



The Global Partnership for Education approves a US\$20.6 million grant to strengthen Cambodia's education system

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, 7 June 2018 – The Global Partnership for Education's Board of Directors approved a grant of US\$20.6 million in support of Cambodia's efforts to improve the quality of primary education.

The grant will particularly benefit children from disadvantaged groups, and will foster effective teaching, leadership and management skills of education staff, including teachers, school principals, as well as local and national education service providers.

This third consecutive Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grant for Cambodia will bring together complementary efforts from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), UNESCO and UNICEF, as well as other education development partners including the European Union, Sweden, and USAID.

Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, welcomed the renewed partnership, saying children from disadvantaged groups would be better placed to learn and develop.

"The Global Partnership for Education has been an indispensable contributor to Cambodia's education sector since 2006," he said. "This new, additional GPE support will allow us to broaden and deepen our pool of qualified teachers, giving more children from the most disadvantaged groups the conditions they need to learn and prosper."

The results of the new GPE program will be achieved through two distinct components: a 'fixed' component of US\$14.4 million, the *Strengthening Teacher Education Program in Cambodia (STEPCam)*, which will target early grade teachers of primary education and teacher trainers at provincial teacher training centers; and a 'variable' component of US\$6.2 million that is linked to the achievement of specific results to improve education equity, efficiency and learning outcomes.

"Cambodia, a GPE partner since 2006, has demonstrated how continuous commitment to education makes a country stronger and more equitable for more children," said **Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Partnership for Education**. "Through this third consecutive grant, GPE will help accelerate the country's remarkable record of educational progress," she added.

STEPCam, to be delivered in partnership between MoEYS and UNESCO, supports the Ministry of Education's Teacher Policy Action Plan and focuses on continuous professional development for early grade teachers. The program will assist MoEYS in developing and operationalizing a sustainable system to strengthen teacher skills, in line with the teacher career development pathway also to be developed as part of Teacher Policy Action Plan.

Anne Lemaistre, UNESCO Representative in Cambodia said: "Teacher training is crucial for quality education. GPE support on capacity development to teachers will make significant contributions to improving quality of education as per Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)".

The results-based component will be delivered in partnership between MoEYS and UNICEF, through the existing Capacity Development Partnership Fund, a multi-partner fund helping to strengthen



capacities in policy development, planning, financing, personnel, inclusive education and gender equitable leadership, ultimately leading to more equitable, inclusive and quality education services for all children in Cambodia.

Debora Comini, Representative of UNICEF Cambodia, the GPE coordinating agency - said: “GPE’s contribution to the Capacity Development Partnership Fund will enable work to be progressed in important areas of the education system, such as the development of a primary education scholarship framework that caters to the needs of disadvantaged children, more effective implementation of school development plans, and mentoring for teachers to improve the quality of student learning.”

Franck Viault, Minister Counsellor – Head of Cooperation for the European Union in Cambodia, said: “The EU and its members states have provided 71.5 percent of GPE funding since its inception and we are proud of this collaboration. The GPE support complements our important bilateral agreement to the Royal Government of Cambodia towards improving the quality of education in the country at all levels.”

Cambodia’s education system has made steady and encouraging progress in recent years. Its net enrollment rate for primary education increased from 87 percent in 2001 to 94 percent in 2015, and enrollment in early childhood education across the country grew by almost 2.5 times between 2005 and 2015.

Gross enrollment at the lower secondary education level also rose, from 19 percent to 51 percent between 2001 and 2015, but further efforts are needed to boost completion rates. Thanks to strong efforts by the government, the country is close to reaching gender parity at the primary level. In secondary education, girls outnumber boys.

While Cambodia’s primary repetition rate declined from 12 percent to less than 7 percent between 2004/05 and 2015/16, the rate for grade 1 is still high at 11.6 percent. The GPE funding will focus on some of the most disadvantaged districts.

UNESCO is GPE’s grant agent in Cambodia for the teacher education component of the grant, while UNICEF is the grant agent for the variable component. In collaboration with other development partners, both agents will support MoEYS to implement the programme.

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About the Global Partnership for Education: The Global Partnership for Education works with more than 60 developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality basic education, prioritizing the poorest, the most vulnerable and those living in countries affected by fragility and conflict. GPE mobilizes financing to improve learning and equity through building stronger education systems. As the only global organization focused exclusively on improving education, GPE brings together developing country and donor country governments, multilateral development and humanitarian agencies, and organizations from the private sector, philanthropy, civil society and the teaching profession.

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