania	(+) Overall satisfaction with the support from the GPE Secretariat
Uganda	(+) The GPE Secretariat provided a supportive environment and relevant guidance for the compact development, and stakeholders were impressed with accessibility for advice (-) It was felt by some that GPE Secretariat may not have sufficiently ensured inclusion of development partners in decision-making about grant activities

Source: Country-level stakeholder interviews

Table 21: Summary of adaptations to the GPE 2025 operating model

Timeline	Adaptation made	Shortcoming / lesson addressed	Whether the adaptation was justified and evidenced	Link to evaluation findings
Oct-Nov 2021	<p>Draft guidelines and templates published for enabling factors assessment, partnership compact, and SCG</p> <p>GPE commitment to the right to education made explicit throughout operating model tools and guidelines.</p> <p>Operationalization of gender hardwiring incorporated throughout relevant tools.</p>	Strengthened emphasis on the commitment to the right to education and gender hardwiring.	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>Internal review of operating model documents to identify opportunities to strengthen GPE’s approach.</p> <p>External review included interviews and a document review to benchmark and inform recommendations.</p> <p>Amendments framed by existing right to education tools and guidance, and documentation of how GPE partners implement a human rights-based approach.</p>	No links identified.
June 2022	<p>Grant agent selection process updated:</p> <p>New guidelines mean that Grant Agent selection can happen once the draft compact is available. Additional support available from the GPE Secretariat during the selection process.⁸⁶</p>	Streamlining OM processes and reducing transaction costs - estimated to save approx. 1 month in time.	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>A review of pre-grant timelines identified opportunities to speed up the grant agent selection process.</p>	<p>Global KII with GPE Secretariat (Country Engagement and Policy Team and Grant Operation Team) confirmed the relevance of this adaptation.</p> <p>Four case studies noted challenges with grant agent selection, including the timing and level of support available.</p>

⁸⁶ Board document: Report from the Acting CEO, December 2022; Presentation on the grant portfolio status, June 2023.

Timeline	Adaptation made	Shortcoming / lesson addressed	Whether the adaptation was justified and evidenced	Link to evaluation findings
June 2022	<p>New operational framework for effective support in fragile and conflict-affected contexts</p> <p>Adaptions made to the GPE Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected Contexts, to give GPE better capabilities to accelerate funding in close coordination with countries and partners on the ground.</p>	Adapting the model to country contexts.	<p>Some evidence found</p> <p>Feedback from Board members highlighted the need for timely and effective delivery of grants in fragile and conflict affected contexts.</p>	No links identified.
Dec 2022	<p>Refined approach to Quality Assurance Reviews (QAR)</p> <p>Streamlined and tailored approach to QAR process which allows for flexibility depending on the size and context of the grant application.</p>	Streamlining processes and reducing transaction costs, allowing more flexibility within the operating model to account for different contexts.	<p>Some evidence found</p> <p>Although the evaluation did not find much specific evidence of the need for adaptations to the QAR process, this adaptation was justified by identified transaction costs and timelines during the pre-grant process, including quality assurance reviews.</p>	No links identified.
2022-2023	<p>Enhanced training and capacity building across the partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional staff capacity-building on the operating model and gender equality - 63 webinars held with GPE partners and stakeholders across FY21 and FY22. In-person workshops, in-country presentations of the model, and facilitation of peer-to-peer learning Two-day webinar held with pilot countries to share experiences and lessons from the roll-out (June 2022). GPE 2025 operating model e-learning course launched in 2023 	Fostering a common understanding of system transformation and prioritization mean in practical terms, and opportunities to strengthen country capacity for systems thinking.	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>Feedback gathered from partner countries and lessons learned from the roll out of the model highlighted the need for greater clarity around system transformation and the operating model.</p>	Need for adaptation supported by evaluation findings which noted potential issues around inconsistent understandings of system transformation and prioritization in practical terms.
Feb-2023	<p>Refinement of the partnership compact guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplified, more user-friendly language / structure Inclusion of ‘priority reform’ definition and criteria for selection Inclusion of roles and responsibilities in compact development 	<p>Simplifying and clarifying guidelines relating to the compact development process.</p> <p>Clearer guidance on the expectations around timelines and length of compact documents.</p>	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>Feedback collected from secretariat FGDs, country surveys, and effective partnership webinars</p> <p>Review of partnership compacts</p>	Findings support the need for this adaptation. Specifically, case studies highlighted that some partner countries found guidance overly complex. Findings

Timeline	Adaptation made	Shortcoming / lesson addressed	Whether the adaptation was justified and evidenced	Link to evaluation findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on the need to facilitate inputs from relevant stakeholders including teachers and CSO Updated timeframe to complete the compact (6 months rather than 2 months) Additional guidance on the proposed content of the MEL section of the compact (to include a theory of change, and brief guidance on the selection of indicators) Updated guidance on suggested content of compacts (including a 15-page template and previous examples) 	Strengthened communications around system transformation and prioritization.	Data on the time taken to complete compact development process	also noted the potential limited inclusion of CSOs in the compact development process.
Feb-2023	<p>Refinement of the enabling factors assessment tools and templates, and simplifying of the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling factors assessment guidelines rolled into the partnership compact guidelines. Sequencing of activities streamlined so that discussions about the priority reform happen in parallel to starting the enabling factors assessment GPE support outlined in more detail, including use of the SCG, option of GPE input into a first draft, and coordinating with GPE country team leads for advice on advancing with the analysis. Changes to screening and enabling factors assessment templates include simplified and more consistent language and structure. 	Streamlining processes and reducing transaction costs. Additional support for countries with low capacity.	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>Lessons collected through the Learning Framework, including extensive consultations and ongoing feedback from partners, Provisional ITAP Lesson Learned report.</p>	No links identified.
July 2023	<p>Mid-term review</p> <p>The mid-term review of the partnership compact shall to the extent practicable be integrated within existing sector processes and serve as the basis for the strategic parameters for the subsequent funding round for the 2026-2030 financing period.</p>	Streamlining processes and reducing transaction costs. Reduced the need for countries to unnecessarily re-develop compacts which is a lengthier process than expected.	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>Draws on evidence collected as part of the operating model roll out, extensive consultations, and ongoing feedback from partners.</p>	No links identified.
July 2023	<p>ITAP assessment optional for certain contexts</p> <p>ITAP requirement made optional for countries eligible for Multiplier only grants, as well as those with a STG allocation of \$10 million or less.</p>	Streamlining processes and reducing transaction costs. The ITAP process was lengthier than anticipated, and risks creating bottlenecks and delays	<p>Evidenced</p> <p>Draws on evidence collected as part of the operating model roll out, extensive consultations, and ongoing</p>	No links identified.

