

# COORDINATED ACTION TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION?



Students in Kasimba Primary School, Mpanda District, Katavi Region, Tanzania  
GPE/Kelley Lynch

Education transformation comes about when stakeholders in a system change how they interact with one another, purposefully aligning their actions to arrive at dramatically improved outcomes. Toward this goal, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** supports partner countries in getting the most out of policy dialogue and coordination. This brief is part of a companion series to the [Principles toward Effective Local Education Groups](#), although the contents can apply to any mechanism or platform where stakeholders gather to coordinate their actions around national education policy.

**Multiple crises, COVID recovery and strains on public resources have drawn ministries of education's attention to the interdependent challenges facing education systems and to the need of mobilizing and working with a variety of system actors to find sustainable solutions. The advent of tech-enabled innovations has disrupted "business as usual" and changed how system actors and components interact with each other. In times of increased uncertainty, it has become more evident that ministry leadership ensures optimal use of the expertise, investments, implementation, technical capacities and alignment of system actors behind national priorities. By leading and working through coordination bodies, ministries of education can mobilize smarter partnerships, ensure continued commitments to collective action and generate evidence for policy making, learning and adaptation.**

### HOW CAN COORDINATED ACTION SUPPORT MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION IN THEIR SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY?

Ministries of education are ultimately responsible for defining national education ambitions and steering strategic policy goals. At the same time, the inherent complexity of education challenges means that transformative solutions will not emerge from individual governments, system actors or territories in isolation. Coordination mechanisms enable stakeholders to work together to understand the underlying dynamics of their education systems, analyze how complex interactions contribute to system challenges and develop interventions that address the roots of bottlenecks, rather than just treating symptoms. Through coordination, a compelling, inclusive vision

for system transformation—and, ultimately, improved learning outcomes—can emerge.

Coordination can be a particularly powerful accelerator for change when it generates genuine cooperation and harmonized actions around priority areas between actors advancing innovative solutions to overcome challenges, and/or bringing new value to education systems. Such actions may involve infrastructure, technologies, pedagogic approaches and quality education contents supporting inclusive and equitable learning for underserved populations. Coordinated reform endeavors can achieve change with greater speed, scale and inclusion. Appreciating the value that different partners and stakeholders contribute, ministries can lead dynamic education systems through collective problem solving, co-creating strategies and pooling resources. The synergies created generate a momentum for change that, in turn, becomes the catalyst for changes elsewhere in systems, policies and legal frameworks.

## Aligning resources along the system transformation pathway

### Assess and diagnose

**Strong footing for system transformation** – The multilayered and iterative processes of education reform and system transformation require strong stakeholder engagement and continuous adaptation. Consultation and coordination across stakeholders generate a strong footing through

- Early engagement and support of partners who will be central to discussing system transformation goals and implementing changes throughout the process;
- Capitalizing on partners' experience to diagnose the current performance and overall efficiency of the system, understand different perspectives about it and identify the key bottlenecks and roots causes of barriers to learning for different population groups; and
- Mobilizing and disseminating different types of data and evidence to support decision-making.

*"In Guyana, we at the Ministry of Education value our partners' contribution through dialogue and other participatory mechanisms because they represent the voices of our beneficiaries. Hearing from them helps us to develop inclusive policies and programs that effectively address the needs of students, teachers and all education stakeholders, which indicates that we cannot do it alone in education."*

Nicola M. Johnson, Chief Planning Officer of the Ministry of Education, Guyana

### Align and prioritize

**Creating an efficient roadmap** – Coordination can further support the generation of a compelling vision and coalition for system transformation – which can be translated into a relevant and strong partnership compact – that allows for resources to be mobilized and allocated strategically. This includes through:

- Consensus and alignment on priorities and desired changes based on a clear understanding of the purposes of transformation, what change might look like, why it matters and for whom?
- Discussion around key levers for addressing obstacles and co-creating solutions to ensure that interventions are relevant and tailored to specific stakeholder needs and contexts;
- Agreement on system-level indicators of success, including metrics for measuring progress in improving learning outcomes and/or system efficiency, and on how to use evidence and data for further adaptation and decision-making; and
- Clarification of roles and accountabilities to reduce duplication and fragmentation and ensure complementarities across partner actions.

