

 **MAY 25, 26 AND 28, 2021**

# MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

## MEETING REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

This report presents a high-level summary of key discussion points and decisions made. The agenda and documents for the Board meeting can be found on the GPE website.

### TUESDAY, May 25, 2021

#### 1. Opening of the Board Meeting

1.1 The Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00am Washington, D.C. time. She confirmed there was quorum and welcomed meeting participants, including new Board representatives.

1.2 The Board Chair noted the objectives of the first day, including i) receive an update from the CEO; ii) discuss the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and approve the Evaluation Policy and iii) approve the Results Framework; and iv) receive an update on the country pilots.

1.3 She noted the agenda for Day 1 had been revised: there would not be a DCP report-back. A revised agenda for Day 3 would also be shared.

1.4 She noted Malala Yousafzai would attend the meeting to observe some sessions.

#### 2. A Word from the CEO (BOD/2021/05 DOC 03)

2.1 The CEO, Alice Albright, presented her report to the Board.

## **Discussion**

2.2 Several Board members commended the Secretariat for its work during the pandemic and appealed for GPE to continue to be adaptive in its response to the learning crisis exacerbated by the pandemic.

2.3 In response to questions from Board members, the CEO noted that:

- The Secretariat was not considering another formal COVID window and that the operating model is adaptive in nature and could consider adaptations for countries to the environment. This is in line with the trend to be less prescriptive and more able and willing to meet countries where they are.
- While the World Bank has been very helpful in facilitating the Secretariat office move and the work pertaining to hedging, there have been challenges in the areas cost recovery, IT and systems capacity, and securing staffing necessary to support the summit meeting in July. In these instances, the manner of discussions was not deemed in compliance with the overall approach of the hosting arrangements.

## **3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning: GPE Evaluation Policy (BOD/2021/05 DOC 04)**

3.1 The Chair of the Performance Impact and Learning Committee (PILC) summarized the deliberations of the Committee's April 27 meeting, including strong support for the evaluation policy, and the centrality of evaluation results for learning across the partnership. The PILC further highlighted the need for realism with regard to obligations of partner countries and to consider whether the standards for evaluation should be adapted to fragile context in particular and take into account the pandemic while maintaining high levels of independence and impartiality. The PILC recommended engaging local expertise where feasible and leveraging the support of different partners. The PILC appreciated the inclusive nature of the policy, including gender inclusiveness. Finally, the policy should be disseminated at the country level and there should be a mechanism in place for implementation and a periodic review.

3.2 Next, Nidhi Khattri, Manager, Results and Performance, presented the Evaluation Policy as set out in DOC 04.

## **Discussion**

3.3 Board Members strongly supported the policy. Various comments and suggestions were made. These included a recommendation for the Board and all Committees to discuss evaluations to inform decisions and a recommendation for gender equality to be a

standard item in evaluations moving forward. There was also an appreciation of alignment of the policy with OECD DAC criteria and World Bank policies on access to information. Suggestions were made to focus evaluations on GPE priorities and key actors and to spend activity time on monitoring and learning from evaluations. One Board member also recommended to include in the policy a requirement for a management letter from the Secretariat with follow-up actions.

#### 3.4 Other key comments included:

- **Periodic review.** One Board member suggested the policy be reviewed every two years while another suggested that in addition to the policy, implementation should be reviewed. The Board adopted the latter suggestion. The Secretariat noted that that the policy would take time to implement at the country level in order to get the criteria and standards upheld whereas the Secretariat would start implementing the policy immediately and support the Board and Committees.
- **Capacity.** Several Board members appreciated the element of local capacity development in the policy and emphasized to retain local expertise and institutions where feasible. It was also suggested to have a differentiated roll-out of the strategy with respect to capacity and skills of grant agents and countries. The Secretariat noted that engagement with local institutions and collaborative capacity-building is supported by the Strategic Capabilities workstream and, as such, is part of the Secretariat workplan.
- **Cost effectiveness.** Two Board members noted the importance of measuring cost-effectiveness of programs and evaluations. A Board member urged to be more directive in the policy about the need to capture cost data and generate cost-effective evidence that will best serve GPE needs in determining whether to scale up interventions. The Secretariat noted that efficiency and cost effectiveness are part of the criteria of each evaluation.
- **Harmonization, Operationalization and Accountability.** A Board member recommended the joint principles should be in line with the principle of harmonization and that there should be an accountability framework detailing roles and responsibilities and how evaluation recommendations will be taken forward. Some Board members called for the development of an operational guide and work plan for the policy. The Secretariat responded that the policy refers to an evaluation plan which includes how evaluation findings are used and by whom. The Secretariat further noted that compacts and grants are separately monitored based on their own results framework and the Secretariat will systematically monitor these based

on specific guidelines under development. Additional evaluations are part of the overall Secretariat workplan over the GPE 2025 period, for discussion with the PILC, and will outline evaluations over the GPE 2025 five-year period.