Timeline	Adaptation made	Shortcoming / lesson addressed	Whether the adaptation was justified and evidenced	Link to evaluation findings
	GPE Secretariat requested to implement improvements to the relevance of recommendations and timeliness of report completion.	as the number of countries increases in 2023/24. Fact checking/ clarifications with countries are an additional transaction. Views on value-add vary.	feedback from partners, ITAP review, and ITAP lessons learned reports.	
July 2023	\$2 million of system capacity funding allocated to support partnership compact development System Capacity Funding allocated to provide additional support for partnership compact development and review to be approved by the GPE Secretariat as either grant financing from the GPE Fund and/or as administrative expenses.	Streamlining processes and transaction costs Although countries can use SCG to get additional support, this can only be done after a grant agent is selected for that small portion of financing. The adaptation aims to reduce transaction costs and streamline the process for getting SCG support.	Evidenced Draws on evidence collected as part of the operating model roll out, extensive consultations, and ongoing feedback from partners	No links identified.
July 2023	Phase out the variable part Determined that a mandatory variable part is not required for any system transformation or Multiplier grant approved under GPE2025. Countries are expected to include results-based financing components within grants that are aligned with grant agent procedures. Countries that choose not to implement results-based financing, must provide an explanation in their grant application	The phase out of the variable part aims to improve country level engagement and operations to reduce transaction costs. Avoids additional layer of negotiation with grant agents already using results-based financing mechanisms. Some grant agents unfamiliar with or unable to do results-based financing.	Evidenced Draws on evidence collected as part of the operating model roll out, extensive consultations, and ongoing feedback from partners	Need for adaptation supported by findings that some partner countries experienced issues with confusion or complexity around top-up triggers.
July 2023	Partners countries may apply for 100% of their indicative allocation Partner countries may apply for 100% of their indicative allocation for a STG. Top-up funds would continue to only be released upon achievement of the triggers at mid-term review. Partner countries that do not apply upfront for 100% of their indicative allocation but achieve the top-up triggers, may continue to program the top-up funds: (1) as	Streamlining processes and transaction costs.	Evidenced Draws on evidence collected as part of the operating model roll out, extensive consultations, and ongoing feedback from partners	Need for adaptation supported by findings that some partner countries experienced issues with confusion or

Timeline	Adaptation made	Shortcoming / lesson addressed	Whether the adaptation was justified and evidenced	Link to evaluation findings
	additional financing or (2) as top-up funds to any 2030 STG allocation, submitting a single application that includes the 2025 top-up in addition to the 2030 allocation. A top-up would not be required for STGs of \$10 million or less.			complexity around top-up triggers.

Source: Desk review of GPE board documentation and presentations on the operating model

Table 22. Synoptic overview of country-level priority reform theories of change

Desired components / attributes of a country-level GPE theory of change	Sierra Leone	Nepal	Cambodia	Democratic Republic of Congo	El Salvador	Uganda	Tajikistan	Tanzania
Form of presentation / visualization								
Presentation / visualization	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative	Diagram + narrative
Components								
Problem analysis / needs assessment	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative	Included in the narrative
Objectives	Included	Included	Missing	Missing	Included in the narrative	Missing	Missing	Included in the narrative
Inputs	Included, partially on the side	Missing	Mixed with activities	Missing	Missing	Mixed with activities	Included	Missing
Activities	Included	Missing, replaced with "strategies"	Mixed with outputs and outcomes	Missing	Included	Missing	Mixed with outputs	Included (as "intervention measures")
Outputs	Mixed with outcomes	Missing	Missing	Mixed with outcomes	Included	Mixed with outcomes	Mixed with activities	Missing
Outcomes	Included, multiple levels of outcomes	Included	Included	Included, multiple levels of outcomes	Included, as "results"	Intermediate outcomes and a high-level outcome included	Included, multiple levels of outcomes	Included, multiple levels of outcomes
Impacts	Missing (mixed with the goal / objective)	Included	Included	Included	Included, multiple levels of impact	Included	Included	Included
Assumptions	Not included explicitly	Not included explicitly	Not included explicitly	Included, but formulated as risks	Not included explicitly	Included, but formulated as barriers	Included	Included
Constraints (included as part of theory of change?)	Missing	Missing	Missing	Mixed with risks	Missing	Included, formulated as enablers	Missing	Missing
Other attributes								

Desired components / attributes of a country-level GPE theory of change	Sierra Leone	Nepal	Cambodia	Democratic Republic of Congo	El Salvador	Uganda	Tajikistan	Tanzania
Credibility / validity / robustness / internal coherence	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Pathways to change	High	Medium	Low / Medium, lack of prioritization	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
External coherence	Medium	Medium, and includes a "Transformative phase"	Low	Low / Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
MEL								
Is a MEL system developed and in place?	MEL existing but not explained	Yes	No <i>using the existing ESP 2019-2023 MEL</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Source: Analysis of partnership compacts

Table 23. Comparative analysis of the theories of change

Component	Analysis
Problem Statements and Objectives	<p>In terms of components, all eight theories of change built on identified problems which are articulated in the accompanying narratives. The degree of articulation varied across countries and sometimes only a short statement was made about the major underlying issue.</p> <p>Four out of eight theories of change contained objectives of the priority reform. Of these, two theories of change (Sierra Leone and Nepal) contained objectives in their diagrams, whilst in two cases (El Salvador and Tanzania), the objectives were included in the accompanying text narrative. However, in the remaining four theories of change, no reference was made to objectives which were, therefore, missing (Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Tajikistan). This was not to say that the partnership compacts in these four countries did not reference goals / objectives of the priority reforms in its other sections. The way in which the objectives were formulated differed across the four countries. For example, in Sierra Leone, there was one overarching objective: “All students acquire foundational skills and learning gaps for girls and other marginalized groups are closed.” Whereas in Nepal, four objectives have been integrated into the theory of change: “Equitable access and participation,” “Enhance relevance and improve quality of school education,” “Literacy for all and expand the opportunities for continuous education and lifelong learning,” and “Improve education governance and management.”</p>
Inputs	<p>Only two theories of change articulated clearly what inputs (or resources) are expected to be invested to the priority reforms (Sierra Leone and Tajikistan). In the remaining six cases, inputs were not clearly stated, or they described activities, rather than inputs (Cambodia and Uganda).</p>
Activities	<p>Activities were formulated in a clear way in three theories of change (Sierra Leone, El Salvador, and Tanzania). The theories of change in the five remaining countries either lacked activities completely (Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda), or they confused and mixed them with other components, such as with outputs (Tajikistan and Cambodia). In Nepal, activities were replaced by “strategies,” which were relatively operational in their nature, however, they were formulated rather as additional objectives.</p>
Outputs	<p>Outputs, as a component indicating what will be produced by activities, were contained only in one theory of change (El Salvador). They were missing in the Nepal, Cambodia, and Tanzania theories of change. Outputs were sometimes not clearly defined, especially when it was obvious what happens after activities have been completed (e.g., “training teachers” as an activity leads to “teachers trained” as an output). In these cases, it may not be necessary to include both activities and outputs in a theory of change diagram. Nevertheless, in Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Tajikistan, the outputs have been mixed up with outcomes. For example, “Competency-based teacher preparation and needs based continuous professional learning system” in Tajikistan appears to be an outcome (even a long-term one) rather than an output.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Of all the components of theories of change, outcomes seem to have been the least problematic to articulate in the eight country case studies. All theories of change included articulated outcomes. Five theories of change even distinguished between outcomes at multiple levels, typically short-term / intermediate / long-term. It was clear what results of the priority reforms in the eight countries were desired. Seven out of eight theories of change included an impact statement. In Sierra Leone, the impact was used synonymously with the goal of the priority reform.</p>
Assumptions	<p>Assumptions were formulated and explicitly mentioned in Democratic Republic of Congo’s, Uganda’s, Tajikistan’s, and Tanzania’s theories of change. The theories of change in the remaining countries lacked explicit mentions. In Democratic Republic of Congo’s theory of change, the assumptions were formulated as risks, and as barriers in Uganda’s theory of change, both of which are acceptable, because it was clear what conditions must be/remain in place in order for the theory of change to work. Partnership compacts included dedicated chapters on enabling factors and constraints. Nevertheless, only in one document were these contained in the country-level theory of change (in Uganda, where they were formulated as enablers).</p>