**Unlocking financing, partner technical capacities and resources for priority areas** – With a clear vision for system transformation, coordination makes it easier to solicit operational, technical and financial support in a time-saving way across multiple partners, including through

- Solid funding and grant-making applications to reinforce overall system capacities;

- ▶ Possibilities for innovative financing (multiplier grants, catalytic funding, impact investing and so on);
- ▶ Mapping of knowledge, skills and capacity development opportunities available to ministries of education, schools and other stakeholders to test new initiatives, policies and practices;
- ▶ Smart partnerships and service delivery arrangements with traditional and nonstate partners; and
- ▶ Financial synergies and cost savings across sectors, for example through coordination with the private and health sectors to enhance access, equity, affordability and sustainability.

*“The development of the National Compact is the logical and essential step to ensure the operationalization of this reform agenda, working together with our development partners, and is expected to strengthen not only coordination between various stakeholders, but also to enable the scaling-up of most effective solutions.”*

[Khilola Umarova, Minister of Preschool and School Education, Uzbekistan](#)

### Act, learn and adapt

**Combined implementation capacities** – Regular coordination can help to ensure a more coherent system transformation pathway by ensuring that the full range of partner resources are pulling in the same direction to tackle identified challenges, and by generating the momentum needed for transformations to take hold. Coordination is particularly essential in securing the cross-sector collaboration needed to overcome complex barriers to education access and equity, and to gender equality. Ministries can thus augment the transformative potential of specific strategies by

- ▶ Regularly bringing together education actors implementing activities connected to education priority areas, including different types of pedagogic, technology-based or systems-related activity (such as partners implementing locally trialled, low-cost and transformative approaches with potential for scaling and accelerating progress); and
- ▶ Using cross-sector needs assessments, planning and intervention strategies to concretely anchor partners’ financial and operational support for gender- and rights-based approaches (such as school feeding, WASH programming and safe school approaches) in planning, policy making, implementation and budgeting.

## TANZANIA

**The government is building on effective consultation between stakeholders as it continues its efforts to transform the education system.** Mainland Tanzania’s comprehensive dialogue structures allow for differentiated dialogue at different levels and engage government, development partners, civil society organizations and the private sector. Implementation of the 2016/17–2020/21 Education Sector Plan (ESDP II) required cross-sector dialogue under the decentralization policy and was the first attempt at creating a framework for aligning the plans and budgets of all implementing agencies.

Through the Partnership Compact developed in 2022, and in support of the ESDP III (2021/22–2025/26), the Ministry and its partners further worked to agree on a priority reform: Improved Inclusive Student-Based Teaching for Quality Learning. The Partnership Compact as a roadmap calls for national and international partners to align and harmonize their technical and financial resources through the Education Program for Results (EPforR), further proposing a model for coordinated financing and joint monitoring and evaluation to track progress against trigger indicators. Expected progress includes improved girls’ transition rates from primary to lower-secondary school. To support coordinated action to this end, the Ministry initiated a mapping of stakeholders already supporting key policy issues related to gender equality and teacher workforce management, as well as a stakeholder portal to ensure all partner information is readily available.

**Feedback to ensure alignment, sustainability and success over the long-term** – A system transformation approach recognizes that educational systems evolve continuously and that interventions may need to adapt over time in response to changing circumstances. Through coordinated feedback loops, iterative monitoring and sharing of information, knowledge, and insights, ministries can ensure that the transformation effort remains aligned with the needs of the education system. More specifically, coordination enables ministries to

- ▶ Gain a better understanding of which practices are taking root, any resulting catalytic impacts and/or emerging areas for improvement;
- ▶ Using agreed metrics for measuring progress, identify areas where progress is lagging or the transformation effort is not meeting its objectives, and then adapt strategies based on insights gathered from stakeholders;
- ▶ Agree on roles and metrics, and use them to promote accountability among partners and to improve the effectiveness of the transformation effort; and
- ▶ Learn from practice on which transformation approaches are more suited to multi-stakeholder or public-private partnerships, co-investments and cost-sharing, and which types of collaboration may require closer coordination or more differentiated dialogue.