3.5 Given time constraints, the Board Chair invited constituencies to contact the Secretariat for responses to outstanding suggestions and questions.

3.6 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decision:

**BOD/2021/05-XX-GPE Evaluation Policy**: The Board of Directors in reference to decision [BOD/2020/11/12-08](#):

1. Reaffirms the importance of supporting evidence-based learning and decision-making across GPE.
2. Approves the GPE Evaluation Policy as set out in BOD/2021/05 DOC 04.
3. Requests the Secretariat to conduct a periodic review of the Policy and its implementation to ensure its alignment with the overall GPE strategy.

#### **4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning: GPE Results Framework (BOD/2021/05 DOC 05)**

4.1 Rudraksh Mitra, Economist from the Secretariat presented the Results Framework to the Board. The presentation provided information on the design principles based on lessons from GPE 2020, how the framework serves as a “telegraph” of GPE results, enabling conditions and priority areas, goal level indicators, country-level objectives, enabling objective, and comprehensive results reporting.

##### **Discussion**

4.2 Board members expressed broad appreciation and support, for the Results Framework. Board members commended the Framework for being focused with fewer indicators, taking previous learnings into account, extensive consultations, and linkages with SDG 4. They appreciated the alignment to the Operating Model, focus on quality, and the avoidance of duplications by using existing indicators by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). Furthermore, Board members highlighted the increased simplicity of the framework, possibility for learning and focus on areas such as disaggregation, gender, and domestic financing.

4.3 Other key points raised included:

Areas of improvement

- **Overall areas.** A Board member highlighted that much of the Results Framework will rely on strength of national and regional levels, and that strengthening the LEGs at national and regional levels should be a strong component of the Framework. In addition, several members emphasized that the Framework should build on existing processes and indicators with the highest levels of endorsement at political level.
- **Data gaps.** Some Board members enquired about the role of the GPE in collecting data, especially in areas with evident data gaps, such as disability and gender equality. The Secretariat agreed that this is an important point and that it would look to align the Operating Model, strategic capabilities, and data gaps.
- **Role of the PILC.** A Board member requested clarification on the role of the PILC in the results framework. The PILC Chair confirmed that the outcomes will be included in the annual results report, which the PILC would discuss.
- **Data partnerships.**
  - A Board member reported that only one third of GPE donor countries are able to report on learnings from results, and suggested that data partnerships could be considered, with a group of partners trying to find solutions for the problem of data. The Secretariat clarified that there are three ways in which data would be addressed: strategic capability approach on data issues, data and evidence as a core aspect of the OM, and strategic capability around evaluation. All of these would already include a ground-up approach for data issues and how these would be addressed country by country.
  - A Board member requested the Secretariat take steps to strengthen partnerships with grant agents and UN organizations including UIS, to address challenges, gaps and capacity in education data.
- **Disaggregation.** The Board approved a proposal from several of its members to include disaggregation in the Board decision on the results framework. The Board Chair also noted that disaggregation would be an innate part of the framework, as SDG indicators themselves are disaggregated.
- **Consultation.** A Board member enquired about the process of consultation to develop the results framework and suggested additional language to include further consultation. The Secretariat clarified that consultations with varied stakeholders were already conducted as part of the OM roll-out process. The Chair emphasized inclusive consultations and outreach had spanned years with the OM approved and at the stage of piloting. Therefore, it was decided to not include any additional language related to consultations.

## Specific indicators

- **Teaching.** A Board member enquired about having an indicator on assessing teachers, which would strategically benefit the GPE. In addition, another Board member suggested that the participation of teachers in civil society groups could also be included. The Secretariat confirmed both elements had been included and retained from the previous set of indicators.
- **Inclusion.** Some Board members proposed additions to the Board decision to include a greater focus on inclusion, specifically gender equality and disability.
  - Members suggested additional indicators, such as proportion of countries with gender responsive planning and disability inclusion planning. The Secretariat clarified that adding new indicators is dependent on having data, and these elements are already captured through some existing indicators, such as child rights and disability in legislative frameworks. In addition, the Secretariat highlighted that there is a lack of standard international indicators on children with disability. The Board took note of the suggestions of some of its members and agreed to retain the decision language as-is, with additional consultations to be held as needed directly with the Secretariat.
- **Resilience.** A Board member suggested that an indicator on measuring resilience could be added as a component of existing indicators, and further support could be sought from organizations such as UNESCO which have a crisis resilience unit. The Secretariat clarified that this is included as part of the indicator on planning. Another member suggested that another indicator could perhaps be included on COVID-19 response, and that baselines and longer-term targets at sector-level should reflect the impact of the COVID crisis.
- **Domestic financing.** Some members suggested that more domestic financing indicators could be added. The Secretariat noted that a number of elements related to domestic financing were already included in the Framework.