Source: Partnership compacts

Table 24. Status of the costing and financing of priority reforms

Country	Priority reform costed?	Finance plans developed?	Notes	Evidence strength
Cambodia	To some extent	To some extent	Compact does not include a detailed budget for the priority reform. Applications for SCG and STG grants provide adequate budgets, but gaps remain	High
Democratic Republic of Congo	No	No	No budget for the priority reform Compact identifies some measures to improve domestic finance	High
El Salvador	To some extent	To some extent	Compact does not include a detailed budget for the priority reform Receiving external support to cost priority reform	Medium
Nepal	To a large extent	To large extent	Priority reform has been costed, but unclear if this is adequate Budgets have been developed Capacity constraints need to be costed for and addressed	Medium
Sierra Leone	No	No	Compact does not include a detailed budget for the priority reform Currently unclear what the priority reform will cost MoF not involved until grants are approved	High
Tajikistan	To some extent	To some extent	Compact does not include a detailed budget for the priority reform Instead, costs of national strategy were updated	Medium
Tanzania	No	No	Compact does not include a detailed budget for the priority reform SCG grant identifies interventions, but does not have a budget	Medium
Uganda	To some extent	Unclear	Compact does not include a detailed budget for the priority reform Draft STG design is fully costed and detailed, including PbR mechanisms Wider funding for key elements of the priority reform (especially improvement of pre-primary) do not appear to be fully costed or have government commitment.	Medium

Source: Partnership compacts

Table 25. Status of implementation plans for the priority reforms

Country	Implementation plan developed?	Status of Implementation plan	Notes	Evidence strength
Cambodia	Partially	Progress made, but more detail and clarity needed	High-level implementation plans exist for SCG and STG grants Further definition of implementation plans needed, including roles and responsibilities	High
Democratic Republic of Congo	No	Not yet developed	No evidence of implementation plan Certain components are covered by pre-existing interventions and/or new grants	High
El Salvador	Partially	Progress made, but more detail and clarity needed	Many gaps in information on implementation Analysis of implementation challenges is ongoing, with support from Summa Lab	High
Nepal	Yes	Plans are in place	Implementation mechanisms are being established A Program Implementation Manual has been drafted and is awaiting approval	Medium
Sierra Leone	Partially	Progress made, but more detail and clarity needed	Further definition of implementation plans needed, including roles, responsibilities, and timelines Discussion of roles, responsibilities and financing ongoing	High
Tajikistan	Yes	Plans are in place, but more detail needed	A national stakeholder mapping exercise has been completed Roles and responsibilities are clear Existing national implementation plans are comprehensive	Medium
Tanzania	Partially	Certain projects and programs have plans, but others do not	DP-supported projects/programs have implementation plans STG-supported Teacher support program does not have an implementation plan Roles and responsibilities are unclear	Medium
Uganda	Partially	Progress made, but more detail and clarity needed	High-level detailed implementation plans exist for STG, although wider roles and responsibilities for stakeholders and accountability mechanisms are less clear	Low

Source: Country case studies

Table 26. Status of MEL mechanisms and conditions for priority reforms

Country	Status of indicators	Proposed MEL mechanisms for priority reforms	Observations on MEL mechanisms (data collection, analysis, and reporting)	Indicators proposed in partnership compact
Cambodia	<p>Indicators aligned with ESP-MTR. Adopts 6 indicators from the ESP-MTR (1-5, 8)</p> <p>Indicators include baseline and annual targets until 2025.</p>	<p>Builds on existing monitoring systems (EGRA/EGMA, PFM monitoring, and monitoring by inspectorate general)</p> <p>Key indicators are shown in EMIS.</p> <p>Development of the monitoring system for the MTR of the GMSP 2021-2025 is still required.</p>	<p>(+) Gaps in monitoring systems have been identified and are being addressed</p> <p>(-) Integration of systems and consistency of data needs improvement</p> <p>(-) Risk of fragmentation due to a lack of detail in theory of change and no MEL plan for priority reform</p> <p>(-) Unclear what the approach to reporting will be</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of five-year-old children enrolled in ECE (M/F) 2. Completion rate in primary education (M/F) 3. Completion rate in lower secondary education (M/F) 4. % of students achieving at 'below basic proficiency level,' Khmer reading/writing, mathematics, grs .3, 6, 8, 11 5. % of primary teachers qualified according to national standard 8. # of principals trained in SBM (annual, primary, and secondary)
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>Compact includes 11 indicators.</p> <p>Indicators include some baseline figures and targets (but not consistently).</p>	<p>Not described.</p>	<p>(-) Systematic and current data not available</p> <p>(-) Unclear what data will be used and how it will be analyzed</p> <p>(-) Gaps in data will make conducting a robust analysis challenging</p> <p>(-) Unclear what the approach to reporting will be and who will lead it</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary school teacher salary as a share of GDP/inhabitant. 2. % teachers benefiting from social security 3. % teachers eligible to exercise their right to retirement who benefit from effective retirement (departure + pension) 4. % teachers recruited with initial diploma training through renovated HPs or IFMEs 5. % of women among newly recruited teachers 6. Provinces with a functional system for continuing teacher training (M/F) 7. Rate of increase in access for girls in primary school 8. Rate of increase in retention of girls in primary school until 5th grade 9. % children with special needs enrolled in primary school 10. % schools with educational projects developed and implemented 11. Level of functionality of the coordination, planning, mobilization, and operationalization structures of the Partnership Pact (PP).

Country	Status of indicators	Proposed MEL mechanisms for priority reforms	Observations on MEL mechanisms (data collection, analysis, and reporting)	Indicators proposed in partnership compact
El Salvador	<p>Includes 3 process indicators (P), 19 product indicators (O), 3 results indicators (R)</p> <p>No baselines are set out, except where the baseline is 0 (applies to 3 process indicators and 14 product indicators)</p> <p>No end targets set, except when goal is 100% (applies to 2 process indicators)</p>	Not described.	<p>(+) Aware of need to develop analysis tools to support decision-making</p> <p>(+) Motivated to share learning with other countries</p> <p>(-) Unclear what mechanisms will be used to collect data and how it will be analyzed</p> <p>(-) Unclear what the approach to reporting will be</p>	<p>P1 Approved funding for the Country Compact</p> <p>P2 Commitments for Compact activities</p> <p>P3 Percentage committed for Compact activities</p> <p>P4 Disbursements on Compact activities</p> <p>P5 Percentage disbursed on Compact activities</p> <p>O1 Number of schools intervened</p> <p>O2 Number of students in intervened schools, disaggregated by gender and age</p> <p>O3 Children receiving books at home</p> <p>O5 Number of schools with improved infrastructure</p> <p>O6 Schools accredited with quality assurance</p> <p>O7 Schools implementing new early childhood curricula</p> <p>O8 New curricular instruments</p> <p>O9 Schools with transition promotion strategies</p> <p>O10 ESENGUA implemented</p> <p>O11 Specific learning assessment implemented</p> <p>O12 Dual assessment of learning implemented</p> <p>O13 Staff trained in capacity building to design learning assessments</p> <p>O14 Teachers trained in new curriculum</p> <p>O15 Staff trained in technical and technological capabilities</p> <p>O16 Staff trained in the design of gender-neutral assessments</p> <p>O17 Surveys carried out</p> <p>O18 Knowledge products for decision making</p> <p>O19 SIGES modules reviewed with a gender focus</p> <p>R1 Over-age students</p> <p>R2 Net enrollment</p> <p>R3 First grade entry rate</p>
Nepal	Indicators are based on program results framework (PRF) and joint DLI framework	Builds on existing MEL processes (SWAp) and frameworks (including EMIS).	(+) Data collection is frequent, robust and comprehensive	<p><u>ECED:</u></p> <p>PRF 1.1: ECED centers that meet prioritized minimum enabling conditions</p>

