

 **DECEMBER 7, 8 AND 10, 2021**

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

BOD/2021/12 DOC 04

FOR INFORMATION

OPERATING MODEL ROLL-OUT

Please note: Documents are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are considered to be public documents only after their appraisal by the relevant governance instance. It is understood that members will circulate documents among their constituency members prior to consideration for consultation purposes, with the exception of documents that are confidential.

Key issues for consideration:

- The Board is not being asked to provide constituency views on the pilots at this time but to take note of the next steps for Board engagement in the pilots.

Objective

1. This document serves to update the Board on the roll out of the operating model, including how human rights principles are being strengthened and the hardwiring of gender equality.

Background and overview

2. At the December 2020 Board meeting ([BOD/2020/11/12-03](#)), the Board approved the plan to pilot the GPE2025 operating model.
3. Building on sector plans and policy frameworks, GPE's operating model aims to engage partners in an evidence-based reflection on what it will take to address critical system bottlenecks and enable progress at scale. To enable the achievement of GPE2025 objectives, the operating model must support context-based reflection on how system transformation can be achieved.
4. It is therefore critical to progressively assess the operating model processes and methodologies against their ability to support country specific system transformation. The pilot process provides opportunities for collective learning to refine and adapt the operating model so it can deliver the ambition of GPE2025.
5. **Annex A** provides an overview of four mutually reinforcing pillars to roll-out the operating model: (1) support to the pilot process in six partner countries, (2) the

development of sound technical methodologies to be tested and adapted; (3) partner engagement and communication to enable mutual support to the country level process from GPE partners; and (4) a learning framework to capture country experiences and lessons learned to further refine the operating model.

6. During the first quarter of 2022, the Board will receive the first proposals for the allocation of System Transformation Grants, based on endorsed partnership compacts. The proposals will consist of strategic parameters including high priority enabling factors (indicated in the ITAP Assessment); proposed top-up amounts and triggers; the focus of the System Transformation Grant; and the planned use of Multiplier or Girls' Education Accelerator funds, if applicable.
7. Human rights: As requested by the Board, the Secretariat undertook work to strengthen the operationalization of human rights principles in GPE's operating model. This involved an initial internal review of the operating model documents and subsequent contracting of an external consultant to identify opportunities to strengthen GPE's approach. The consultant conducted internal and external interviews and collected documentation to benchmark and inform recommendations. Findings have been incorporated into the operating model guidance as it has been developed, piloted, and rolled out, and a second stage of work is proposed. A summary of the findings is provided in **Annex B**.
8. Gender equality: Actions on gender equality have been incorporated into draft technical and operational guidelines on an ongoing basis, quality assured through internal review mechanisms. The pilot learning framework seeks input from country partners on addressing gender equality, so that this can be strengthened based on feedback. Additional information is available in **Annex C**.