4.4 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decision:

**BOD/2021/05-02 - GPE 2025 Results Framework:** The Board of Directors in reference to decision [BOD/2020/11/12-08](#):

1. Approves the GPE 2025 Results Framework as set out in Annex B to BOD/2021/05 DOC 05, and requests the Secretariat to develop indicator methodologies, baselines, milestones, and disaggregated targets for the Results Framework, as relevant.
2. Further requests the Secretariat to develop a Grant and Compact monitoring approach that provides requisite data on the performance and achievements of GPE grants and

processes in GPE 2025 priority and requirement areas, and to report this data through annual results reports.

## **5. Update on Pilot Countries (BOD/2021/05 DOC 03)**

5.1 The Secretariat (Jo Bourne, Chief Technical Officer, and Margarita Focas Licht, Chief, Effective Partnership) presented an update on Secretariat actions and progress to date on the GPE 2025 pilots in Kenya, Uganda, Tajikistan, Nepal, DRC, and El Salvador. In addition, the Secretariat presented the progress against plan, highlights, learning framework, general observations and learning approach for the pilots. Finally, two videos sharing experiences from Kenya and Nepal were presented.

### **Discussion**

5.2 Board members expressed broad appreciation of the pilots, noting its positive effects and impact, and the benefits of translating the results of the pilots for others interested in supporting areas for strengthening (such as private sector or CSOs). The Board also welcomed the update on innovative partnerships.

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2021**

## **6. Opening of the Meeting**

6.1 The Chair summarized the discussions of Day 1 and reviewed the objectives for Day 2. These included reviewing the Financial Forecast, making decisions on additional allocation for Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), proposed delegation for Education Out Loud (EOL), eligibility and allocation, including prioritization criteria, the Trustee budget, and Operating Expenses, as well as discussing major strategic risks and risk mitigation measures.

## **7. Financing the Partnership**

7.1 Nesmy Manigat, the Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee (FRC), gave an overview of the deliberations of the Committee at its April 29–30 meeting, highlighting recommendations to the Board on an increase in allocation for KIX, on the Trustee Budget and on the FY22 Operating Expenses. He also indicated that the Committee received updates on the Financial Forecast, Corporate Risk and Innovative Finance, and noted that the Committee's inputs have been reflected in the documents presented for the Board's consideration. The Committee will meet in early September to receive an updated Financial Forecast that factors in the outcome of the financing conference and to allow the announcement of indicative grant allocations for eligible countries.

## Financial Forecast (BOD/2021/05 DOC 06)

7.2 Padraig Power, the Secretariat Chief Financial Officer (CFO), presented the Financial Forecast, as set out in DOC 06, to contextualize the discussion ahead.

### **Discussion**

7.3 Board members welcomed the Financial Forecast. The following key points were raised:

- **Currency hedging.** Several Board members were encouraged by continued progress to identify a currency hedging solution, but given its significance, requested more information on the timeline, the amounts lost due to currency fluctuations, and expressed concern around multi-year contributions in light of donors' internal budgeting procedures. The Secretariat highlighted that multi-year contribution agreements are preferable because they allow for more predictability of funding, and therefore greater hedging opportunities and greater reduction in volatility. The Secretariat added that over US\$250 million would have been saved since 2014, on US Dollar, Pound Sterling and Euro contributions alone, if the Secretariat had a currency hedging solution in place. In a following session, Angela Williamson, representing the Trustee, provided an update on World Bank's efforts to develop the currency hedging solution, acknowledging delays from the Bank and expecting that the proposal should be ready at the end of the calendar year.
- **Outstanding contributions and country allocations.** An update on outstanding donor contributions and outstanding country allocations, including for West Bank and Gaza and Syria, was requested. The Secretariat explained that every partner country has submitted their application or will do so shortly, with the exception of Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo who are, as pilot countries, receiving funding under the GPE 2025 funding period. The Secretariat and the World Bank representative recalled the Board decision to create a sub-account within GPE fund to ring fence donor contributions for West Bank and Gaza. A related non-objection procedure with the World Bank Board of Directors was underway. In terms of donor contributions, the Secretariat explained that a small number of donors are yet to fulfill their 2021 pledges.

## Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) and Education Out Loud (EOL) (BOD/2021/05 – DOC 07, 08)

7.4 The CFO presented the elements related to the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) and the Education Out Loud (EOL) for Board consideration, as set out in DOC 07 and

DOC 08. The Secretariat further announced that the LEGO Foundation is financing the increase in the KIX allocation.

7.5 Prior to the discussion of the EOL agenda item, The Board Member for CSO1 representing Oxfam declared a conflict of interest as grant agent for the funding mechanism.

### **Discussion**

7.6 The following key points were raised:

- **Increase in KIX allocation.** Several Board Members expressed appreciation to the LEGO Foundation, with one Board member proposing to look at opportunities for the Board to discuss KIX achievements. The Chair noted that the Secretariat can work with the Executive Committee (ExCo) to schedule a KIX item on the Board meeting agenda.
- **Top up financing for Operational Component 1 of EOL.** A Board Member noted the need to have the results of the rapid review available before taking a final decision. The Secretariat confirmed that the rapid review would be completed in time to feed into, the deliberations on the proposal by the FRC in September, with input from the PILC.

7.7 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decisions:

#### **BOD/2021/05-03 – Knowledge and Innovation Exchange:** The Board of Directors:

1. Recalls its previous decisions to approve an initial allocation of USD\$58.5 million ([BOD/2018/06 - 11](#)) and an additional USD\$12 million ([BOD/2019/12-07](#)) for KIX.
2. Subject to confirmation of the additional funding from targeted sources, approves an increase of USD\$3 million (inclusive of agency fees of USD\$196,262) to the International Development Research Centre as the Grant Agent for the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) mechanism to fund a call for proposals in Africa as set out in BOD/2021/05/DOC 07 Annex A. The original closing date of the grant of March 31, 2024 remains unchanged.

#### **BOD/2021/05-04 – Education Out Loud:** The Board of Directors:

1. Building on BOD/2019/03-02, notes that Education Out Loud support for national education coalitions will finish in December 2021.
2. Invites the Grant Agent, Oxfam IBIS to develop a costed extension proposal for OC1 – support to National Education Coalitions – in order to bring this component in line with the other Education Out Loud components.

3. Delegates authority to the Finance and Risk Committee to review and approve up to US\$17.5 million plus applicable agency fees based on the Secretariat’s assessment of the proposal, informed by the rapid review of progress and impact to date.

#### Eligibility and Allocation, including Prioritization Criteria (BOD/2021/05 – DOC 09)

7.8 The CFO presented the process by which funding allocations for the GPE 2021–2025 period will be made available following conclusion of the financing conference, and how they will be prioritized in the very unlikely event that available resources for system transformation grants are less than US\$2 billion, as set out in DOC 09.

#### **Discussion**

7.9 Board members expressed broad support for the proposal presented, in particular the prioritization criteria. The following key points were raised:

- **Prioritization criteria.**
  - A few Board Members inquired whether allocations in the case of prioritization would require Board decision, with one Board Member calling for some flexibility in the eligibility criteria to account for the impact of COVID-19. The Secretariat clarified the process ahead includes translating the outcome of the replenishment in line with the eligibility and allocation approach approved by the Board in December 2020. The Chair reiterated that previous Board decisions are not to be re-opened. The Secretariat further explained that the economic impact of COVID-19 would be reflected in the updated World Bank economic classification, which could make more countries eligible for the system transformation grant, while noting a lack of up-to-date data on the impact of COVID-19 on learning and completion rates.
  - Several Board Members expressed concerns over reducing the Strategic Capacities envelope and the resources towards building countries’ capacity to implement funding, how prioritization would impact LICs and regions with small allocations, the impact on countries that only have access to the Multiplier and inquired on the rationale to increase carryover. The Secretariat noted its assessment that prioritization will not be required but clarified that, in the event of prioritization, the minimum floor for countries with small allocations will remain intact and the system transformation grant and system capacity grant will be protected, while the pro-rata reduction would apply to the Multiplier and Strategic Capabilities which includes KIX, EOL and Strategic Partnerships. The CFO further

noted that a carryover of 25% does not present a significant risk and that while reducing multiplier allocations might impact some countries' ability to apply, it will not impact countries that have already expressed interest. He reiterated the need to maintain as much resources as possible for LICs and informed that the financial forecast will include projected allocations for LICs.

