

# CEO DECISION MEMO

DATE 10/23/2024

<b>TO:</b> Laura Frigenti, CEO	
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Request to approve Syria US\$1M accelerated funding	
Country	Syria
Grant amount requested	US\$1,000,000
Grant agent	Save the Children
Agency fee (% and amount)	7% (US\$70,000)
Period	1 year
Expected start date	9/1/2024
Closing date	8/31/2025
Funding source	GPE Trust Funds: System Transformation Grant allocation (additional US\$1M reallocated from the System Capacity Grant allocation)

**Action request**

Approve an allocation from GPE trust funds for an accelerated funding grant, in support of the Syria education program, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table above, subject to:

- a) Availability of funds.
- b) Board decision BOD/2012/11-04 on commitment of trust funds for grants in annual installments.

**Grant Summary**

With Save the Children, US as the grant agent (GA), this program continues to support the education activities in Northeast Syria from September 2024 to August 2025. These activities were initially approved under the Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) in 2021. Through the US\$ 6.25 million ESPIG program, which ended August 2024, the GA supported non-formal education opportunities through establishment of temporary learning spaces, early childhood care and development opportunities, and remedial learning centers across three governorates of Northeast Syria. The impact of GPE’s support has been positive, resulting in a notable reduction in dropout rates and encouraging the re-enrollment of children who had previously left school due to displacement. Continuing the provision of non-formal education services to children for an additional academic year will enable these children to transition smoothly to formal education by the end of the program.

**Current Portfolio**

Syria is not a GPE partner country but has received funding with exceptional approval by the GPE Board in December 2019. Currently, there are three ongoing grant programs in Syria. The UNICEF-implemented ESPIG (US\$ 18.75M, 2021-2025) has been extended to August 2025 to provide further support to out-of-school children in the Whole of Syria except Northeast Syria. The System Transformation Grant (STG) has been granted as an accelerated funding

grant (US\$ 15M, 2023–2025) to UNICEF and Save the Children, US to support education continuity and system recovery in the earthquake-affected areas of Syria. Finally, Syria has accessed US\$ 1.6M (2024–2027) of its System Capacity Grant (SCG) with UNICEF as the GA to support coordination among humanitarian and development partners. As all the STG allocation has been fully allocated, upon the request of the Syrian Education Dialogue Forum (EDF) Steering Committee, the GPE Board approved in September 2024 a transfer of US\$ 1 million from Syria’s SCG allocation to its STG allocation to support the continuation of non-formal education activities in Northeast Syria.

### **Significant Opportunities:**

The additional funding of US\$ 1 million will ensure that GPE support to critical learning opportunities in Northeast Syria continues, especially to most marginalized children. GPE earlier extended the ESPIG being implemented by UNICEF in other parts of Syria. However, the ESPIG for Northeast Syria expired at the end of August 2024. The additional funding will ensure that GPE continues with the Whole of Syria approach. This support is crucial to help children in selected governorates of Northeast Syria to reach their full potential, both academically and in terms of social and emotional development, which have been severely affected by the prolonged disruption of education services. The continuation of this program will also facilitate a smooth transition for these children into formal education by the end of the program.

### **Significant Issues and Risks**

By 2025, the non-formal education centers established under GPE funding is planned to be handed over to the local education authorities and converted into formal schools, following thorough planning and adherence to Save the Children policies and donor guidelines. However, this still requires clearance of the Syrian Education Dialogue Forum (EDF) as some of the donors earlier raised concerns on handing over of these centers to local education authorities. Save the Children, US and the Coordinating Agency (USAID) will continue the dialogue with donors to ensure compliance with the donors’ intervention matrix (including agreed redlines) and if required, donors will be approached to revisit the intervention matrix to allow the smooth transition of these centers to local education authorities, and/or to local organizations.

### **Recommendation**

The Review Meeting (RM) concluded, based on the Secretariat’s quality assurance review, that the **RM recommends to the CEO the approval of an allocation of US\$1,000,000 for Syria with Save the Children, US as Grant Agent.**

## **RECOMMENDED DECISION**

**Grant: Accelerated Funding**

**Country: Syria**

**CEO/2024/10-23-2024**

The CEO in her delegated authority from the Board of Directors approves the Accelerated Funding Grant request for Syria in the amount of US\$1,000,000 plus an additional US\$70,000 in agency fees to Save the Children, US as the grant agent, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table above, subject to:

a) Availability of funds.

b) Board decision BOD/2012/11-04 on commitment of trust funds for grants in annual installments.

Date : October 23, 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Frigenti', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Laura Frigenti, CEO

**The CEO Decision Memo should not exceed 3 pages.**