*“I believe one of the biggest lessons is that we ought not to leave out any critical partner in the education dialogue. ... I believe too that the technical advice that those groups bring are equally (and sometimes even more) important than the financial support that is given by partners and others.”*

[Marcellus Albertin, Head of the Education Reform Unit, OECS](#)



A teacher and her students in class at the community preschool in Nambirghékaha, near Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire.  
GPE/Luis Tato

## LEADING AND MOBILIZING PARTNERS FOR SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

As a ministry of education responsible for leading national education policies, you play a crucial role in coordinating and mobilizing all partners behind your strategies for system transformation. Through your leadership in coordination mechanisms, you can create inclusive spaces for dialogue and mobilize the partner resources and expertise needed. You have the authority to ensure that standards for education quality are maintained and raised, overseeing and guiding development partners in providing the necessary support and empowering system actors in their respective roles. Your access to information further enables transparency and informed decision-making to keep transformation strategies on track.

### **Understanding and valuing what each stakeholder group gains from and contributes to the process**

– Recognizing the different reasons that lead stakeholders to engage in dialogue and coordinated action allows you to tailor your communication strategies and engagement approaches accordingly. Mobilizing different system actors through coordination forums can offer a space for identifying common ground, aligning stakeholders around shared

**Figure 1.** How education partners gain from and contribute to coordinated action

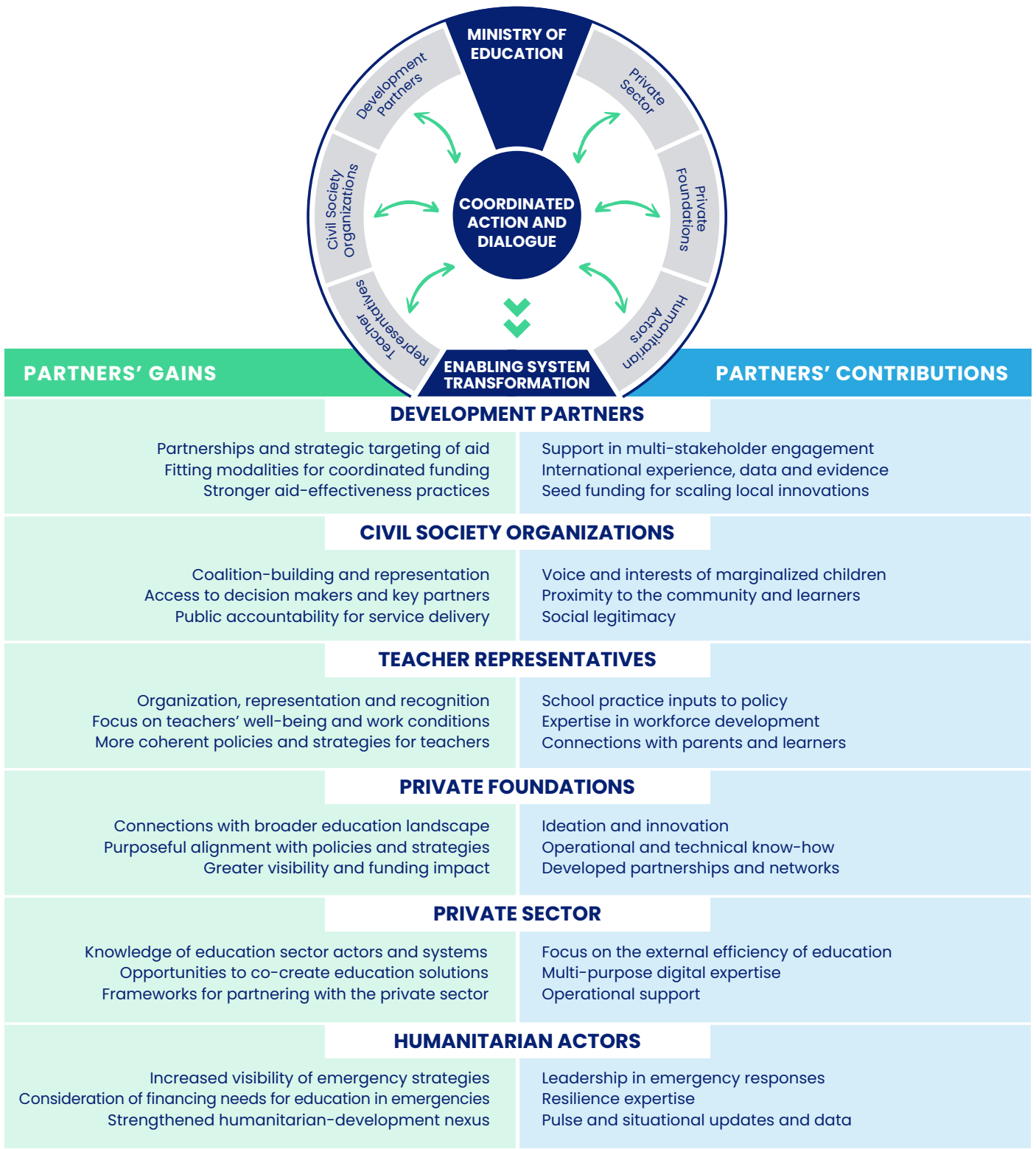


Figure 1 provides a snapshot of what different stakeholder groups gain from their engagement in dialogue and coordination, as well as the value each group brings to the process. To explore these aspects further, click on the [links in the figure to access the individual briefs on each system actor](#).

# CAMEROON

The 'Education Plus' Initiative leverages intersectoral coordination to enable girls to complete secondary education, transforming learning outcomes with an essential package of support services targeting their safety, health and social and economic inclusion. Education Plus's unique planning and implementation arrangements involve a high volume and diversity of actors mobilized from different sectors, and multiple levels of coordination to ensure that national investments and local actions provide needed support services and align with priorities.