- **Application process window.**

- Several Board Members welcomed the proposal for narrower window for countries to complete the application process, while noting that the GPE quality assurance process also needs to be simplified and streamlined. Several Board Members called for flexibility for first time applicants or those in fragile or emergency contexts. A few Board Members noted the ambitious timeline of the grant application process, given that there have already been delays in the piloting phase, and stressed the need to stand up the provisional Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP) as soon as possible.
- The Secretariat clarified that every country, regardless of cohort, will have 18 months to apply, with the possibility of a 6-month extension by the CEO. The Secretariat highlighted the changes that will reduce the previous major bottlenecks in the application process, namely removing the requirement of an education sector plan to access grants and shifting the requirements assessment from the Secretariat to the ITAP to take place before the application stage commences.

- **75% ESPIG threshold guidance.** Several Board Members supported the lowering of the threshold of having at least 75% of existing ESPIG committed rather than completely removing it, while several others supported the removal of the 75% threshold guidance as it would allow for more flexibility, as long as the existing ESPIG is in an advanced stage. The Secretariat agreed on the importance of closely monitoring existing programs and highlighted the need to learn from the new operating model as it rolled out.

- **Clustering of countries in cohorts.**

- Many Board members supported the clustering of countries in cohorts based on ESPIG progress and their willingness and readiness to engage in compact discussions, while stressing the need to ensure fair treatment across cohorts and equity in access to allocations, in particular the gender equality accelerator (GEA). One Board member inquired how to ensure that countries receive the technical

support they need to prepare and submit their grant applications. Several Board Members indicated that core funding to GPE also supports girls' education in line with the commitment to hardwire gender equality into GPE operations and inquired on scenarios for when the GEA is over- or under-subscribed.

- The Secretariat highlighted that the staggered approach would allow GPE to be more adaptive and stressed that countries will opt to become part of the cohorts based on their readiness to engage. At the same time the Secretariat will establish country teams, drawing on expertise from various parts of the Secretariat, and pay particular attention to countries with capacity challenges, including through the system capacity grant. The Secretariat called on donors to make contributions to the GEA as soon as possible to avoid any substitution risks but noted that, as long as GPE continues to be funded, the timing of the cohorts and issues of equity is not a major risk. The CFO acknowledged the challenge of having lower supply of funds for the GEA than demand but noted the possibility of raising additional funds, while adding that the FRC would review the status of the GEA and recommend options for Board consideration in case it is oversubscribed.
- The Chair of the FRC explained that the Committee had requested more information on the outcome of consultations with interested developing country partners and grant agents prior to making the recommendation on this decision, noting the need for ongoing dialogue as the new operating model is rolled out.

7.10 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decision:

**BOD/2021/05-05 – Prioritization of GPE Funds:** The Board of Directors:

1. Refers to its decisions [BOD/2020/11/12-04](#) and [BOD/2020/11/12-05](#) on eligibility and allocation for GPE funding mechanisms, and its request to the Secretariat to develop prioritization criteria, along with [BOD/2020/09-02](#) to approve up to 20% of grant funds for the Multiplier.
2. Approves the process to indicatively allocate grant resources for the 2021-2025 financing period as set out in BOD/2021/05/DOC 09 Annex A.

### Trustee Budget

7.11 Angela Williamson, World Bank Trustee representative, presented the Trustee budget, as set out in DOC 10, to contextualize the discussion ahead.

### Discussion

7.12 The following key points were raised:

- **Trustee budget.** The World Bank representative gave an overview of the services that World Bank provides to GPE, which have costs that are reimbursed based on full cost recovery. She explained that the same procedure is used for all the Financial Intermediary Funds (FIF) that the World Bank serves as Trustee. From FY21, the process to estimate the budget was strengthened by including standardized cost estimates based on size and activity level. The Trustee commented that, although there was an increase of activities during FY21, those were largely anticipated with an overrun of US\$15,000. With the increase of activities expected after the financial conference, the Trustee has anticipated an increase of 8% in the FY22 budget. The Secretariat recognized the outstanding work the Trustee provides and informed that GPE is paying ten times less, compared to other similar funds, for a similar service.
- **Currency hedging.** The Trustee representative informed about the status of the Currency Hedging mechanism. The work started as a customized proposal at the request of GPE followed by an internal request at the World Bank for a standardized solution for all FIFs, causing delays. GPE would likely be the first pilot. The proposal is expected to be ready by year-end.

7.13 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decision:

**BOD/2021/05-06—Trustee Budget:** The Board of Directors approves the estimated administrative expenses of US\$843,000 for trustee services for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 and a supplementary budget of US\$15,000 for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 to cover higher investment management costs resulting from a larger than anticipated average fund balance as set out in BOD/2021/05 DOC 10.

