TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATION

Thandiwe, 10, using a computer at school in Zimbabwe.
GPE/Carine Durand

Technology is a powerful tool to enhance children's learning, and it has the potential to improve access and learning for children facing barriers to education. When supporting countries' use of technologies for education, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) maintains a focus on equity and bridging the digital divide.

THE CHALLENGE

❯ Research on what works in technologies for education is evolving, but **more evidence is needed to support effective interventions**. Many do not address children's learning challenges, fail to set clear context-specific goals, are not designed with the users in mind, are being scaled up without sufficient evidence and are not improved upon through continuous monitoring.

❯ COVID-19 created an **urgency to expand access to digital distance learning** so that children can continue to learn outside of the classroom.

❯ Level of access to connectivity can **exacerbate existing inequities**. Two thirds of the world's school-age children (1.3 billion children) do not have internet access at home, preventing them at times from using certain technology.

❯ The **global digital divide** has been especially challenging for learners who are members of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as girls, learners in rural areas and learners with disabilities.

❯ Two-thirds of **teachers feel they do not have the skills** to design and facilitate digital distance learning. Most countries have issued written guidance for teachers, however, less than 30 percent offer additional training.

GPE RESULTS

GPE mobilized more than US$500 million for COVID-19 support to 66 countries. Over **1/3 of the grants** included low-tech distance learning solutions such as radio and TV, while roughly 1/4 included digital solutions via mobile phone, tablets or web platforms.

GPE's Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) has invested over **US$12 million** towards technologies for education across student learning, teacher professional development and education management information systems to improve teaching and learning at scale in partner countries.

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For all data sources, visit https://www.globalpartnership.org/data.

GPE has been **collaborating with partners** to accelerate access to and the use of technologies for education. For example, GPE provided funding to UNICEF to scale up use of The Learning Passport, an online, mobile and offline platform that enables continuous access to quality education.

GPE APPROACH

GPE recognizes that interventions involving technology should be designed so they can reach the poorest children, be used at scale and address local education goals.

GPE support to countries implementing interventions focuses on equity and bridging the digital divide through distance learning approaches based on their needs and contexts to build stronger and more resilient education systems.

- ❯ GPE COVID-19 grants supported low-tech distance learning solutions to ensure learning continuity for the most vulnerable children. In Malawi, solar-powered tablets pre-loaded with education content and that do not require connectivity were distributed to children in poor households with limited access to electricity.

- ❯ GPE KIX supports innovations for using technologies for education, including scaling literacy software to improve learning in Kenya, Rwanda and Bangladesh, and implementing a gaming technology-based innovation in Chad, Sudan and Uganda to address learning quality, reach and equity as well as challenges faced by refugees and displaced children.

- ❯ GPE is consulting country ministers, education stakeholders, technical partners and the private sector to further explore GPE's value add in technologies for education based on partner country needs.

WHY TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATION MATTER

- ❯ They allow for multimodal learning that combines ways of learning (for example, a video combining music, speech and text) and low-tech solutions (for example, radios, SMS messaging and television) which can support learning outcomes for disadvantaged students.

- ❯ They offer the option of personalized content to match specific student needs and backgrounds.

- ❯ For learners with disabilities, technologies can provide an alternative means of communication, access to educational resources in a more convenient way and enhance motivation to learn.

- ❯ They ensure continued learning during emergency school closures, as evidenced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

PAKISTAN

Education in Pakistan's Balochistan and Sindh provinces has been hampered by natural disasters, poor infrastructure and remoteness, further exacerbated by political, economic and security problems. Since 2014, GPE's support has led to enrolling 53,000 previously out-of-school children in Balochistan and the tracking of educational data in all 29 districts in Sindh. From WhatsApp groups to biometric fingerprint systems, innovative technology has helped these remote regions to build, restore and improve teacher retention. Pakistan has built on its experience delivering distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic to design and implement an inclusive distance learning pathway for up to 19 million children who were out of school pre-pandemic.

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information@globalpartnership.org