Annex A - GPE 2025 Operating Model Roll-out

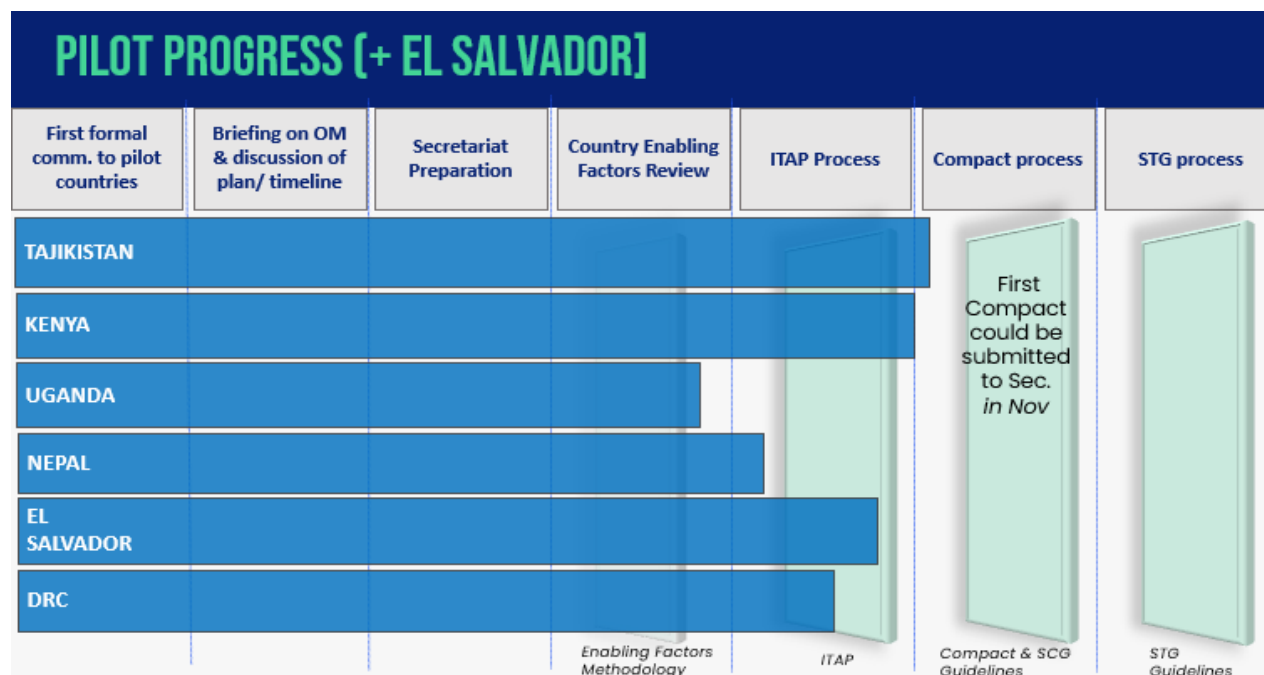
Annex B - Operationalizing Human Rights

Annex C - Hardwiring Gender Equality

Annex A – GPE 2025 Operating Model Roll-out

1. The piloting process has been rolled out gradually in the five agreed countries (DRC, Kenya, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Uganda) as well as El Salvador since February/March 2021. Figure A below shows the status of the process.

Figure A: Pilot Progress



2. The **technical guidelines** supporting the operating model have been developed in parallel, generally slightly ahead of the country level stages. One early lesson learned was that there needs to be a clear explanation of how GPE’s operating model supports system transformation (the ‘why’ of the operating model, and not just the ‘how’). Getting the concept and messaging right, while also focusing on the financing conference, impacted the development of the partnership compact guidelines. These were a bit behind the process in some of the pilot countries.
3. The cross-cutting issues of human rights, gender equality and use of evidence have been incorporated in some of the guidance and will be further strengthened on an ongoing basis. Technical guidelines will be revised and streamlined based on feedback from the pilots. The inclusiveness of local education groups is assessed as part of the enabling factors review.
4. The direct work with pilot countries was complemented by a series of **partnership engagement webinars** to enable global and regional stakeholders to support their country level counterparts in pilot countries for effective participation in the process. Close to 30 webinars were organized to identify information needs and

interests among partners and provide tailored training and dialogue. This recognizes that the GPE operating model can only work if partners at country level have the knowledge and support not just to understand the process, but what it is meant to deliver. Board members have a critical role in facilitating engagement in countries through their own in-country constituencies.

5. The Secretariat has developed a **learning framework** to capture the experiences of country level partners and the Secretariat and determine what has worked and what needs adjustment. The learning framework was discussed with the PILC at their October meeting. It takes a phased approach to learn from each stage of the operating model as it is rolled out. Country-level surveys, focus group discussions, Board consultations, and desk review of documents (ITAP assessment, partnership compact, etc.) will be used to triangulate information, put evidence into action and refine the wider roll-out of GPE 2025. Progress of and learning from the learning framework will be shared at each PILC meeting.

Next steps

6. As announced in the monthly Board forecast on grant approvals, the Board will receive the **first proposals for strategic parameters** based on endorsed partnership compacts during the first quarter of 2022. The strategic parameters include:
 - *Enabling factors and top-up:* Based on the ITAP assessment of enabling factors, the Board may decide to award the full System Transformation Grant allocation or retain all (or part) of the top-up portion, up to 40 percent of the maximum country allocation. For cases where a top-up approach is recommended to address a high priority challenge, the country will indicate specific policy actions and triggers linked to accessing the top-up and specific amounts linked to these actions/triggers. Depending on the type of challenge and country context, it may in some cases be most appropriate to respond to the challenge with a specific intervention which may be financed through the system capacity grant (or another source).
 - *Proposed focus area for the system transformation grant:* the focus area should be a subset of a broader priority reform identified for the Partnership Compact. The Board will also have access to a Secretariat assessment of the proposed focus area for the grant, including the potential for transformational impact at scale and for generating a positive impact on gender equality among other criteria.

