

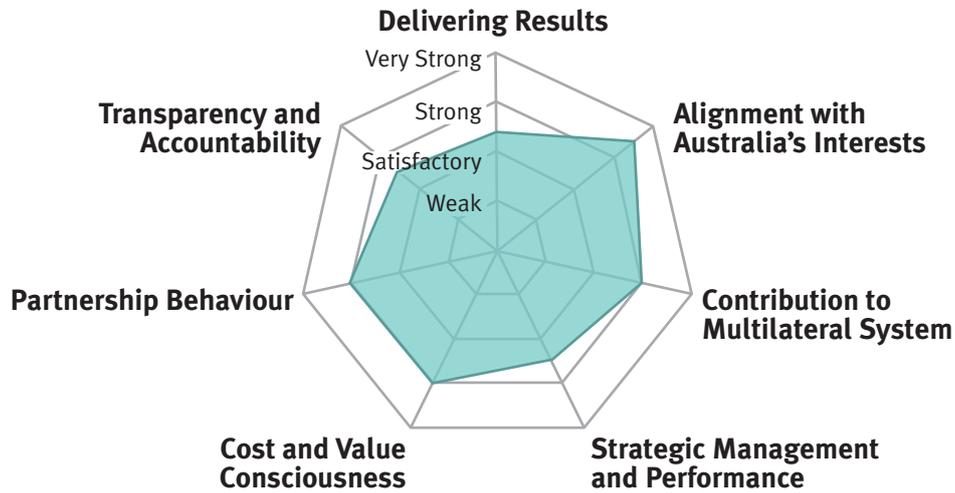


Australian Multilateral Assessment March 2012

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)



OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATION RATINGS



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)—formerly known as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative—is a global partnership supporting the education sector in developing countries, with a focus on accelerating progress toward the United Nations’ Education for All goals.

GPE was established in 2002, hosted by the World Bank, as a compact between recipient countries and donors which linked increased donor support for primary education to recipient countries’ policy performance and accountability for results. It provides funds and technical expertise to help countries create and implement education sector plans.

GPE has 46 partner countries and 43 have had their plans or interim plans (for fragile states) endorsed since 2002. Between 2003 and 2010, donors pledged US\$1.9 billion to GPE’s Catalytic Fund with US\$2.03 billion allocated to 37 countries in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Australia is currently the eleventh biggest donor to GPE, providing \$22.0 million in 2010–11 in voluntary core contributions. In November 2011 Australia pledged contributions of \$270 million over the next four years.

RESULTS AND RELEVANCE	
1. Delivering results on poverty and sustainable development in line with mandate	SATISFACTORY

Reporting from GPE focuses on improving development outcomes in countries where it operates and can demonstrate strong development results. For example, GPE’s 2010 annual report highlighted that among its 46 partner countries, the proportion of children who completed a full cycle of primary education increased from 58 per cent in 2000 to 72 per cent in 2008.

GPE’s analysis shows that improvements in education outcomes in GPE-supported countries are better than in countries without GPE support. Feedback from Australian overseas missions on GPE’s impact at country-level is also generally positive.

At present, however, GPE does not have the systems needed to clearly identify how its support for country-owned plans and processes is responsible for these improved outcomes. This attribution challenge is partly unavoidable given the nature of GPE’s funding model which involves pooling of funds and implementation by partners. Nevertheless GPE is developing a monitoring and evaluation strategy and a results framework to track performance and measure delivery. These have been piloted in several countries.

All GPE support is directed at low income countries.

a) Demonstrates development or humanitarian results consistent with mandate	STRONG
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The 2009 evaluation of GPE concluded that it had made significant and tangible contributions both at the global-level and in specific countries. On available education indicators since 1999, the countries endorsed by GPE have tended to perform better than the eligible countries which are not yet endorsed.

Among the 46 GPE partner countries, the total number of primary school children reached 81 million in 2008, an increase of about 22 million since 2000. The proportion of children who complete a full cycle of primary education in GPE partner countries increased from 58 per cent in 2000 to 72 per cent in 2008. According to the 2010 Annual Report, 15 GPE partner countries are on track to achieve a primary school completion rate of 95 per cent by 2015. GPE-supported countries have increased their own financing for education by an average of six to nine per cent per annum, which is significantly more than the rate of growth of their economies over the same period.

Performance at country-level, however, has been mixed as success largely depends on the effectiveness of the Local Education Group, which includes the host government, donors and civil society organisations, and the Coordinating Agency.

GPE has also provided useful technical support. From 2002 to 2011 the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) provided funding specifically to support countries to develop policy and national education sector plans as well as evidenced-based good practice knowledge generation and dissemination. This funding will be sourced from the new GPE Fund going forward. For example, in Afghanistan in 2009–10, GPE assisted the Afghan Government to develop its national education plan and prepare its submission for funding to implement the plan. The support from GPE over two years is an example of a good practice policy process.