The Ministries of Primary Education, Secondary Education, Health, Youth, Women's Affairs, Social Affairs, Employment and Training, Finance and Decentralization have all engaged in the coordinated action, convening nine times during the preparatory phase through dedicated focal points and with five UN Heads of Agency. Consultations with civil society organizations, community and religious leaders, the umbrella Employers Association (GICAM) representing the country's 50 biggest companies, and leading youth organizations from across different regions provided context and helped co-create the initiative and prepare critical milestones, including the Theory of Change and Education Plus roadmap (2022–2025). The 2021 launch was accompanied by a four-month multimedia communication campaign with key messages on girls' education, health and empowerment in partnership with Cameroonian singer Yannick Noah. The Prime Minister led the launch, giving his support to the creation of an interministerial task force.

objectives, understanding their needs, and more effectively anticipating and addressing resistance. When stakeholders perceive that their interests and perspectives are understood and valued, they in turn are more likely to participate actively, contribute ideas and support the transformation process. Effective communication thus builds trust and agency, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the transformation process among stakeholders.



A young girl in class at the Tim Hines school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.  
GPE/Carolina Valenzuela

## ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- ▶ [Why all the talk about school meals?](#) GPE. February 13, 2023.
- ▶ [Working in Partnership to Create Lasting Change.](#) GPE. July 25, 2022.
- ▶ [Tool for Strengthening the Effectiveness of Local Education Groups.](#) GPE. November 2021.
- ▶ [Guidance Note on Terms of Reference for Local Education Groups.](#) GPE. June 2021.
- ▶ [Addressing fragmented government action: Coordination, coherence, and integration.](#) Cejudo, Guillermo M. and Michel, Cynthia. July 2015.

Also see the "Governments / Ministries of education" page on [GPE'S "Partners Portal"](#) to better understand GPE and the private sector's roles and responsibilities in the partnership.

## OTHER BRIEFS IN THE SAME SERIES:

