



EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 2020 7AM GMT

MEDIA ADVISORY

The Global Partnership for Education announces US\$250 million for low-income countries battling COVID-19

On Wednesday April 1st, 2020, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is announcing US\$250 million to help developing countries mitigate both the immediate and long-term disruptions to education being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will focus on helping millions of the most vulnerable and marginalized children, particularly girls, displaced children and children from poor families, who risk being hit hardest by school closures and will face the greatest barriers to resuming their education.

The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health emergency – it is also an education crisis that will hit low-income countries the hardest. Nation-wide school closures in more than 60 of GPE’s partner countries are already interrupting education for more than 600 million children. For many of them, schools provide much more than an opportunity to learn. They are a lifeline, providing access to health care, nutritious meals, and shielding children from violence and exploitation.

Long-term school closures could have a devastating impact on the world’s poorest children. Interrupted school feeding programs are leaving millions of children hungry. Girls who are excluded from school are more vulnerable to gender-based violence, early marriage and other forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the Ebola crisis, school closures were linked to [11,000 school girls in Sierra Leone becoming pregnant](#) and being unable to return to school. Boys are at increased risk of being recruited into armed groups. Teachers may also be forced to find other sources of income and may not return once the pandemic is over.

Today’s announcement will ensure that up to 67 countries will be eligible to receive funds. GPE is making US\$250 million available immediately, repurposing other programmatic funds to meet this urgent need, with an expectation that additional funding will be required to help low-income countries keep their education systems going through the pandemic and assist children who are vulnerable as a result of school closures.

Note to editors: Last week, GPE provided [US\\$8.8 million to UNICEF](#) to kick-start COVID-19 education response plans in up to 87 countries.

Available for interview

Julia Gillard

*Chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Education
Former Prime Minister of Australia*

Julia Gillard joined the Global Partnership for Education as chair of the Board of Directors in 2014 after a distinguished public service career in Australia. Following her passion for education, she was appointed a Commissioner at the International Commission for Global Education Opportunity in 2015 and became



Patron at CAMFED, the Campaign for Female Education, in 2016. She is also a Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.

Serigne Mbaye Thiam

*Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Education
Minister for Water and Sanitation, Senegal*

Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister for Water and Sanitation and former Minister of National Education in Senegal, was selected as Vice Chair by the Board of Directors in May 2018. Between January 2013 and December 2014, Minister Thiam had been a member of the GPE Board, representing the Africa 2 constituency, which includes 18 francophone countries. Between February 2014 and December 2015, he was the chair of the Governance, Ethics, Risk and Finance Committee.

Alice Albright

Chief Executive Officer, Global Partnership for Education

Ms. Alice P. Albright was appointed as the first Chief Executive Officer of the Global Partnership for Education's Secretariat in February 2013. Since joining GPE, Ms. Albright has strengthened the position of GPE to be a major delivery agency of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

Before taking on her role as CEO at GPE, Ms. Albright served in the Obama Administration as the Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank) from 2009 to 2013. From 2001 to 2009, Ms. Albright served as the Chief Financial and Investment Officer for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI).

Jo Bourne

Chief Technical Officer, Global Partnership for Education

Jo Bourne is Chief Technical Officer at the Global Partnership for Education. Ms. Bourne has a rich and diverse experience in education and international development having held senior positions shaping education policy and programs in the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and most recently at UNICEF.

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About the Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education supports close to 70 developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality basic education, prioritizing the poorest, the most vulnerable and those living in countries affected by fragility or conflict. GPE mobilizes financing for education and supports developing countries to build effective education systems founded on evidence-based planning and policies.

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