## Operating Expenses

7.14 The CFO presented the FY22 Operating Expenses proposal to the Board with indicative allocations for FY23 and FY24 for information, as set out in DOC 11. He highlighted that the proposal has an increase in the staff ceiling for FY22 to deliver GPE 2025 with indicative staff numbers for FY23 and FY24. The proposal also addressed the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) budget for the next 5 years.

### Discussion

7.15 Board members expressed strong support for the proposals presented. The following key points were raised:

- **Operating Expenses.** Many Board members expressed their support to the proposal on GPE Operating Expenses for FY22, particularly on the increase in staff ceiling for

FY22, considering the significant increase of work that the Secretariat has been delivering, increased number of financing mechanisms and the need to strengthen its position to better serve DCPs and successfully deliver on GPE 2025. There was broad support as well as for the MEL budget for the next 5 years. Some Board members stressed that any staff ceiling increase should be done within the 5-7% range of total disbursements. While several others indicated that the Secretariat should be able to decide its own overhead of permanent staff within the parameters defined.

- **World Bank Cost Recovery.**

- Several Board members expressed concerns on the World Bank cost recovery increase to 17% in FY22 and to 28% in the following years and requested clarifications from the World Bank, particularly on the rationale for the increase, the lack of predictability and if this increase was in line with the Hosting Agreement. Several Board Members highlighted that the cost efficiency of being hosted by the World Bank should be discussed during the mid-term review of the Hosting Agreement.
- The World Bank representative expressed that the cost recovery is related to the institution's financial sustainability. Since 2014, starting with the efficiency review, the shareholders have been requesting efficiency gains, and as a result the Bank reduced its expenditures below 75% of revenues which helped to improve lending capacity. The representative explained that the Bank applies these costs across all units, including Trust Funds and FIFs. It was informed that currently GPE is paying for HR and IT services, security, travel services, leasing and others, and these costs have an impact on the IBRD and IDA budget. The World Bank stated that the Secretariat was informed of these changes in December 2020 and that the World Bank had agreed to phase in the increased costs: 17% in FY22 and 24% in FY23. Finally, he stated that this approach is in line with the Hosting Agreement.
- The Board Chair explained that when the Hosting Agreement was negotiated, , the World Bank did not anticipate any increase in recovery costs but was reluctant to set a fixed number in the document. She suggested that the Bank is now applying a formula without calculating the real cost base of GPE's usage of Bank services, and not allowing for any economies of scale. The Chair highlighted that as part of the mid-term review of the Hosting Agreement, the previous comparison exercise with other hosting cost options would be updated and this would be a critical element for the discussions with the Bank.

- On the World Bank's cost recovery increase, the Secretariat noted that it would be absorbed into its operating expenses for the following years, within the 5-7% parameters stipulated.

7.16 The Board discussed the recommended decision language and approved a revision to include, in point 4 of the decision language, that the increase in staff ceiling is "contingent on operating expenses costs remaining within 5-7% of disbursements". The Secretariat noted that it is projecting its operating expenses on a combined three-year FY22-24 period when keeping within the 5-7% limits to deal with annual fluctuations in disbursements.

7.17 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decision:

**BOD/2021/05-07—FY22 Operating Expenses:** The Board of Directors:

1. Approves US\$46,159,000 in incremental costs for direct operating expenses for FY22 as set out in BOD/2021/05/DOC 11, and notes the indicative total envelope estimated by the Secretariat for the FY22-FY24 period should account for no more than five to seven percent of total disbursements from the GPE Fund over the same period.
2. Authorizes the Secretariat in addition, to carry over into FY22 any unspent FY21 funds for multi-year and special initiatives.
3. Refers to its decision BOD/2018/12-01 Institutional Arrangements, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 8 of the Hosting MoU, approves an additional 17% of direct costs incurred in FY22 for
4. Noting the Secretariat's regular staff ceiling has not increased since the Board's previous decisions in 2016 BOD/2016/12-06 and 07, authorizes an increase in the ceiling for FY22 as set out in BOD/2021/05/DOC 11 Annex C contingent on operating expense costs remaining within 5-7% of disbursements.
5. Approves the five-year Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning budget of US\$8,049,450 for the FY22-FY26 period as set out in BOD/2021/05 DOC 11 Annex D, noting the costs for FY22 are included in the overall direct operating expenses budget. Further authorizes the CEO to administer such funds as either Secretariat administered expenses or as grants directly from the Trust Fund to facilitate the efficient implementation of the strategy.

