

# HOW GPE DRIVES GENDER EQUALITY IN A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH



Grade one students from Chambak Haer Primary School showing their drawings in class in the Siem Reap province of Cambodia.  
GPE/Luis Tato

Education has the potential to drive gender equality—the key to creating a more peaceful, prosperous, healthy and sustainable world. To achieve this goal, every child must equally benefit from education regardless of their gender. This is why the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) places gender equality at the center of everything we do.

## THE CHALLENGE

- ▶ **Gender disparities** in education access and achievement **vary by region and school level**, changing especially in adolescence. In sub-Saharan Africa, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys, while in East and Southeast Asia, the out-of-school rate is higher for boys.
- ▶ **Poverty, disability** and having a **marginalized ethnicity** increase school **dropout rates**. Boys often drop out because of a need to work and a belief that school curriculum is not relevant to skills for employment. Boys are also more likely to be forced into child labor or recruited into armed forces, whereas child marriage stops girls from completing their education. Nearly one in three adolescent girls from the poorest households has never set foot in a classroom.
- ▶ An estimated **246 million girls and boys experience violence in and around schools**, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse both online and in person.

- ▶ **Gender norms** impact children’s learning experiences. Boys have lower reading skills than girls and sometimes disengage from their studies to conform to masculine stereotypes. Girls are less likely to achieve high marks in mathematics and be encouraged to pursue scientific subjects.

## GPE RESULTS



**227 MILLION**  
girls and boys reached by  
GPE grants since 2021.



**84%**  
of implementation grants active in  
2023 included one or more programs  
focused on gender equality.



**US\$121.8 MILLION**  
in 2023 toward activities in 23 partner  
countries targeted at reducing school-  
related gender-based violence.

## GPE APPROACH

GPE works so that girls and boys can have equal access to an education where they learn what they need to unlock their full potential. '[Going Further Together: A Partnership Approach to Gender Equality](#)' outlines how GPE achieves this by:

- Supporting countries to **identify and address gender inequalities** through data and evidence for planning, strategy and accountability.
- **Mobilizing partnerships** with a focus on mutual accountability to drive change that accelerates progress in countries and regions where gender inequalities in education exist.
- **Addressing harmful gender-based barriers** to and within education through public awareness campaigns, removing gender stereotypes from learning materials, building schools closer to communities and reducing school costs so that children in the poorest households can attend.
- **Ensuring context-specific gender expertise is part of policy dialogue** to identify priorities at the country level.

## WHY GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION MATTERS

Gender equality is a precondition for ending poverty, building peaceful societies, having a more resilient society and achieving sustainable development. Men and boys are adversely affected by stereotypical gender roles and harmful gender norms, impacting boys' and men's choices and behaviors.

Universal girls' education would drastically decrease child marriage, more than halve infant mortality and reduce early childbearing, and overcome some of the main drivers of gender inequality.

Progress toward gender equality requires a collective engagement of women and girls, men and boys to shift restrictive gender-based social norms and gender-biased institutions, ultimately benefiting everyone.

## SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN NEPAL

In its partnership compact, Nepal focused reforms to support girls at higher risk of being excluded from mainstream education, including girls from specific ethnic groups and with disabilities. Building local government capacity was key to translate national policies into local mechanisms to create gender-sensitive schools free from gender-based violence and harassment. Nepal applied a system approach to develop reforms that also addressed social norms:

- Tied to **access to education** by granting secondary school scholarships to girls and households affected by poverty and improving toilet and sanitation facilities at school;
- **Within education** by increasing the number of female teachers, reviewing curriculum materials and topics to challenge gender and disability stereotypes and omissions, and modeling curriculum subjects as gender equitable by encouraging girls' engagement with math and science at the secondary level;
- **Through education** by integrating life skills curriculum and materials on gender equality and human rights, respect for inclusion and diversity, non-violence and global perspectives for sustainable development.



Barsha Kumari Pashawal, 12, does her homework accompanied by her younger brother Badal, 5, at home in Nepal.

Two years ago Barsha, like many Dalit girls in her community, was not in school. She spent her days helping her mother at home with chores, taking care of her two younger siblings while her mother went to the market or to cut firewood, and watching the family's goats.

GPE/Kelley Lynch