- *Proposed use of the Girls' Education Accelerator, if applicable:* eligible countries seeking to access the Girls' Education Accelerator must also provide in the partnership compact an overview of how progress on girls' education will be accelerated.
 - *Multiplier, if applicable:* Expression of interest to secure a Multiplier allocation can also accompany the strategic parameters proposal, including its relation to (the focus area) of the System Transformation Grant.
7. **Terms of reference (TOR) for the permanent Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP)** will be shared with the Board for approval in March 2022, with the permanent ITAP established by July 2022. The TOR will reflect lessons learned from the pilots and PILC consultation (February 2022). In the meantime, the provisional ITAP will provide country assessments through June 2022 as needed.

Cohort 2

8. While pilot implementation and lessons learning continues, implementation for Cohort 2 countries has begun, with initial engagement underway in Cambodia, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Comoros, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Somalia, and Fiji.

Annex B – Operationalizing Human Rights

1. **Approach and methodology:** This work focused on enabling rights through the operating model tools and guidance. There was an immediate window of opportunity in relation to strengthening the operating model guidance and tools as they were being developed, piloted, and rolled out. The work was framed by existing right to education tools and guidance, including the 4A framework. It drew on the recommendations of the CSO, private sector, and private foundations proposal submitted to the Board in September 2020, as well as documentation of how GPE partners implement a human rights-based approach.
2. **Review of the GPE 2025 operating model:** Overall, the initial phase found that the core right to education legal elements are largely incorporated in the operating model, in both the positive and negative sense. In the ‘positive’ sense, the core right to education elements are already partly embedded in GPE’s six priority areas, including: the ‘12 years + 1 year pre-primary’ standard (as in the Incheon declaration and other rights instruments), the focus on gender equality, inclusion, equity, quality teaching and learning, and an emphasis on equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing. In the ‘negative’ sense, they are not contradicted or undermined in any major way by language, processes or actions as set out in the operating model. Other aspects of the model that align with a human-rights based approach include: Encouraging participation through the centrality of local education groups in the model and the use of Education Out Loud to encourage civil society participation; A focus on mutual accountability through strengthening formal stakeholder collaborative forums and encouraging joint sector monitoring; supporting empowerment through the capacity-building of country-level actors and through education itself.

Ways that the operating model has been strengthened:

3. The Secretariat considered the findings of the internal review and external consultancy in light of the [Effective Partnership Principles](#), which emphasize country ownership and leadership. A balance needs to be struck between maintaining the principle of being country-led while effectively supporting the realization of the right to education in partner countries. Given that, overall, the model is already enabling rights in both the negative and positive sense, the Secretariat sought to make GPE’s commitment to rights more explicit across the operating model documents, strengthening the ways in which the realization of the right to education can be supported at various stages of the operating model, as follows:

Right to Education core obligations	In key GPE documents, standard text will explain that GPE is guided by the five minimum core obligations on states to ensure the right to education ¹ , and that all GPE partners are bound by these obligations. These core obligations include provision of 12 years of free, quality, public primary and secondary education – of which at least nine years are compulsory – and at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education, for all children, without discrimination; and maximizing the availability of resources.
Enabling factors initial screening	This process considers both whether countries have a legal framework on the right to education and whether they apply it in their planning process, as one of the enabling factors for system transformation.
ITAP guidance	The ITAP’s assessment will contribute to and inform policy dialogue including in areas of concern to the enjoyment of the right to education for all. The assessment should highlight instances where the progressive realization of the right to education has stalled. To achieve this focus, the panel will be expected to include expertise on human rights.
Partnership Compact development	As well as text on Right to Education core obligations, partnership compact development guidelines will give consideration to the inclusion of civil society actors, and how partners can support human rights as part of an inclusive country-level process.
System capacity grant	The guidelines will include an explicit mention that the grant can finance activities related to: (i) review and update of national legal frameworks on the right to education, where applicable, to be in better accordance with the state’s obligations under international human rights law, and (ii) activities to review and ensure clear and direct linkages between such legal frameworks and education sector policies. It is relevant for GPE to support such activities, for example in cases where a country does not have a legislative framework ensuring the right to education for

¹ (1) Provide 12 + 1 years of education; (2) Non-discrimination; (3) Aiming towards full development of human personality and dignity; (4) Liberty of choice and minimum standards of education institutions; (5) Maximum available resources, progressive realization, and non-retrogression.

	all children but would like to develop one. These activities allow discretion to states to decide the most appropriate means by which to comply with their obligations and realize the right to education.
Ongoing support to rights	It was found that Secretariat staff have varying levels of familiarity with right to education frameworks and states' obligations on rights. The Secretariat will therefore provide training to country-facing staff on right to education frameworks (such as 4A) so that staff can provide better support to countries in their efforts to realize the right to education.