Only recently has GPE reporting focused on establishing clear connections between education outcomes and broader development outcomes. With the establishment of a dedicated communications and fundraising team in 2010–11 to prepare for the replenishment pledging conference, GPE greatly strengthened its capacity to communicate key messages on the wider benefits of education and contribution of GPE to the broader development agenda.

As the GPE itself notes, the attribution of improvements to GPE is challenging and results cannot be taken as proof of effectiveness. The implementation of the new results framework which has clearly defined targets for GPE should improve this over time.

b) Plays critical role in improving aid effectiveness through results monitoring	WEAK
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The GPE financing model promotes harmonisation and aid effectiveness, with the partner country in the driver’s seat. GPE was established as a ‘global compact’ between low income countries and donor partners. This compact includes that donors harmonise their aid delivery to the sector, help mobilise resources and make them more predictable, while beneficiaries need to demonstrate their commitment through adequate and sustainable domestic financing for education. Typically 70–80 per cent of the costs of education sector programs are being paid by the countries themselves. The remaining financing is mobilised from bilateral and multilateral donors and GPE. The OECD and the United Nations have praised the GPE as an excellent model for donor coordination and collaboration.

As noted under 1(a), GPE is able to present some impressive results in GPE-supported countries, however the 2009 independent evaluation concluded that there was insufficient evidence to determine the extent to which GPE support was instrumental to this success (for example, if GPE was a contributing partner). This is a common challenge in the education sector, where results are not short-term or concrete, but linked to broader improvements in development objectives.

The 2009 evaluation concluded that the Global Partnerships monitoring and evaluation systems were weak and that further work was needed to define and measure results. Further, the review concluded that the original goals of GPE were very ambitious and included elements that were outside of its control. As a result, progress was not being made against all of its objectives. These goals included ensuring all children are in school, achieving gender parity, and committing 20 per cent of a government’s national budget to education—of which 50 per cent should be allocated to primary education. These are high-level goals linked to the MDGs that, even if achieved, could not be solely

attributed to GPE. In response to the 2009 evaluation, the secretariat, under the direction of the Board of Directors, has undertaken a major process to strengthen monitoring and evaluation. With the support of the secretariat, a Board working group will develop a clear, goal-oriented strategic plan which is due to be presented to the Board of Directors in May 2012.

c) Where relevant, targets the poorest people and in areas where progress against the MDGs is lagging	STRONG
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GPE has a strong poverty focus, directing its support towards low income countries globally (International Development Association eligible countries). Support from GPE assists partner countries to achieve MDG 2 (universal primary education for all) and MDG 3 (eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education) which directly target the poorest people.

GPE has put in place measures to ensure that the poorest people within partner countries are identified and targeted for support. Countries seeking support from GPE are required to present education indicators, such as enrolment rates, for disadvantaged groups including disabled and indigenous children.

The allocation of GPE funding is based upon a Needs and Performance Framework (NPF) which assesses countries in terms of their need (education need, poverty, population) and performance (commitment of national government to supporting education through national budget, use of previous grants). In 2011 the Board of Directors agreed that the NPF be revised to also factor in increased funding for fragile states, countries with larger populations of out-of-school children and those with greater gender disparities in education.

2. Alignment with Australia’s aid priorities and national interests	VERY STRONG
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In 2011, GPE developed three new strategic directions that align closely with three of Australia’s priorities: girls’ education; fragile states; and quality and learning outcomes. Australia’s investment in GPE extends the reach of Australia’s education assistance to countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America where assistance in the sector would otherwise be limited to higher education scholarships.

GPE has been responsive to key issues raised by Australia, including ensuring that Small Island Developing States are eligible for grants. This has had a positive impact on countries of significant strategic and national security interest to Australia including East Timor, Pacific Island countries and Papua New Guinea.

GPE’s mandate directly aligns with the Australian aid program’s strategic goal of promoting opportunities for all. Education is the flagship of Australia’s aid program. The Australian Government considers education as one of the best investments it can make in Australia and overseas, as investment in education results in economic development. GPE is the only global partnership helping to improve education in the world’s poorest countries.

GPE has a strong focus on gender parity in education. Strategies to achieve gender parity in primary school are a requirement for GPE endorsement and all tools developed by GPE require gender-disaggregated monitoring and reporting. GPE pursues special strategies to address the needs of disadvantaged children in low income countries such as those affected by HIV/AIDS or those living with disability. GPE was party to the development of the Education for All Equity and Inclusion in Education Guide.

GPE emphasises environmental protection in program design and implementation, especially as related to school construction. GPE-funded school construction programs, such as those in Sierra Leone in 2010, include capacity building workshops for construction contractors on environmental impact.

Almost half of GPE funding is allocated to fragile states. GPE has invested considerable time and effort to ensure its model is flexible enough to respond to the unique needs of these states. In 2010, GPE developed new processes and guidance specifically for countries in crisis and post-conflict situations to give countries with the most challenging environment access to GPE support.

a) Allocates resources and delivers results in support of, and responsive to, Australia’s development objectives	VERY STRONG
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The Australian Government considers education fundamental to poverty reduction, promoting stability and prosperity within the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

In line with its domestic emphasis on education, the Australian Government has expressed a very strong commitment to challenging the international community to increase funding for education to improve progress towards the MDGs on education. The Australian Government regards education as one of the best investments a government can make, domestically and internationally as investment in education leads to economic development as a result of a better educated and more productive workforce. Further, the Australian Government acknowledges and supports the critical links between improved education levels and better development outcomes more broadly such as a reduction in child mortality and the prevention of HIV/AIDs. The work of GPE directly aligns with these objectives.

