

Global Partnership for Education deliberates on governance in Board meeting

30 November – 2 December 2016, Siem Reap, Cambodia



In a Board meeting of the Global Partnership for Education, members discussed its relationship between the Education Cannot Wait fund, plans for GPE's fund replenishment, and minimum standards for Local Education Groups.

In a Board meeting of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the largest global multi-stakeholder education fund, members deliberated on its governance reforms, the GPE risks matrix, and the staffing levels of its Secretariat. It examined progress in relation to its Strategic Finance Working Group (SFWG) and its Country Grants and Performance Committee, and considered a range of matters such as its relationship between the Education Cannot Wait fund, plans for GPE's fund replenishment, and minimum standards for Local Education Groups (LEGs - key national education policy decision-making bodies.) The Board also approved its Financing and Funding Framework.

Civil society representatives on the Board (including Zehra Arshad of PCE Pakistan, an ASPBAE member) made frequent inputs during the meeting. They expressed concerns regarding the inclusion of an Innovation Fund, which was designed to be a challenge fund for "in-country scale-up of service delivery" and could potentially have opened the door to funding low cost private schools. CSO representatives argued that this was a narrow view of innovation, that core country grants ought to include innovative work; that a parallel proposal process would undermine harmonisation – and that innovation would also fit under the Knowledge and Good Practice work. Civil society also emphasised the need for more focused work on leveraging/maximising domestic public financing, and raised concerns about the risks of increasing debt through work with loan-based financing – given the increasing debt burden in many countries, which has a direct impact on availability of funding for education.

Revisions to the Board Committee structure were agreed, with the Governance, Ethics, Risk and Finance Committee splitting into two – one on Governance and Ethics and one on Risk and Finance, making a total of four committees (the others being the Country Grants and Performance Committee and the Strategy and Policy Committee), together with the umbrella Coordinating Committee. Two seats on each committee will be shared between CSO 1 (Northern), CSO 2 (Southern), CSO 3 (teachers) and the Private Sector/Private Foundation constituency.



Civil society also raised the importance of focused attention of domestic pledges by developing countries, and agreed that more work needs to be done to ensure that pledges are credible and trackable.

The Board approved the creation of 19 new posts in the GPE Secretariat which will have an annual cost of \$2.9 million. A comprehensive human resource plan will be prepared for June 2017. An investment in information technology of \$2.4 million over the coming 3 years was also approved.

Regarding the GPE fund replenishment, the Board approved a surge in capacity for the GPE secretariat to prepare for replenishment – amounting to \$2.4 million. Related to the framing of the replenishment, civil society made a strong pitch for an ambitious target reflecting the Education Commission's

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recommendation of \$2 billion annually by 2020. Civil society also raised the importance of focused attention of domestic pledges by developing countries, including through creating a moment for such pledges before the main pledging event. All agreed that more work needs to be done to ensure that pledges are credible and trackable. This includes examining the process through which pledges are made, the content of the pledges, and the credibility of the data behind the pledges.

This write-up includes contributions from Zehra Arshad, of the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE), and CSO 2 Representative on the GPE Board; and David Archer of ActionAid International.

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