4. **Follow-up area of work – accountability mechanisms:** It is currently premature to draw conclusions on accountability mechanisms. Given GPE operates through grant agents, a conclusion would require mapping out existing grant agent policies and procedures relating to violations of the right to education. A follow-up phase could include a brief mapping and would help to explore viable options available within identified constraints.

Annex C – Hardwiring Gender Equality

1. The [GPE 2025 Strategic Plan](#) commits the partnership to systematically identify and address barriers to education that affect boys and girls differently, putting gender equality at the heart of planning and implementation of education systems.
2. To further incentivize progress on girls’ education and the hardwiring of gender equality into GPE’s support for strengthening education systems, additional financing will be available to those countries where girls are the furthest behind through the **Girls Education Accelerator (GEA)**. Donors have contributed US\$140 million for the GEA – above the \$100m threshold needed to launch the GEA – with an overall financing target of \$250m. The GEA provides supplemental funding that can only be accessed as part of, and integrated into, the system transformation grants.
3. **Operationalization of Gender Hardwiring:** As part of the “assess and diagnose” phase of the new operating model, early assessments of gender equality bottlenecks are in place to shape policy dialogue through the enabling factors analysis and reinforced in ITAP assessments. Below are some of these early assessment tools and examples of how they are used in relation to gender equality.

Tool	How gender equality is hardwired
Screening Template (as part of Enabling Factors Assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool asks countries to identify the most recent gender diagnostics, provide an analysis on if/how the education sector plan proposes strategies to address gender equality, and note the level of sex disaggregation in administrative and learning data.
Enabling Factors Analysis Template	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local education groups identify country challenges and opportunities for accelerating gender equality in education. Gender-responsive education sector planning is one of the core enabling factors being assessed.
ITAP Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ITAP verifies the country assessment and flags any additional opportunities and risks related to gender equality.
Partnership Compact guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Compact is reviewed by Local education Group and Secretariat for likelihood that compact actions will generate a positive impact on gender equality

<p>GPE grants (system capacity grant; system transformation grant; Multiplier; Girls' Education Accelerator)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE grant mechanisms will be expected to address gender equality challenges identified in the enabling factors assessment and partnership compact • Gender equality is also supported by KIX and EOL • Other strategic capabilities in gender equality may be identified in response to demand from countries
<p>LEG Self-Assessment Tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local education groups can use this tool to reflect their level of dialogue on gender-responsive budgeting, sharing of gender analysis among national stakeholders, and representation of gender expertise in the group.

4. *Engagement and outreach.* Gender equality is incorporated in all engagement with partners and dialogue with country partners on the new operating model. Wider learning and engagement opportunities on how to strengthen gender equality will emerge through the pilot learning framework and inform the revision of technical guidance and support to country partners.

5. *Country Pilots- examples.*

- **Tajikistan:** Through the enabling factors analysis the local education group highlighted greater enrollment of girls as one of the agreed policy priorities with potential for system transformation as included in the package for ITAP review. The ITAP report agreed and provided additional considerations for the local education group to consider for addressing gaps in gender-responsive sector policy, planning, and monitoring.
- **Kenya:** The enabling factors analysis identified some of Kenya’s main issues regarding gender equality and where there were gaps in support. The ITAP concurred that gender equality is among the policy areas needing greater attention and resources.
- **Uganda:** The enabling factors analysis remains underway.
- **Nepal:** Implementation, enforcement, and capacity building around gender policy was discussed as part of the enabling factors analysis in Nepal submitted as part of the package that currently awaits ITAP review.

- **El Salvador (GEA eligible):** El Salvador’s analysis highlighted challenges in planning, policies, and monitoring through a gender lens, which the ITAP agreed was a high priority.
- **DRC (GEA eligible):** In the enabling factors review, the local education group discussed the challenging implementation of a girls’ education strategy due to poor coordination and insufficient data and evidence for gender-responsive planning.