Country	Status of indicators	Proposed MEL mechanisms for priority reforms	Observations on MEL mechanisms (data collection, analysis, and reporting)	Indicators proposed in partnership compact
	<p>in the areas of the three priority reforms (ECED, gender, quality teaching).</p> <p>Indicators not described in detail in compact.</p> <p>No baselines or targets included in the compact, but DLIs are tied to SESP Joint DLI framework, which includes baseline and targets.</p>		<p>(-) Integration of systems and consistency in data needs improvement</p> <p>(-) Data on gender requires disaggregation to develop an analysis</p> <p>(-) Mobilization of learning needs improvement</p>	<p>PRF 1.2: Sets of ECE learning materials</p> <p>PRF 1.5 Basic teacher training for ECED teachers</p> <p>PRF 8.7: Separate toilets and WASH facilities for ECED</p> <p>KPI 1.1: GER in ECED</p> <p>KPI 1.3: Children with ECED experienced enrolled in grade 1.</p> <p>KPI 1.2: Enrolment of 4-year-old Children in ECED</p> <p>KPI 2.1: Trained ECED teachers</p> <p>7.6.1: Enrolment of Dalit students in ECED</p> <p><u>Gender Inclusion:</u></p> <p>DLI 2: No. students receiving need-based scholarships</p> <p>DLI 2: National equity index score increases to 0.74</p> <p>KPI 3.1-3.3: GPI across each level of school education</p> <p>KPI 3.4-3.5: Ratio of email teachers at basic and secondary level</p> <p><u>Quality Teaching:</u></p> <p>DLI 3: No. local levels implementing teacher professional support in schools</p> <p>DLI 3: No. teachers receiving TPD certification training</p> <p>DLI 3: Observations showing improved classroom practices</p> <p>DLI 3: Local levels receiving grants for additional secondary level teachers</p> <p>KPI 2.1-2.3: Trained teachers at each level of school education</p> <p>KPI 5.1-5.2: Local levels that have fulfilled teacher-student ratio at basic and secondary level.</p>
Sierra Leone	<p>Builds on ESP M&E framework</p> <p>Includes 16 indicators</p> <p>Some indicators have baseline figures and has year 5 targets (ESP targets).</p>	<p>Progress on key indicators will be assessed as part of Annual JSRs.</p>	<p>(-) Reliability and timeliness of data needs improvement</p> <p>(+) Investing in unifying data and monitoring systems</p> <p>(-) Unclear how data will be analyzed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Share of P2 and P4 students who meet and exceed minimum benchmarks in English and Mathematics Percentage of classrooms being taught using the new foundational learning curriculum Material to pupil ratio for core TLM in government and government-assisted schools Pupil-Qualified-Teacher Ratio (PQTR)

Country	Status of indicators	Proposed MEL mechanisms for priority reforms	Observations on MEL mechanisms (data collection, analysis, and reporting)	Indicators proposed in partnership compact
			<p>(-) Potential issues with capacity to conduct an analysis</p> <p>(-) Unclear what the approach to reporting will be</p> <p>(-) Limited institutional capacity to share learning and implement reforms</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Average number of CPD support visits received by teachers 6. How well teachers are distributed relative to where students are enrolled (GPE R Squared Measure), 7. Gender Parity Index, Primary 8. % of schools that report at least one coaching and support visit during the term 9. % of primary schools head teachers submitting data using tablets 10. Number of “stock take” meetings conducted at national and district levels 11. Number of publicly available reports/communications on progress of Delivering the Foundations for Learning for All 12. Number of district education offices with enhanced capacity 13. % of districts and national staff using dashboard to update action plans based on school level learning data 14. Number of additional children from Radical Inclusion groups enrolled in quality pre-primary 15. Number of new pre-primary classrooms in targeted locales 16. Number of new pre-primary teachers qualified by pre-service program
Tajikistan	<p>Results framework not included in compact.</p> <p>M&E section describes 5 proposed outcome-level performance indicators.</p> <p>Does not include baseline or target figures.</p>	<p>Builds on existing mechanisms (JSRs and MOES’ annual reporting) for NSED-2030 and MTEAP 2021-2023.</p> <p>Evaluation will require coordination with partners to undertake learning assessments (EGRA, PISA, TIMSS, ICILS, PIRLS, and national learning assessment), but no further details outlined for this in compact.</p>	<p>(+) Plans in place to build capacity</p> <p>(-) Approach to data collection needs to be more systematic</p> <p>(-) Data collection needs to include efficiency indicators</p> <p>(-) Unclear how data will be analyzed in relation to priority reform</p> <p>(-) Analytical capacity needs strengthening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of boys and girls who have reached achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics (in %), of which: (i) students in grade 5 (boys and girls), and (ii) students in grade 11 (boys and girls); • The presence of a modern curriculum and TLMs that are based on the CBE approach; • Gender parity index (GPI) in general secondary education (by age groups and grades); • Establishment of a competency-based teacher continuous professional learning and growth system;

Country	Status of indicators	Proposed MEL mechanisms for priority reforms	Observations on MEL mechanisms (data collection, analysis, and reporting)	Indicators proposed in partnership compact
			(-) Accuracy and accessibility of reports needs improvement (-) Feedback perceived as an assessment rather than a tool	• Share of schools using digital learning platforms and solutions, i.e., technology-enabled learning (in % of all schools).
Tanzania	Adopts 6 KPIs from ESDP M&E framework and proposes 1 additional KPI. Includes baseline and targets for 2025, 2030.	Builds on MTEF and Strategic Plan monitoring instruments, including Education Sector Development Committee (ESDC), Annual Joint Education Sector Review (AJESR).	(+) Compact identifies measures to improve data analysis (-) Data is fragmented across multiple systems (-) Unclear who is responsible for improving data systems (-) Capacity for data analysis and use are limited; (-) Unclear what the approach to reporting will be (-) Capacity issues and lack of coordination may create challenges	K09: Pupil/Qualified Teacher Ratio in Pre-Primary Education K10: Pupil/Qualified Teacher Ratio in Primary Education K11: Primary School Leaving Examination Pass Rate K12: Certificate of Secondary Education Examination Pass Rate K13 % STD II learners achieving the national benchmark in reading with comprehension K14 % STD II learners achieving the national benchmark in mathematics (level 2 addition and subtraction) Additional: Pupil/Qualified Teacher Ratio in Secondary Education
Uganda	No results framework was included in the compact Indicators cannot fully measure or monitor success Monitoring in place for certain interventions	Compact proposes that an annual monitoring system will be adopted and mainstreamed with the MoES EMIS once it is functional. Proposes that monitoring take place through biannual missions. May build on the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE).	(+) Monitoring of certain interventions is regular and well-structured (+) Improving data systems seen as a priority (-) Analysis may not be reliable due to data collection issues, including major issues with quality and reliability of data (-) Lack of capacity in data analysis and management (-) Unclear what the approach to reporting will be and how to operationalize learning	None included