## **8. Corporate Risk Management (BOD/2021/05 DOC 12)**

8.1 The Chief Financial Officer presented the latest Risk Management Report as set out in DOC 12, highlighting main risks, including the importance of a successful financing conference, the need to roll out the operating model, ensuring that the governance reform achieves its intended purpose, and having a resourced Secretariat to support the

implementation of the strategy.

### **Discussion**

8.2 Board Members appreciated the update. The following key points were raised:

- A Board member suggested that the FRC should review the new risk framework, noting it should be less complex and more responsive to changes in country context. Other members suggested the risk framework include mitigation mechanisms in the event the Operating Model leads to increased transaction costs and the availability of domestic resources as one of the biggest risks for education financing in developing countries.
- The CFO informed that the Operating Model was designed to be more efficient and capable of adapting. The Secretariat considered including the mitigation of transaction costs as an indicator in the risk report. It was noted that the report is in transition. Some changes to the formulation of risk and indicators are expected in the following report, informed by the outcome of the financing conference, decisions made on the results framework, and the pipeline for rolling out the operating model.

## **FRIDAY, MAY 28, 2021**

### **9. Opening of the Meeting**

9.1 The Board Chair reviewed the objectives for Day 3. These included an update on the initial findings of the evaluation of the COVID-19 funding window, a continuation of the update on country pilots, and an update on the Financing Campaign in open session. The Board would convene in executive session to decide on the GPE priorities for the next CEO performance cycle, and to endorse the selected Chair and Vice-Chair candidates.

### **10. Learning from GPE COVID-19 Funding**

10.1 Dr. Shenila Rawal and Dr. Monazza Aslam from Oxford Partnership Education Research and Analysis presented the initial findings of the formative evaluation of the COVID-19 funding window and solicited suggestions for the final summative evaluation planned for 2022.

### **Discussion**

10.2 The following points were raised:

- **Summative evaluation.** A Board member recommended to include in the evaluation the grant agent selection process, the adequacy of planning and adaption to context and alignment with other efforts, and good practices and room for improvement in

emergency contexts. Dr. Rawal confirmed these areas would be included and the summative evaluation would have a mix methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative data, and a range of disaggregated databases as well as guidance notes and actual reporting. Another Board member noted the need to improve the engagement of teachers and unions in COVID-related decisions and to provide funding for teacher development and training as well as student and teacher well-being. Dr. Rawal confirmed the summative evaluation would consider marginalized groups and acknowledged the pandemic had exacerbated differences. Those teacher representatives consulted for the formative evaluation noted they had been engaged. The summative evaluation would consider whether teacher engagement, and community members broadly, was ongoing during grant implementation. The formative evaluation found that several countries had included psychosocial support and a secondary data analysis would consider wider contexts.

- **Consortium.** A Board member representing a multilateral agency in the consortium administering the COVID-19 ESPDG window suggested an evaluation of the window, including in terms of its agility, and drive towards partnership and cooperation.

## 11. Presentation on the Financing Campaign

11.1 Geoff Adlide, and Charlie Tapp, the Secretariat Managers of External Relations, provided an overview of the Financing Campaign, culminating in the Global Education Summit to be held in London on July 28-29. The Secretariat acknowledged the work done by the United Kingdom and Kenya as co-hosts of the campaign, as well as other stakeholders, to leverage more domestic and external financing.

### **Discussion**

11.2 Board members commented the work accomplished so far by the Secretariat and looked forward to the campaign's success. Minister Thiam, the Vice-Chair, emphasized that COVID is limiting the number of participants and recommended that partners work to locate offices in developing countries to hold live events to enable local education groups to gather and participate in the event. A Board member noted the need for an agenda of events, and parameters for the size of delegations to secure the participation of relevant participants. The Secretariat noted that the Global Education Summit will be capped at 600 participants on-site, due to COVID restrictions, with a virtual summit available on-line and more details to follow shortly.

## 12. Executive Session

12.1 The Board in executive session discussed the CEO priorities and the candidates for

the position of Chair and Vice Chair.

12.2 The Board Chair declared consensus on the following decisions:

**BOD/2021/05-08 - GPE Priorities for CEO Performance Feedback:** The Board of Directors endorses the proposed GPE Priorities set out in BOD/2021/05 DOC 13 Annex A as the basis for the CEO feedback process for the period from June 2021 to June 2022, in accordance with the regular schedule.

