Education is the foundation for building peaceful, prosperous, healthy and equitable societies. In a time marked by the impacts of conflicts, climate change and massive technological shifts, the role of education has never been more critical to empower the next generation with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in the 21st century. And yet, nearly a quarter of a billion girls and boys remained out of school in 2023, and an alarming proportion of children in lower-income countries are still struggling to acquire basic reading and math skills.

Against this backdrop, support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has reached 227 million children since 2021. Having grown to nearly 90 partner countries, GPE has rallied governments, civil society, teacher organizations, development agencies, the private sector and philanthropic foundations to support countries in their efforts to transform education systems. Our collective efforts have enabled partner countries to distribute 48 million textbooks, train 481,000 teachers and build 6,664 classrooms in 2023.

Our partnership also continued to grow. We welcomed Belize, Egypt, Indonesia and Sri Lanka as new partner countries and received new funding pledges from the US, Japan, Denmark and Norway. We joined forces with the Harry Hole Foundation and the Roger Federer Foundation to drive forward progress on girls’ education and foundational learning.

GPE nearly doubled its grant support to partner countries compared to the previous year, approving almost $800 million in grant funding over the course of 2023. Working with new and existing partners, we also leveraged $1.2 billion in additional cofinancing to further drive progress, using innovative financing mechanisms such as the GPE Multiplier.
In 2023 there was a significant acceleration in partner countries identifying and agreeing on their vision for transforming education. Thirty-three partner countries finalized ambitious partnership compacts which can be used as a basis to leverage partnerships and funding around priority reforms with the greatest potential to improve education outcomes. Compact priorities emerging included foundational learning, teacher training and early childhood education.

A commitment to gender equality is at the center of GPE’s mission, and this year we reinforced our partnership-wide approach to gender-inclusive education. Every partnership compact endorsed during 2023 considered gender aspects. The Girls’ Education Accelerator reached $176.5 million in allocations to initiatives aimed at addressing the unique barriers to education faced by girls, such as combating harmful gender norms and creating safer learning environments for over 26,000 girls in El Salvador and Zimbabwe.

During 2023, we also advanced our commitment to tackling the impacts of climate change on education. We launched the first-ever framework for climate-smart education systems, supported by a $15 million initiative that provides education ministries with support to integrate climate into their national education plans, policies and curricula. At COP28, together with the Green Climate Fund and Save the Children, GPE mobilized $70 million for a unique program that will support up to 23 countries to build more resilient education systems and prepare teachers, students and schools for an increasingly climate-impacted future.

Underpinning all these efforts is an unrelenting emphasis on effective, evidence-based approaches shared across the partnership. Fostering learning, innovation and adaptation, GPE hosted several regional workshops in which partner countries and other stakeholders gained a deeper understanding of systemic roadblocks to transforming education and how to remove them. At the same time, GPE made several operational changes based on partner feedback to make it easier to work together toward our common goals.

As we look to the future, our resolve to transform education systems remains unwavering. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of our partners and stakeholders whose dedication, generosity and trust fuel our ambition to make quality education a reality for every child. Let us reaffirm our commitment to education as the most powerful tool for building a more just, sustainable and peaceful world.

Laura Frigenti
Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Education