Source: Analysis of partnership compacts

Table 27. Stakeholder roles and capacity in the implementation phase

Country	Stakeholder roles clear	Stakeholders' alignment with expected roles	Stakeholders' capacity to fulfil their roles	Notes
Cambodia	Low	Low	Unclear, due to lack of analysis	Stakeholders unclear about roles in implementation phase Greater analysis of capacities by MoEYS is needed
Democratic Republic of Congo	Low	Low	Low	No definition of roles and responsibilities Stakeholders unclear about next steps in implementation
El Salvador	Medium at central level Low at regional/local level	Medium at central level Low at regional/local level	Medium at central level Low at a regional/local level	Lack of clarity around role of regional and/or local actors Certain actors have not been involved in the local education group
Nepal	Medium	Medium	Medium at central level Low at local level, but improvement plans in place	Implementation builds on existing roles and processes Greater clarity needed on responsibilities and resourcing across tiers of government
Sierra Leone	Low	Low	Low	Stakeholders unclear about roles in implementation phase Capacity challenges at central and local levels
Tajikistan	High	High at central level Low at local level	Medium at central level Low at local level	Implementation builds on existing roles and processes Rural areas face significant capacity challenges
Tanzania	Low	Low	Low	Lack of accountability and clearly defined roles Strong awareness of need for clear roles and responsibilities
Uganda	Medium at central level Low at regional/local level	Low	Low	Roles and responsibilities only defined on a program level Capacity differences between public and private schools and rural and urban areas

Source: Partnership compacts and case study country-level stakeholder interviews

Table 28. Risks linked to implementation

Risk	Budgets and financial plans			Implementation plans			MEL plans			Stakeholder roles and capacity		
	Reforms are not costed and financial plans lack adequate detail			Implementation plans are not fully developed for the priority reform			MEL plans are not sufficiently comprehensive			Stakeholder roles are not clearly defined and gaps in capacity are not adequately addressed		
Country	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation strategy	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation strategy	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation strategy	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation strategy
Cambodia	M	M	Budgets developed for SCG and STG grants	M	M	Strong leadership and development of tools for coordination	M	M	Existing MEL frameworks to be used	M	M	Active engagement with stakeholders during compact development
Democratic Republic of Congo	H	H	Compact shows awareness of risk No evidence of mitigation of risk	H	H	No evidence of mitigation of risk	H	H	No evidence of mitigation of risk	H	H	Compact shows awareness of risk No evidence of mitigation of risk
El Salvador	M	M	MoE working on realistic budget and studies conducted	M	M	External contractor supporting development	M	M	Attempting to secure additional resources for MEL through grants	M	M	Improving alignment with stakeholders discussed in compact
Nepal	M	L	Reform has been costed, but may not be adequate	M	L	Plans have been developed	M	L	Existing, robust MEL plans to be used and indicators identified	M	M	New Education Act attempts to clarify roles and processes
Sierra Leone	H	H	No evidence of mitigation of risk	H	M	Working to further develop plans, but significant systemic challenges exist	M	M	Plans to hire additional monitoring staff Existing MEL frameworks to be used	H	M	Improvements made to direct communication with schools
Tajikistan	M	M	Costs of national strategy updated	M	L	Plans have been developed	M	L	Compact clearly outlines MEL mechanisms	M	M	Roles clearly defined and well-established at a national level
Tanzania	H	U	Unclear – Gaps in evidence on financial planning	M	M	Plans in place for some projects, but gaps remain	M	M	Existing MEL frameworks to be used	M	M	Consensus around need to define roles and responsibilities
Uganda	H	U	Detailed costing for STG has been developed; financial support for some elements of the reform (especially pre-primary) is unclear.	H	U	Working to further develop plans, but further coordination of stakeholder priorities may be necessary	M	M	Existing MEL frameworks to be used	H	M	Some roles identified in country's theory of change

Source: Compacts, enabling factors assessment documents, ITAP reports, country case studies

Table 29. Goals and indicators in the domestic finance of different GPE strategic plans

Strategic plan	Goal/objective	Indicator
Education for All—Fast Track Initiative (FTI)	Goal 4 “Adequate and sustainable domestic financing for education within the framework of a country’s national poverty reduction strategy, medium-term expenditure framework or other country statements as appropriate.”	Domestic resources moving towards the benchmark of 20 percent of recurrent government expenditure.
GPE Strategic Plan 2012–2015	Objective 5: “Expand the volume, effectiveness, efficiency and equitable allocation of external and domestic financing and support to education in GPE-endorsed countries.”	Indicator: Percentage of total government budget that goes to education and to basic education
GPE Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020	Goal 3 “Effective and efficient education systems delivering equitable, quality educational services for all.”	Results Framework Indicator 10: Proportion of partner developing countries that have (i) increased their public expenditure on education; or (ii) maintained sector spending at 20 percent or above. Indicator 14: Proportion of partner developing countries reporting at least 10 of 12 key international education indicators to UIS (including financing indicators as identified by GPE).
	Objective 4: “Mobilize more and better financing.” Support increased, efficient and equitable domestic financing for education through cross-national advocacy, mutual accountability and support for transparent monitoring and reporting.	Results Framework Indicator 31: Proportion of country missions addressing domestic financing issues.

Source: Desk review of GPE strategic plans

Table 30. GPE 2025 Results Framework goals and indicators in domestic finance

Goal	Indicator
Global goal “To accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century”	<p>Proportion of countries with government expenditure on education increasing or 20% or above as a percentage of total government expenditure (volume of domestic finance). Source: National budget documents compiled by GPE.</p> <p>(a) Proportion of countries where equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic finance for education is assessed. Source: Enabling factors assessments by ITAP.</p> <p>(b) Proportion of countries making progress against identified challenges in equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic finance for education. Source: partnership compact periodic monitoring.</p>
Country-level objective #2 “Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change”	<p>Proportion of countries that implement GPE allocation-linked policy reforms in the overall equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic finance enabling factor as identified in their partnership compact. Source: STG top-up at compact review.</p> <p>Proportion of GPE grant funding aligned to national systems. Source: ESPIG and STG application form.</p> <p>Proportion of GPE grant funding using harmonized funding modalities. Source: ESPIG and STG application form.</p>
Country-level objective #3 “Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale”	Proportion of STGs met objectives at completion on equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic finance.
Enabling objective “Mobilize global and national partners and resources for sustainable results”	Additional co-financing leveraged through GPE innovative financing mechanisms.