**BOD/2021/05-09 – Appointment of the Board Chair:** The Board of Directors:

1. Recognizes the leadership of the current GPE Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Advisory Group, in overseeing an open and competitive process for the search and selection of a new GPE Board Chair;
2. Expresses its gratitude for the diligence demonstrated in finalizing the selection on behalf of the GPE Board, based on robust criteria and thoughtful consideration of all of the dimensions of GPE’s work and profile;
3. Endorses the appointment of H.E. Dr. Jakaya Kikwete as Chair of the Global Partnership for Education Board of Directors for a three-year term effective September 15, 2021.
4. Notes the exemplary leadership and unparalleled commitment of the outgoing Board Chair, Julia Gillard, and wishes to express its deepest appreciation for her years of services at the helm of the Board.

**BOD/2021/05-10 – Appointment of the Board Vice- Chair:** The Board of Directors:

1. Recognizes the leadership of the current GPE Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Advisory Group, in overseeing an open and competitive process for the search and selection of a new GPE Board Vice-Chair.
2. Expresses its gratitude for the diligence demonstrated in finalizing the selection on behalf of the GPE Board, based on robust criteria and thoughtful consideration of all of the dimensions of GPE’s work and profil.
3. Endorses the appointment of Dr. Susan Liataud as Vice-Chair of the Global Partnership for Education Board of Directors for a three-year term effective September 15, 2021.
4. Expresses its deepest gratitude to H.E. Serigne Mbaye Thiam for his service as GPE Board Vice-Chair, and notes its strong appreciation for his thoughtful and impactful engagement in bringing developing country voices to the fore of Board deliberations and decision-making.

12.3 Following the decisions, the Board Chair closed the executive session and resumed the open session where the Chair-elect and Vice Chair-elect presented themselves to the Board.

### **13. Any Other Business**

- 13.1 The Board Chair noted the Board would next convene in December.
- 13.2 There was no other item for discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 9am.

## Annex 1: List of Board Participants

	Name	Constituency	Role
<b>Board Members</b>			
1	Edgar Moyo	Africa 1	BM
2	Abdullahi Abukar Haji	Africa 1	ABM
3	Emmanuel Ahiya ( <i>represented Komla Kokoroko</i> )	Africa 2	BM
4	Youssef Ahmat ( <i>represented Merci Kosmadji</i> )	Africa 2	ABM
5	David Moinina Sengeh	Africa 3	BM
6	Sunday Echono	Africa 3	ABM
7	Ram Prasad Thapaliya	Asia and Pacific	BM
8	Walipe Winge ( <i>represented Jimmy Uguro</i> )	Asia and Pacific	ABM
9	Usman Sharifxodjayev	EEMECA	BM
10	Attaullah Wahidiyar	EEMECA	ABM
11	Didacus Jules	LAC	BM
12	Doris Gutierrez	LAC	ABM
13	Rangina Hamidi	EEMECA	BM
13	Donatienne Hissard	Donor 1	BM
14	Sabina Handschin	Donor 1	ABM
15	Line Baagø-Rasmussen	Donor 2	BM
16	Per Magnusson	Donor 2	ABM
17	Alicia Herbert	Donor 3	BM
18	Louise Holt	Donor 3	ABM
19	Camilla Fossberg	Donor 4	BM
20	Rashid Al Shamsi	Donor 4	ABM
21	Martin Seychell	Donor 5	BM

22	Heike Kuhn	Donor 5	ABM
23	LeAnna Marr	Donor 6	BM
24	David Coleman ( <i>represented Sarah Lendon</i> )	Donor 6	ABM
25	Kira Boe	CSO 1	BM
26	Yona Nestel	CSO 1	ABM
27	Solange Akpo-Gnandi	CSO 2	BM
28	Abeer Darwazeh	CSO 2	ABM
29	Haldis Holst	CSO 3	BM
30	Dennis Sinyolo	CSO 3	ABM
31	David Boutcher	Private Sector	BM
32	Jake Cho	Private Sector	ABM
33	Euan Wilmshurst	Private Foundations	BM
34	Carolyn Ng'eny	Private Foundations	ABM
35	Stefania Giannini	MLA 1	BM
36	Carmen Burbano ( <i>represented Valerie Guarnieri</i> )	MLA 1	ABM
37	Robert Jenkins	MLA 2	BM
38	Mamadou Balde	MLA 2	ABM
39	Luis Benveniste	MLA 3	BM
40	Jawara Gaye	MLA 3	ABM

### Board and Committee Chairs

41	Julia Gillard	Board	Chair
42	Serigne Mbaye Thiam	Board	Vice Chair
43	Nesmy Manigat	FRC	Chair
44	Donatienne Hissard	PILC	Chair