GPE complements Australia’s strong bilateral education aid program and extends the reach of our education assistance to countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. More than 70 per cent of GPE funding has been allocated to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, home to more than 50 per cent of the world’s out-of-school children and where development needs are great. In the context of increasing Australian aid to Africa, the GPE represents an efficient option to deliver assistance where bilateral presence is limited.

In 2010, Australia successfully advocated for the extension of funding eligibility to small island developing states including East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Pacific Island Countries.

Currently, GPE partner countries in the Asia-Pacific region are Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, Afghanistan, Mongolia and East Timor. Bangladesh is in the process of applying, and it is expected that additional countries such as Solomon

Islands will become members in the near future. Pacific regional technical and/or financial support is an issue under consideration.

b) Effectively targets development concerns and promotes issues consistent with Australian priorities	VERY STRONG
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Education is the flagship of the Australian aid program. By 2015, Australia expects to increase its contribution to the education sector to 25 per cent of the aid program and be one of the largest bilateral donors to education globally.

The Australian aid program's priority in education is 'enabling more children, particularly girls, to attend school for a longer and better education so they have the skills to build their own futures and, in time, escape poverty'. The work of GPE directly aligns with this objective.

c) Focuses on crosscutting issues, particularly gender, environment and people with disabilities	STRONG
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GPE has always maintained a strong focus on gender parity in education. Support from GPE has seen steady increases in girls' enrolment. Girls account for 54 per cent of new enrolments at primary school-level in GPE countries. Of the 30 countries with complete data on gender parity in primary education, 22 have achieved or are close to achieving the goal of girls and boys equally completing primary school, compared to 17 in 2000–01.

Strategies to achieve gender parity in primary school are a requirement for GPE endorsement. All proposals must include targets for gender parity as part of the requirement and GPE tracks gender parity in primary school completion rates.

All tools developed by GPE require gender disaggregated monitoring and reporting, and this principle is well mainstreamed in practice. The new results framework includes indicators that are disaggregated by gender.

In November 2011, GPE commenced a multi-year results-driven replenishment campaign based on a three-pronged policy agenda which includes a focus on girls' education, particularly in getting girls through the crucial transition from primary to secondary school. This should improve the GPE's ability to play a global leadership role on gender equality in education.

GPE recognises that special strategies are needed to address the needs of disadvantaged children in low income countries such as children affected by HIV or living with disabilities. The GPE secretariat worked with the UN Girls' Education Initiative, the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task team on Education, the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education, the Education For All Flagship on the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities (convened by UNESCO), and civil society partners to create an Equity and Inclusion Guide to promote a more comprehensive approach to providing equitable education for all children.

The Equity and Inclusion Guide provides practical guidelines to develop education sector plans with a targeted approach to enrol these children into school including identifying barriers to participation. The guide was piloted in Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, and Malawi

in 2009 with the first edition launched in 2010. It is premature to assess the effectiveness of this guide in improving access to education for people with disabilities or other marginalised groups, but the Equity and Inclusion Guide is a positive development and is a practical tool to be used by countries when developing national education sector plans.

d) Performs effectively in fragile states

STRONG

Almost half of GPE funding is allocated to fragile states. GPE has invested considerable time and effort to ensure that its model is flexible enough to respond to the needs of fragile states.

In 2010, GPE developed new processes and guidance specifically for countries in crisis and post-conflict situations to enable countries with the most challenging environment to access support from GPE. Acknowledging the capacity constraints faced by fragile and conflict affected states, GPE made a number of amendments to the eligibility criteria to improve flexibility and responsiveness to the unique needs in these countries. This includes allowing the development of interim education plans, rather than comprehensive sector plans (the standard requirement for endorsement) and adapting the country-level process guide to include moveable targets within the context of crisis and transition.

Increased support for fragile states is one of three new strategic objectives for the Partnership, indicating a continued focus on fragile states.

3. Contribution to the wider multilateral development system

STRONG

As the only global partnership focusing exclusively on education in developing countries, GPE plays a critical role in global coordination within the multilateral system. Before its establishment there was no clear international leadership on education in developing countries. GPE is an important, inclusive global forum and plays an important role in keeping education (in particular Education for All Goals and Millennium Development Goal 2 on universal primary completion) on the international agenda.

The GPE model promotes donor coordination and harmonisation and has been praised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and United Nations as a model of aid effectiveness. GPE’s Board and committees bring together major education donors, partners and stakeholders including United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank and major civil society organisations to engage in significant global education policy dialogue.

GPE also plays a critical role in improving coordination between stakeholders at country-level in the education sector and has done so effectively in several countries of importance to Australia’s aid program, including Afghanistan, East Timor, Laos, Nepal and Papua New Guinea.

The GPE funding instruments are the only significant pooled funding mechanism in the education sector. Since its establishment in 2002, GPE has allocated more than US\$2 billion to 37 countries in support of their education sector plans from its Catalytic Fund. A 2009 independent evaluation concluded that the need for GPE is as great as ever.

GPE was established to play a lead role in mobilising resources to fill key gaps in funding for education at country-level. Despite this, the 2009 evaluation assessed that to date GPE has had a limited positive effect on increasing the level of external financing for education. GPE responded by identifying new targets for fundraising and potential new donors, including private foundations.

GPE has recently improved its capacity to provide specialist policy development support by establishing a Country Support Team and a Global Good Practices Unit, although it is too early to assess the impact of these initiatives.

a) Plays a critical role at global or national-level in coordinating development or humanitarian efforts	VERY STRONG
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As the only global partnership focusing exclusively on education in developing countries, GPE plays a critical role in global coordination within the multilateral system. Prior to its establishment there was no clear international leadership on education in developing countries.

GPE is an important and inclusive global forum, especially for donors, and has played an important role in keeping education (in particular the Education for All Goals and MDG of Universal Primary Completion) on the international agenda.

The 2011 GPE replenishment pledging conference demonstrated the Partnership’s pivotal and influential role in convening global education stakeholders. The conference was attended by 300 participants from 52 countries representing developing partner governments, donors, multilateral agencies, the private sector, foundations, teachers and civil society organisations. Pledges made at the conference saw donors commit funding to GPE, but also saw stakeholders, including developing partner countries, commit to increasing their investment in education more broadly.

GPE has also been effective in coordinating donor efforts at national-level. For example, in Papua New Guinea GPE provided the convening power and framework for all donors to consider and endorse an agreed national plan with the Government as well as financing and monitoring arrangements including a quality assurance process. Similarly, GPE provided a powerful convening role in East Timor’s first successful funding proposal, substantially strengthening donor harmonisation. The role of GPE in these processes provided the confidence to attract donors to support the sector and the means by which to coordinate their efforts.

The GPE model promotes harmonisation, and the OECD and the United Nations have praised the GPE as an excellent model for donor coordination and collaboration.

b) Plays a leading role in developing norms and standards or in providing large-scale finance or specialist expertise	STRONG
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The GPE funding instruments are the only significant pooled funding mechanism within the education sector. Since its establishment in 2002, GPE has allocated US\$2.03 billion to 37 countries in support of their education sector plans from its Catalytic Fund.

In addition, GPE has allocated US\$112.1 million from its Education Program Development Fund to assist low income countries to develop education sector plans. Having an endorsed education sector plan is the core application requirement for gaining access to the previous Catalytic Fund or the current Global Partnership for Education Fund.

The GPE secretariat’s strengthened ‘Country Support Team’ and ‘Global Good Practices Team’ means that GPE is in a strong position to provide specialist policy development support. GPE’s commitment to three strategic priorities (girls’ education, fragile states and education quality) demonstrates GPE’s willingness to tackle difficult policy issues. Results from the implementation of these strategic directions cannot be assessed at this point.

c) Fills a policy or knowledge gap or develops innovative approaches	SATISFACTORY
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GPE is seeking to play a more active role in shaping international development policy on education, establishing the Global Good Practices Unit within its secretariat. The Unit aims to accelerate knowledge-sharing among partners, identify and advocate good practices, and base policy dialogue on evidence to support low income countries and countries in crisis or transition situations. As the Unit has only recently been established, it is not possible to assess its effectiveness at this stage. However, over the past 12 months the outreach capacity of GPE has expanded and become more visible, with the creation of the Education For All blog, redesign of the GPE website and release of reports prior to the replenishment pledging conference. Education Specialists from GPE regularly share experience, lessons and research with the wider development community via online platforms. A Communications Strategy that is under development by the secretariat notes the GPE’s plan to increase effective and innovative ways to encourage south-south sharing of lessons in the education sector. These mechanisms look promising.

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR	
4. Strategic management and performance	STRONG

At the November 2011 meetings, GPE’s Board prioritised the development of a strategic plan to consolidate policies and objectives and provide a strong platform for strategic management going forward. It remains to be seen whether these improved governance arrangements will significantly improve GPE’s strategic management and performance, but early indications are positive.

Throughout 2011, GPE’s secretariat increased its capacity to monitor grant implementation at country-level and is conducting quarterly reviews of grant performance, with sanctions for underperformance.

Since 2009, GPE has been working to implement reforms informed by recommendations of its independent evaluation and experience gained since partnership inception. Good progress has been made in improving governance, including appointing an independent chair of the Board of Directors and strengthening the secretariat.

In June 2010, GPE established a Technical Oversight Committee to support the development of its new monitoring and evaluation strategy. It also established a Strategy

Reference Group to refine its strategic directions. Monitoring and evaluation is part of all programs but to date this has had limited influence on decision making.

Later in 2010 the board approved a new goal statement, outcome indicators and service delivery areas within its new results framework, and agreed to streamline its trust fund arrangement into a single fund. In 2011 the board endorsed an updated needs and performance framework, a reconfigured quality assurance review process and the structure and terms of reference of a new Financial Advisory Committee.

a) Has clear mandate, strategy and plans effectively implemented	SATISFACTORY
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GPE is in the midst of an ambitious program of reform that has shown good progress to date.

The 2009 evaluation concluded that GPE’s mandate had become increasingly broad over time as it struggled to reconcile the focus on primary education with the development of sector-wide education plans. The review recommended that GPE reconsider its mandate in light of the Education for All goals and focus its support on a select subset of the goals and make clear decisions on the extent to which its support would be financial or technical.

In May 2010, the Board of Directors decided to support through the partnership all six of the Education for All goals while maintaining a continuing emphasis on basic and lower secondary education. According to GPE, this decision will serve to heighten the political support for education overall and broaden the coverage of GPE funds. Given that the economic climate has seen a decrease in donor funds across all sectors, the decision to provide support across all six goals may result in GPE spreading its resources too thinly. Further, reviews of other multilateral organisations have highlighted how ‘mandate creep’ can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of multilateral organisations. The Board of Directors has indicated that it is aware of these risks, and has taken the following steps to maintain a core focus for the partnership: three strategic directions have been agreed (girls’ education, fragile states, and quality and learning outcomes); the Needs and Performance Framework has been updated; and a Strategic Plan will be developed.

As part of the reform process, GPE is establishing clearer links between mandate, strategy and results monitoring. As noted, GPE has identified three new strategic directions for 2011–2014 that are linked to the new results-oriented approach. GPE has also created the Global Partnership for Education Fund to succeed the existing multiple trust fund arrangements. GPE has strengthened its systems to improve disbursement rates. Since 2007 GPE has doubled its disbursement and reduced the time taken to move from decisions on allocations to signing grant agreements from 12–18 months to an average of 5.5 months.

The secretariat has increased its capacity to monitor the implementation of financing and is conducting quarterly reviews of grant performance, with sanctions for underperformance.

Demand for funds from GPE trust fund resources is expected to significantly increase: indications are that 16 countries will present funding requests in 2011–12. GPE will not be

able to keep pace with demand without a significant increase in funds and without a well defined strategy and plan for implementation. The need for increased funding was the rationale for the 2011 replenishment campaign and conference, which resulted in US\$1.5 billion in committed funds for 2011–2014. As noted, the board will prioritise the development of a GPE Strategic Plan, for endorsement in May 2012. GPE has made good progress to date on its reform agenda but must maintain a clear strategic focus if it is to make a significant contribution to improving education outcomes for developing partner countries.

b) Governing body is effective in guiding management	STRONG
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In response to the 2009 evaluation, GPE has invested considerable effort to improve its governance structures. GPE has introduced a range of measures to improve representation, decision making capacity and strategic direction.

One of the key reforms introduced in 2010 was the appointed of an Independent Chair of the Board of Directors. Under this new leadership the board has been proactive in driving the reform agenda through the establishment of specialist sub-committees such as the Financial Advisory Committee and Technical Oversight Committee. These committees have been tasked with progressing key reforms in resource allocations and results monitoring.

Another key reform has been the restructure of the board to better represent its various constituencies. The 19 member Board now includes equal representation from donor and partner country constituencies which has important implications for the transparency of decision making on resource allocations, now clearly the responsibility of the board. The board also includes representation from civil society and the private sector, making it a well rounded body that is in a position to provide sound advice on policy development and programming for GPE.

In addition, GPE has strengthened the secretariat in recognition of the critical role it plays, particularly in monitoring and evaluation. The secretariat has increased capacity in its External Relations and Communications Team to assist with attracting new donors and larger pledges from existing donors. Given that demand is expected to rapidly outpace available resources, this team will play an important role in the long-term success of GPE.

The restructure of the board has put it in a much better position to guide management and hold the secretariat to account. The board and its sub-committees have already demonstrated improvements in this regard. For example, in November 2010, the Catalytic Fund Committee tasked the secretariat to assess underperforming grants and potentially cancel or reduce allocations. As noted, the secretariat is now conducting quarterly assessments of grant performance.

Good progress has been made to strengthen the GPE Board. The true test of the board’s capacity will be its ability to continue to implement the ambitious program of reform it has commenced and maintain a clear strategic direction for GPE as part of this process.

c) Has a sound framework for monitoring and evaluation, and acts promptly to realign or amend programs not delivering results	SATISFACTORY
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The 2009 independent evaluation highlighted serious weaknesses in GPE’s monitoring and evaluation systems. In response to this finding, GPE has taken significant steps towards developing stronger accountability mechanisms for the partnership. The Board of Directors requested the secretariat run an open, international selection process to identify a monitoring and evaluation contractor to develop an improved monitoring and evaluation model. The proposed new monitoring and evaluation strategy consists of three main elements that seek to clarify roles and responsibilities of all partners, expected outcomes and includes an evaluation component.

Between January and May 2011, GPE undertook a monitoring exercise. This was the first step in implementing the new results framework at country-level. The monitoring exercise uses a number of tools such as donor and partner government questionnaires to capture data. The GPE secretariat relied on Local Education Groups (the country-level governance component of the partnership) including the Coordinating Agency, the Supervising Entity and the government to provide national data for the questionnaires.

While good progress has been made in the development of the monitoring and evaluation strategy and piloting implementation of the new results framework, GPE—like many agencies—still faces the challenge of accurately identifying results that can be directly attributed to its work rather than broader success within the education sector in partner countries.

d) Leadership is effective and human resources are well managed	STRONG
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The leadership of GPE has improved with the appointment of the independent Chair of the board. Under this leadership, GPE has taken strides to clarify its role within the World Bank, a source of criticism in the past, and establish itself as a leading organisation on education in developing countries.

Currently, the GPE secretariat uses World Bank Human Resource processes and policies with GPE staff on World Bank contracts. As GPE is not a legal entity, the secretariat cannot recruit for itself and the close links between GPE and the Bank make it difficult to challenge these practices. Despite this, as part of the reform program, good progress has been made to strengthen the secretariat with the board approving a new secretariat structure and staffing plan and work program in mid-2010. Recruitment for key positions within the secretariat took place in late 2010 and detailed secretariat team work plans were developed for approval by the board in 2010 and 2011. As part of the GPE Strategic Planning process, the GPE will consider the cost and benefits of continuing within the organisational remit of the World Bank, versus a more independent organisational structure.

5. Cost and value consciousness	STRONG
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GPE senior management and its Board focus on value for money. This is evidenced by the inclusion of two related key guiding principles in its Charter: lower transaction costs and development results, and value for money.

The GPE model is cost effective. It does not create parallel structures, but uses existing government systems and draws on donor partner resources at country-level through the method of supervising entities of grants and coordinating agencies of programs.

The 2009 evaluation found a lack of clarity around Catalytic Fund procedures which resulted in high transaction costs. There is evidence that GPE is seeking to address this through clearer procedures and strengthening the role of its in-country local education groups to monitor progress at country-level. Progress is evident. For instance, since 2007 GPE trust funds have doubled disbursement rates and reduced the time taken to move from decisions on allocations to signing grant agreements—from 12 to 18 months to an average of 5.5 months. In November 2010 the Catalytic Fund Committee tasked the secretariat to assess underperforming grants and potentially cancel them or reduce their allocation.

A key feature of GPE’s approach is increasing domestic resources for education and so GPE challenges and supports partners to think about value for money and affordability over the long term as part of proposal development and approval processes. As evidence of this policy in action, at its replenishment pledging conference in November 2011 developing country partners committed to increasing their domestic spending on education by more than US\$2.5 billion between now and 2014.

a) Governing body and management regularly scrutinise costs and assess value for money	STRONG
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The 2009 evaluation concluded that a lack of clarity about GPE procedures resulted in high transaction costs at country-level. Again, GPE is seen to be responding positively to review findings and recommendations and has produced updated country process guidelines, strengthened its financial oversight capacity and boosted the capacity of the Country Support team.

Responsibility for financial decision making and allocations of GPE trust fund resources rests with the Board of Directors. The establishment of the Financial Advisory Committee and improved reporting systems is expected to result in a greater focus on value for money by the Governing body and management. As outlined in 4(b), there is evidence that the governing body scrutinises costs and takes steps to identify poor performance and re-allocate funds where necessary.

b) Rates of return and cost effectiveness are important factors in decision making	STRONG
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GPE revised its Charter in May 2011. The Charter includes seven guiding principles, two of which directly relate to this criterion: lower transaction costs, and development results and value for money.

GPE Appraisal Guidelines include detailed criteria on cost control including consideration of unit costs and continued affordability. The 2009 evaluation found that GPE’s focus on cost effectiveness had been primarily at the appraisal stage with limited follow up throughout implementation. The review also found that, as a result, there were high transaction costs in some countries. The strengthened focus on resource allocation and decision making by the board has subsequently seen an improvement in this regard as outlined in 4(b). Further, preliminary appraisals and ongoing implementation reviews are undertaken by Local Education Groups at the country-level, ensuring that consideration is given to the operating environment and associated costs.

c) Challenges and supports partners to think about value for money	STRONG
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As outlined in 5(b), GPE Appraisal Guidelines include guidance on value for money and affordability, providing the basis for value for money assessments. Partner countries seeking funds from GPE are required to demonstrate the sustainability of their proposals over time. As part of the 2011 monitoring exercise partner governments were required to complete a questionnaire providing details on national education budgets and available funds in support of proposals. A key feature of the GPE approach is increased domestic resources for education, therefore GPE challenges and supports partners to think about value for money and affordability over the longer-term as part of its proposal development and approval processes. As evidence of this policy in action, at the replenishment pledging conference in November 2011 developing country partners committed to increasing their domestic spending on education by over US\$2.5 billion between now and 2014.

6. Partnership behaviour	STRONG
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The 2009 evaluation of GPE’s partnership behaviour concluded it was unbalanced and largely donor led. GPE has responded with a number of reforms including a revised Charter and accountability matrix that articulate the roles and responsibilities of various partners in GPE operations (including partner countries, donors and civil society organisations). GPE has engaged well with civil society organisations considering them to be important stakeholders in the education sector.

A major strength of the GPE model is its ability to reinforce the focus of education donors on supporting country-owned plans and processes. GPE has incorporated the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action principles into its approach and directs resources to support partner country priorities as articulated in their education sector plans.

Increasing partner country voice was one of six key areas for reform identified in GPE's response to the independent evaluation. At country-level, recent examples from Afghanistan and East Timor indicate improvement in promoting partnerships with governments. At system-level, GPE's 19-member Board and 15-member Financial Advisory Committee now includes equal representation from donors and partner countries. This has had important implications for the transparency of decision making on resource allocations.

GPE has engaged well with civil society organisations considering them to be important stakeholders in the education sector as implementers with a key role to play in policy discussions and independent monitoring. Civil society, from developed and developing countries, is represented on GPE's Board and Financial Advisory Committee.

a) Works effectively in partnership with others	STRONG
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The 2009 evaluation of GPE's partnership behaviour was not entirely favourable, concluding that it was an unbalanced partnership that was largely donor led. As noted above, significant reform steps have been put in place, including equal donor/partner country representation on the GPE Board and Financial Advisory Committee. Strengthened country-level process guidelines and increased support for Local Education Groups is a particularly important step in this direction. As described in 4(d), a specific element of the planned GPE Strategic Planning process is a consideration of the positioning of the GPE going forward, including an analysis of the cost/benefits of continuing with the secretariat within the organisational remit of the World Bank.

GPE has been criticised for its partnership behaviour in terms of flexibility and ability to support country-led approaches as a result of World Bank requirements and procedures. The World Bank is the Supervising Entity for GPE programs at the country-level in most instances and issues continue to arise with implementation falling behind schedule. However, having the World Bank as trustee of GPE trust funds and Supervising Entity of GPE funds in most countries means that GPE benefits from the World Bank's robust fiduciary management capabilities. The issue of flexibility when supporting country-led approaches has been partially resolved by the GPE model's use of Coordinating Agencies as the lead on the GPE program at the country-level. Coordinating Agencies are typically bilateral donors or UNICEF. For example AusAID is a joint Coordinating Agency with UNICEF in Laos.

The revised GPE Charter and Accountability Matrix clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of various partners in GPE operations including partner countries, donors and civil society organisations. The GPE model relies on the Local Education Groups and Local Donor Groups for in-country delivery.

GPE has engaged well with civil society organisations considering them to be important stakeholders in the education sector as implementers with a key role to play in policy discussions and independent monitoring. Through the Education Program Development Fund (GPE trust fund), a two-year US\$17.6 million grant was provided for the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) that supports the work of national coalitions of civil society organisations in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific through the Global Campaign for Education, a group representing civil society organisations in the education sector.

Grants from this fund have helped national education coalitions to build capacity, improve governance and coordination and extend their membership so that they can engage more actively in the education sector. As a result of support through the CSEF program almost twice as many national education coalitions are recognised as partners in Local Education Groups with an increase from 18 in 2009 to 32 in 2011. Civil society from both the ‘north’ and ‘south’ are represented on the GPE Board and Financial Advisory Committee.

b) Places value on alignment with partner countries’ priorities and systems	STRONG
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A major strength of the GPE model has been reinforcing the focus of education donors on supporting country-owned plans and processes. GPE has clearly incorporated the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action principles into its approach and firmly directs resources to support partner country priorities as articulated in their education sector plans. GPE has been effective in coordinating donor support at the country-level through the establishment of Local Education Groups actively contributing to reducing aid fragmentation.

GPE also provides predictable funding on a three-year planning and commitment basis. It demonstrates a focus on results through performance requirements.

c) Provides voice for partners and other stakeholders in decision making	STRONG
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Increasing partner country voice is one of six key areas of reform for GPE. As part of its reform program, GPE made changes to the composition and operation of its governing bodies to increase the voice of partner countries. Since late 2010, developing country partner constituencies and donor-country constituencies have been equally represented on the Board of Directors and Financial Advisory Committee. Developing country partners have also been included on working groups, the Strategy Reference Group and as co-sponsors of the recent replenishment pledging conference.

The revised operations of the board also granted them the power to make all decisions on allocations under the newly established and the existing GPE trust funds, based on recommendations of the Financial Advisory Committee, allowing for multi-stakeholder involvement in important financial decisions.

At the country-level, the Local Education Group is the mechanism for participation in decision making by partner countries and other stakeholders. The partner country leads and directs the work of the Group, convenes, and chairs meetings and coordinates Joint Reviews of education plan implementation. Civil society organisations and other non-governmental organisations ensure that broad and representative voices are brought into the Group regarding the development, implementation and monitoring of the education plan.