Source: GPE 2025 results framework

Table 31. Comparison of Results Framework indicators in GPE 2020 and GPE 2025 strategic plans

	GPE 2020	GPE 2025
Indicators	2 indicators	2 indicators (one of them is compound)
Definition of indicators	<p>Results Framework Indicator 10: Proportion of partner developing countries that have (i) increased their public expenditure on education; or (ii) maintained their sector spending at 20 percent or above.</p> <p>Results Framework Indicator 31: Proportion of country missions addressing domestic financing issues.</p>	<p>Indicator 4.i. Total number of partner countries/subnational entities that during the corresponding year either (a) increased their government expenditure on education, as compared with a base year value, towards the 20% benchmark or (b) have maintained government expenditure on education at 20% or above, expressed as a percentage of the total number of partner countries/subnational entities.</p> <p>Indicator 4. ii. (a) Proportion of countries where equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic finance for education is assessed. Source: Enabling factors assessments by ITAP. (b) Proportion of countries making progress against identified challenges in equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic finance for education.</p>
Characteristics of indicators	<p>Indicator 10 is related to volume.</p> <p>Indicator 31 is related to progress in addressing domestic finance issues.⁸⁷</p> <p>No indicator on how the issues are identified or whether there is a process in place to ensure that those problems are most pressing and relevant to country context</p>	<p>Specific indicator on problem identification (enabling factors assessment) – specific process of problem identification with the use of evidence and also with requirement to be context-related. The identified challenges are verified and some suggestions could be added or adjusted to better match context (through ITAP process)</p>

Source: GPE 2020 and 2025 results frameworks

⁸⁷ According to Methodology sheet for GPE indicators (Indicator 31), "domestic financing issues are issues related to DCP's commitment towards meeting the requirements of GPE's funding model. Those may include, but are not limited to resource mobilization, education share of budget, Education Sector Plan, and Basic/Primary subsector issues associated with domestic funding." Source:

Table 32. Compact and grant program activities related volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic finance by the country⁸⁸

Country	Activities related to Volume	Activities related to Equity	Activities related to Efficiency	Capacity increasing activities
Cambodia	<p>Compact plans to improve volume and efficiency of education sector non-salary recurrent expenditure (increase flexible funding sources), including through strong evidence-based funding use and allocation.</p> <p>STG top-up indicator “Increased allocation of SOF [School Operating Fund] relative to non-wage expenditure year by year” was chosen because MoEYS lacks control over percentage increases concerning expenditure in other categories.</p>	<p>STG top-up indicator “Increased allocation of SOF relative to non-wage expenditure year by year” addresses the equity aspect, as SOF, decentralized to the school level, allows for need-based financing. As recognized in the ITAP report, this approach is a means of improving facilities and equipment, especially in disadvantaged regions.</p>	<p>Compact plans to improve volume and efficiency of education sector non-salary recurrent expenditure (increase flexible funding sources), including through: strong evidence-based funding use and allocation.</p> <p>SCG initiatives to enhance MoEYS’s capacity in sectoral planning and financial simulation.</p> <p>SCG potential support for evidence-based programming and proposals to fortify the ongoing Public Finance Management (PFM) program funded by the European Union.</p>	<p>Strengthen Department of Finance central capacity to ensure systems development and ICT capacity.</p> <p>Strengthen the reform and PFM, in particular, the Education Financial Management System (EFMS).</p>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>Compact plans to set out a target of 20% of the national budget allocated to education in 2023, 21% in 2024 and 22% in 2026.</p>	<p>No activities. Evaluation report notes that key measures identified by the ITAP report at system level to strengthen equity in domestic financing have not been taken on board in the compact.</p>	<p>Compact plan to improve rationalization of managing offices and efficiency of a system to recruit teachers based on merit, transparency, and competition.</p> <p>Compact plans to strengthen the salary payment system which could increase flexible funding sources and efficiency of domestic finance allocation.</p> <p>Two of the three STG revised triggers target directly domestic financing and have more potential to have broader effects on the efficiency of the system:</p>	<p>Create Thematic Consultation Committee on education financing, the reactivation of the Interministerial Committee for Budget Preparation and Monitoring in support of the DAFs and coordinated by the SPACE, and the strengthening of the capacities of the DAF.</p>

⁸⁸ Note that this is not an exhaustive list of activities as there are some data limitations. The approved SCG applications were not available for two out of eight sample countries (El Salvador and Nepal) at the time of data collection. Uganda has not applied for SCG.

Country	Activities related to Volume	Activities related to Equity	Activities related to Efficiency	Capacity increasing activities
			<p>Setting up a unique identifier for all teaching staff of the MEPST paid by the national budget by 2025 in order to improve administrative and professional management and to have more control over the payroll (triggering a \$20m top-up)</p> <p>Effective retirement of 4,000 teachers by 2025 (triggering a \$25m top-up).</p>	
El Salvador	<p>The priority reform emphasizes the importance of creating a governance, monitoring, and evaluation structure within the MINEDUCYT to oversee funding sources, their utilization, and their alignment with identified program priorities. This should indirectly have an impact on the accountability and potentially the volume of public expenditure on education.</p>		<p>Conduct a study on the efficiency of public spending in El Salvador</p>	<p>The priority reform emphasizes the importance of creating a governance, monitoring, and evaluation structure within the MINEDUCYT to oversee funding sources, their utilization, and their alignment with identified program priorities. This should indirectly have an impact on the accountability and potentially the volume of public expenditure on education.</p>
Nepal		<p>STG activity 1 “Quality of teaching” has an initiative that could contribute to equity: a teacher rationalization and redeployment plan. This plan has contributed to improved teacher distribution and will contribute to equitable teacher distribution based on the set of criteria.</p>	<p>Indirectly improving the effectiveness of teaching and the capacity of teachers through priority reform will have an impact on the efficiency of the education system, public expenditure, and better cost-benefit. Teaching salaries account for the greatest budget utilization in education, with over 75% of the education budget allocation.</p> <p>STG activity 1 “Quality of teaching” focuses on a teacher rationalization and redeployment plan which has contributed to improve efficiency and will continue to do so through improved teacher distribution and efficient use of resources during School Sector Development Plan.</p>	<p>Support deployment of education officers to all Local Governments.</p> <p>Develop the management capacity, including financial management, of the staff in charge of education at the local level</p>

Country	Activities related to Volume	Activities related to Equity	Activities related to Efficiency	Capacity increasing activities
Sierra Leone		STG trigger 2 “incorporate learning outcomes and learner disadvantages in teacher allocation mechanisms” will entail allocating excellent teachers to district areas and contribute to equity objectives.	<p>One of the top-up triggers will work to improve MBSSE budget execution rate, and potentially revise internal allocation of resources, to allocate more funds to primary education.</p> <p>SCG plans to embed technical experts in data, gender, and financial analysis within the MBSSE to "strengthen systems to support data management and analysis, and analysis on financing and expenditure on foundation learning, enabling better and timely use of data to improve teaching, learning, and financing."</p>	
Tajikistan	Updating the costs of education reforms implementation. Updating the cost of implementing the NSED 2030 and its mid-term operational framework as well as the cost of the transition to 12-year schooling, based on the agreed transition scenario.	SCG plans to enhance inclusivity in funding by reviewing the effectiveness of per-capita funding (PCF) mechanism in general secondary education and expand the PCF to the TVET sector. The focus will be to increase inclusivity of children with disabilities and minority groups.	<p>SCG actions:</p> <p>Sensitivity analysis and simulation modelling. Following the ITAP comment about the lack of a rigorous simulation model or projection, SCG includes an activity to develop sensitivity analysis and simulation modeling, based on the country’s macro-fiscal framework.</p> <p>Rigorous costing of the total financing need (and gap) for the implementation of the NSED-2030 and its mid-term operational framework (i.e., MTEAP 2021-2023).</p>	SCG initiatives to increase accountability of expenditure and establish uninterrupted and remote access to the Tajikistan Financial Management Information System under the Ministry of Finance to monitor and analyze education spending by subnational governments through a newly established Planning and Coordination unit.
Tanzania	SCG activity 1.2. “Revision and operationalization of the 2021/2022-2025/2026 ESDP” may supply the Ministry with an evidence base to justify financing requests to both government and development partners. Current finance and resource framework in the ESDP is not a true reflection of the reality within the sector as it is not composed of credible projections of resource needs relative	<p>SCG plans to expand on the ongoing student unit cost study to include household contribution to such costs.</p> <p>STG “Outcome 1: Improved Teacher Workforce Planning and Management” has a potential to incentivize equitable use of financing and efficiency concerning teachers.</p>	<p>SCG plans to review the MoEST ESDP Simulation Model.</p> <p>A third STG trigger will improve projections and simulation in the ESDP.</p>	Partners will also conduct a study on the coordination, management, and governance of Education Program for Results II.

Country	Activities related to Volume	Activities related to Equity	Activities related to Efficiency	Capacity increasing activities
	to expected student population increase, current policy, or projected staffing levels.			
Uganda	STG top-up trigger indicator 2 “[Increase education’s share to] 19% of the domestic financing excluding debt: domestic financing increased by two percentage-points from current 17% to 19% (\$25m)” suggests the needed increase in the volume.	STG top-up trigger indicator 3: Develop and implement the capitation grant formula for primary subsector: capitation grant at least maintained at UGX 20,000 in the compact period for primary level and equitable capitation grant formula approved (\$10m).	Develop a robust EMIS and to avail reliable and timely data to enable government to identify and plug the efficiency gaps relating to repetition, drop-out as well as ensure equitable distribution of other resources such as teachers, infrastructure, materials etc.	

Source: Partnership compacts

Table 33. Bottlenecks in volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic finance outlined in ITAP and corresponding activities planned in the compact or grants program documents

Country	Bottlenecks identified (through enabling factors assessment, ITAP report)	Corresponding activities planned in the compact or GPE grant program documents
Cambodia	The proportion of education expenditure in total government expenditure has steadily declined over the past four years which could be explained partially by COVID mitigation measures.	The priority is to improve volume and efficiency of education sector non-salary recurrent expenditure (increase flexible funding sources). According to data collected during the country visit, clear data, and figures about the latest proportion education expenditure in total government expenditure are not yet available.
	A radical change would be necessary to achieve the goal of the level of expenditure at 20% of GDP by 2025 and it may face challenges in light of competition for financing from other sectors.	Improve volume and efficiency of education sector non-salary recurrent expenditure (increase flexible funding sources), including through: strong evidence-based funding use and allocation; realistic projection modelling (using simulation model)
	A huge effort still needs to be made in mobilizing public funds for education, accompanied by further improvement of management procedures and practices at all levels and upgrading of teachers' capacities.	Simplify financial legislation, and FMIS/EFMS systems, with emphasis on access and reduced administrative load for non-financially trained users; Strengthen Department of Finance (DoF) at Ministry of Education central capacity to ensure systems development and ICT capacity strengthening.
Democratic Republic of Congo	Implement and monitor disbursement of more equitable funds at provincial level.	No explicit mention of activities to address the bottleneck. Only indirectly through “budget programs facilitating execution at the level of responsibility centers.”
	Local education groups devise equitable formulas and couple with allocation system.	No explicit mention of activities to address the bottleneck.
	Consider how to enroll out of school children.	No explicit mention of activities to address the bottleneck.
	There is an increase in education expenditure planned.	Yes, the percentage of the budget allocated to education is planned to be increased and there is an associated indicator: 20% in 2023, 21% in 2024, 22% in 2026 (however, this indicator has been dropped).
El Salvador	The government could give a higher priority to education spending as a share of overall domestic spending. ITAP is concerned whether it is realistic to dedicate 5.5% of GDP to education in 2021 given it is a significant jump from previous years at the same time as the economy is experiencing negative impacts of COVID-19.	Yes, the priority reform addresses the possibility of the government giving higher priority to education spending as a share of overall domestic spending. It also expresses concern about the feasibility of dedicating 5.5% of GDP to education in 2021, especially considering the significant increase from previous years and the economic challenges posed by the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The compact highlights that MINEDUCYT needs to create a governance, monitoring, and evaluation structure on the sources of funding, their uses and their adequacy to the priorities identified in each program. So, that it ensures that the allocated funds are effectively utilized and aligned with the goals of the education sector.

Country	Bottlenecks identified (through enabling factors assessment, ITAP report)	Corresponding activities planned in the compact or GPE grant program documents
	<p>There are potential opportunities for improving the efficiency and equity of domestic resources for education and ensuring that the mechanisms in place for monitoring the link between planning, budgeting and results-based expenditure are used, e.g., ensuring funds are allocated and spent on each of the priorities in the plan.</p>	<p>No explicit mention of activities to address these bottlenecks. The priority reform emphasizes the importance of creating a governance, monitoring, and evaluation structure within the MINEDUCYT to oversee funding sources, their utilization, and their alignment with identified program priorities.</p> <p>Compact identifies two major challenges in education spending equity: coverage disparities and universal provision of certain programs (such as school feeding and supplies) to students who may not necessarily require such assistance. But it does not specify any activities to solve inequalities.</p>
	<p>The absence of a recent public expenditure review which would help to produce a more up-to-date analysis of the equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of public expenditure.</p>	<p>The reform aims to address this by conducting a review of public spending (however, to the best of evaluation team’s knowledge, it has not been done yet). The compact highlights disparities in spending across different education levels compared to the regional average. It also notes that public spending per student consistently falls below the Latin American average, leading to performance lags in some areas. It observes the lack of relevant data for effective targeting of interventions, resulting in persistent gaps in urban-rural and income quintiles. The compact is built on the recognition of these challenges and acknowledges the absence of a recent public expenditure review.</p>
Nepal	<p>There is a commitment by the government to increase the volume of public education financing in Nepal but there are concerns about its feasibility since government spending appears to be increasingly financed by public debt.</p>	<p>[Priority Reform: Quality teaching] No explicit mention of activities to address the bottleneck. Though indirectly improving the effectiveness of teaching and the capacity of teachers through priority reform will have a significant impact on the efficiency of the system with a bigger return on this significant investment. Teaching salaries account for the greatest budget utilization in education, with over 75% of the education budget allocation.</p> <p>[Priority Reform: ECE] No explicit mention of activity to address the bottleneck. Though compact recognizes that private ECED/PPE accounts for almost half (48%) of all ECED/PPE provisions, meaning the ability/willingness to invest household income in ECED impacts inequality significantly.</p> <p>[Volume, equity, efficiency] No explicit mention of activity to address the bottleneck related to the volume of financing in partnership compact, SCG and STG. Geographical disparities indicate that the current mechanisms of financing need to be improved. Moving forward, the sector budget will continue to be gradually decentralized, thereby strengthening the responsibility and accountability of Local Governments to allocate funds from their discretionary funding and maintain federal earmarked funding for specific activities. Due to the wide diversity of the size and capacity of Local Governments, the federal level is developing a system to ensure balance in the conditions of schooling.</p>
	<p>Two areas need particular attention: (i) continuing to review and rationalize the deployment of teachers to increase equity, and (ii) eliminating “hidden” repetition in Grade 1.</p> <p>These will need to be coupled with a continued focus on targeted interventions for the most marginalized as well as on improving</p>	<p>[Priority Reform: Quality teaching] A teacher rationalization and redeployment plan has been approved and is being implemented. This plan has contributed to improved teacher distribution and efficient use of resources during SSDP. This work will be continued to help maintain equitable teacher-student ratios as per the legal provisions. Where there is an insufficient number of subject teachers, earmarked funding to the local level through conditional block grants needs to be continued. This will contribute to equitable teacher distribution based on the set criteria. However, there is no mention of activities related to teacher rationalization and redeployment plans in SCG and STG applications.</p>