The role and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the Local Education Group is clearly articulated in the revised GPE Charter and Accountability Matrix. Performance of these groups and the degree to which partners actively participate in decision making

varies considerably from country to country. The model for GPE relies on these groups for decision making, implementation and monitoring at the country-level. The strengthening of the GPE secretariat's Country Support Team has led to increased capacity for GPE to facilitate this process.

7. Transparency and accountability	STRONG
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GPE has produced a range of key documents for developing country partners, including guidelines on developing proposals and information on the appraisal process. It publishes relevant documents on its website, such as Board decisions and some general information on donor contributions, allocations and fund disbursement. This information is limited, however, and does not include detailed breakdowns by country or operational costs.

GPE trust funds are subject to the World Bank's financial accountability requirements and use its strong systems of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention. Evidence of the effectiveness of these systems includes fast and effective responses to recent instances of fund misuse in Kenya and Nepal (which occurred before GPE funding was included in the pooled fund).

To be eligible for GPE grant funding countries must develop detailed, costed education sector plans endorsed by GPE and local donor groups. GPE convenes donors and stakeholders around the plan to harmonise implementation and allocates funds to fill identified funding gaps.

A key risk for GPE is the need to mobilise considerable new funds from existing and new donors to meet the anticipated increase in the number of proposals from partner countries. The successful replenishment process undertaken in 2011, resulted in US\$1.5 billion in committed funds for 2011–14.

GPE is developing a policy and communications protocol on the misuse of trust funds, a policy on conflicts of interest, and a monitoring and evaluation strategy which will strengthen transparency and accountability.

a) Routinely publishes comprehensive operational information, subject to justifiable confidentiality	SATISFACTORY
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GPE routinely publishes relevant information on its website such as Board decisions including the Financial Advisory Committee, results, aggregate information on donor contributions, allocations and disbursements. GPE publishes a profile for each of its partner countries providing the latest education statistics, progress towards goals and an annual breakdown of resource commitments and disbursements. GPE is not a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

GPE could improve its transparency by improving the availability of operational information. The development and implementation of the GPE's Communications Strategy, which includes provision for better outreach capacity and reporting appears promising.

b) Is transparent in resource allocation, budget management and operational planning	SATISFACTORY
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GPE rates reasonably well in transparency in resource allocation as it has published guidelines and process charts for resource allocation.

GPE Appraisal Guidelines were developed to ensure consistency in the rigor of the appraisal process across countries. Guidelines are available to all existing and potential partners and outline criteria in four areas that form the basis for assessment of proposals. The 2009 evaluation assessed decision making procedures and criteria, noting that these were often opaque, undermining GPE’s principle of transparency and affecting its credibility. Significant process and governance reforms since the 2009 evaluation have greatly increased transparency and accountability.

In 2010, the GPE’s External Quality Review process, that assesses the quality of applications for program implementation grants, was evaluated. Through the evaluation, GPE aimed to ensure that all applications for financing from GPE are clear on what results will be achieved and how. GPE also updated its country process guidelines to improve the transparency and clarity of requirements. The new review process that will replace the External Quality Review will be implemented for all country applications from spring 2012 and as such it is too early to review its impact.

To replace the financial committees that oversaw the previous trust funds (the Catalytic Fund Committee and Education Programme Development Fund Committee), the GPE Board of Directors established a Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) in November 2010. The Committee plays an advisory role overseeing the formulation and implementation of policies for eligibility and prioritisation of GPE Fund resources, reviews requests and makes recommendations for allocations in support of education sector plan implementation. The FAC reports annually to the Board of Directors on the overall portfolio.

GPE provides partner countries with multi-year commitments and has a framework that prioritises according to needs, performance and available resources. The overall framework is clear and transparent.

c) Adheres to high standards of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention	STRONG
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GPE is subject to World Bank financial accountability requirements. The review has assessed the World Bank systems as ‘very strong’ and is therefore satisfied that GPE adheres to high standards of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention.

The risk of GPE funds being mismanaged is a reality and evidence has been presented that GPE responds quickly to allegations of corruption and fraud. In 2009 and 2010 two instances of fund mismanagement were identified (in Nepal and Kenya). Following an investigation by the Government of Nepal and satisfactory resolution, donors resumed support for Nepal’s School Sector Reform Program and the GPE grant agreement was signed. In Kenya, the secretariat closely monitored the audit conducted. The results of a

forensic audit of Kenya's Education Sector Support Programme will see the Government of Kenya repay US\$27 million to GPE and US\$7 million to other partners. GPE has developed a Policy and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds which is currently being considered by the Board of Directors.

d) Promotes transparency and accountability in partners and recipients

STRONG

GPE's appraisal guidelines and 2011 monitoring exercise indicate that GPE encourages partners to consider transparency and accountability in the development of their education sector plans. As outlined in 7(c), where irregularities have been identified partner countries have proactively been investigated.