Country	Bottlenecks identified (through enabling factors assessment, ITAP report)	Corresponding activities planned in the compact or GPE grant program documents
	the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve survival rates.	<p>[Compact and priority reform, Volume, equity, efficiency] Efforts will continue to support deployment of education officers to all Local Governments, providing additional support to those that require capacity building or local governments that temporarily do not have key staff in place.</p> <p>[Priority Reform: ECE] Children that have ECED/PPE experience have 16-20% higher promotion rates in the early grades (grade 1-3) and score an average of 9% higher in early grade exams. They also show increased cognitive and social skills compared to their peers who did not attend ECED/PPE. Investment in ECED/PPE to meet minimum enabling conditions and improve access will improve the internal efficiency of basic, and possibly secondary level education. Increasing efficiency will free up (scarce) resources across the school sector.</p>
Sierra Leone	Major challenges with equity (in access and learning across gender, socio-economic status, geographical location, rural/urban and disability status which all become more pronounced as children progress through the education system) and the efficiency of resource use, despite some recent improvements in both areas.	No explicit mention of activities to address these equity bottlenecks.
	Domestic resources are not equitably distributed across districts and there remain disparities in the allocation of teachers (and their salaries) as well as in the allocation of capital resources across districts.	STG trigger 2 “Incorporate learning outcomes and learner disadvantages in teacher allocation mechanisms” aims to better allocate teachers to district areas and contribute to equity objectives.
	In relation to efficiency, the main challenge seems to be dropout although repetition is a specific challenge in P1 partly due to parents enrolling their children before the official school age given the lack of public pre-primary schools and inefficiencies in teaching time.	<p>One of the top-up triggers- will work to improve MBSSE budget execution rate, and potentially revise internal allocation of resources, to allocate more funds to primary education.</p> <p>SCG plans to embed technical experts in data, gender, and financial analysis within the MBSSE to “strengthen systems to support data management and analysis, and analysis on financing and expenditure on foundation learning, enabling better and timely use of data to improve teaching, learning, and financing.”</p>
Tajikistan	The lack of a rigorous simulation model, or any projection tool that demonstrates the different development scenarios that were prepared before the final scenario of reference was chosen following systematic trade-off.	<p>SCG: • Developing several financing scenarios in the education sector, including sensitivity analysis and simulation modelling, based on the country’s macro-fiscal framework;</p> <p>• Updating the cost of implementing the NSED-2030 and its mid-term operational framework (i.e., MTEAP 2021-2023).</p>
	Caution is necessary in the treatment of the targets to increase the proportion of education expenditure on the GDP to 6% in 2021 and in 2022, particularly in light of the COVID pandemic and considering the strain this will place on government	No explicit mention of activities to increase the volume per se. The compact recognizes that the government operates within constrained fiscal space and high vulnerability to internal and external risks. Accordingly, they admit that public financing in education is likely to remain stretched in the medium term and requires key government institutions to be on top of sector planning and financial modelling to safeguard themselves against future risks. SCG focuses on sound fiscal and financial planning, credible

Country	Bottlenecks identified (through enabling factors assessment, ITAP report)	Corresponding activities planned in the compact or GPE grant program documents
	expenditure with a heavy demand likely from the health and economic investment sectors.	costing of policy documents, alignment with policy-based budgeting principles for effective strategic planning and resource allocation.
	Extremely high spending plans for year one of the preliminary costings for the transition to 12-year education, especially on infrastructure – a suggestion was made suggest that the expenditure plans are spread more evenly over the medium term.	SCG: Reviewing and updating the cost of the transition to 12- year schooling, based on the agreed transition scenario
Tanzania	Substantial challenges in the equitable use of financing as well as some concerns about the efficiency of resource use, although the latter has been improving in recent years. Both of these are a particular challenge with regards to teachers.	SCG: (i) Expand on the ongoing student unit cost study to include household contribution to such costs; (ii) Review the ESDP Simulation Model and update the ESDP; (iii) Conduct a study on the coordination, management, and governance of Education Program for Results II. ESDP III not yet in place.
	Domestic resources, including the budget for teacher salaries and the deployment of teachers, are heavily weighted in favor of wealthier and urban populations.	No explicit mention of activities to address these bottlenecks.
	The share of the budget for primary education has been declining in recent years and capitation grants to schools are not weighted for equity.	SCG plans to expand on the ongoing student unit cost study to include household contribution to such costs, however no specific actions to address the issue of decline of the total share of budget for primary education
Uganda	Education expenditure is only predicted to increase slightly and then will remain around 12.5 per cent of the public budget and around 2.2 per cent of GDP over the next few years.	Top-up trigger for STG is linked to the increase in volume. Top-up trigger 2 “[Increase education’s share to] 19% of the domestic financing excluding debt: domestic financing increased by two percentage-points from current 17% to 19% (\$25m)” The compact does not give details on how it plans to increase volume.
	The government is off track against its public debt target due to Covid-19	No explicit mention of activity to address the bottleneck.
	The volume of domestic financing is not sufficient and results in inadequate capacity of the education system for transformation and delivery of quality learning outcomes for all children.	Top-up trigger for STG is linked to the increase in volume. Top-up trigger 2 is “[Increase education’s share to] 19% of the domestic financing excluding debt: domestic financing increased by two percentage-points from current 17% to 19% (\$25m)”.
	The government has made progress in reaching gender parity in access nationally. However, there are significant geographic and income inequities related to both access and learning.	Top-up trigger for STG is linked to this bottleneck. STG top-up trigger 3: Develop and implement the capitation grant formula for primary subsector: capitation grant at least maintained at UGX 20,000 in the compact period for primary level and equitable capitation grant formula approved (\$10m).

Country	Bottlenecks identified (through enabling factors assessment, ITAP report)	Corresponding activities planned in the compact or GPE grant program documents
	Public finances should flow more equitably to local governments so that poorer households do not continue to withdraw their children from education due to high costs.	<p>Top-up trigger for STG is linked to the increase in volume. Top-up trigger 2 “[Increase education’s share to] 19% of the domestic financing excluding debt: domestic financing increased by two percentage-points from current 17% to 19% (\$25m)”</p> <p>SCG: mention that it could be used for ‘capacity building in planning, budgeting’</p> <p>Government plans for reforming equitable capitation formula stated.</p>
	Significant repetition and dropout rates and poor learning outcomes remain a challenge, as do inefficiencies in teacher allocations, inadequate in-service training, and the lack of investment in pre-primary education.	<p>Theory of change: There is a whole pillar for pre-primary education, which includes input to ‘roll out licensing and registration regime for pre-primary education.’ Professional development of teachers is an input at all levels.</p> <p>Discussion about efficiency, and specific needs (increased salaries and accountability) identified as necessary.</p> <p>Government plans stated to enhance use of ICT in teacher management and use and EMIS for efficiency.</p>

Source: Partnership compacts, enabling factors assessment templates