

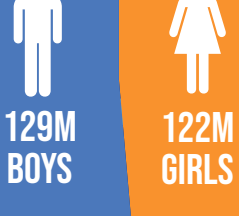
EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Too many children and youth are still missing out on the opportunity to access education.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE

251 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 worldwide are out of school, a **rise of 7 million** from 2021.¹



GENDER DIFFERENCES

There are more boys out of school than girls.²

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT

It is estimated that **468 million children, or one in six**, live in areas affected by conflict, marking an increase of 28% since 2015. These children are more likely to be out of school.⁴

1 IN 6 CHILDREN LIVE IN CONFLICT AREAS

HIGH RATES IN POORER COUNTRIES

In the poorest countries, **33% of students** are out of school compared to 3% in the richest countries.³

GROWING RATES IN MUCH OF AFRICA

The number of out-of-school children and youth in much of Africa continues to rise.⁵



78% PRIMARY LEVEL COMPLETION RATE

DROPOUTS DRIVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATES

Significant numbers of children and youth are at risk of dropping out of school.

In 4 of 5 regions in Africa, primary education completion improved to 78% in 2023, but at the upper secondary level, completion rates **only reached 33%**.⁶

33% UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL COMPLETION RATE IN 4 OF 5 REGIONS IN AFRICA



Evidence-based and cost-effective options for these vulnerable learners are needed.

4 research projects



From 2021 to 2024, GPE KIX supported four research projects to test, assess and develop strategies to scale education innovations that can increase access to quality education for out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) and those at risk of dropping out.

15 countries



The research focused on:

11 southern-based implementing organizations



Accelerated education programs (AEPs), which fill important gaps in traditional education models by providing condensed curricula, tailored pedagogy and flexible learning schedules

30+ AEPs and in-school practices assessed



Enhanced school-based practices — such as improved teacher training, community engagement and extra-curricular activities — to prevent dropout and attract OOSCY back into the education system

Bridging Classes for OOSCY: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal

Scalability of Programs for OOSCY and At-Risk Learners: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal

Comparative Study of AEPs and Girl-Focused Education Models: Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone

Back2School: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania

Countries in which GPE KIX research projects were implemented

Effective AEPs and enhanced school-based practices prevent school dropout and bring children back into school and learning.

GPE KIX research projects have demonstrated the powerful impact of AEPs and enhanced school-based practices at individual, school, community and national levels.

- Individual-level results
- School-level results
- Community-level results
- National-level results

1

Increased access to education for marginalized communities

In Nigeria, some 310,000 OOSCY were educated over seven years through five existing AEPs, providing learners with access to education that might otherwise have been unavailable.

2

High rates of transition to formal education

In Ghana, overall transition rates of AEP learners to formal education were 80% or more, with more girls than boys transitioning to formal education.

3

Developed skills that increased economic empowerment

In Nigeria, AEP learners gained skills in literacy, numeracy, communications and daily living that were considered invaluable in their working lives and in their households.

4

Empowered learners, particularly girls

In Sierra Leone, AEP learners reported strengthened empowerment, self-esteem and confidence.

5

Delivered comparable or better academic performance

In existing AEP models reviewed in Sierra Leone, learners were comparable to formal school learners in word reading, while scoring slightly lower in reading comprehension.

6

Strengthened teacher and facilitator capacities

In research on adapted AEP models in Kenya, teachers demonstrated new skills in managing accelerated education learners within classrooms and in meeting their specific needs, leading to improved academic performance.

7

Reduced dropout rates

Bangladesh saw an 11% reduction in dropout rates due to holistic interventions with communities, teachers and students.

8

Improved engagement and support for education

In Nepal, engagement campaigns enhanced parents' knowledge, beliefs and self-efficacy in making positive change in the school environment.

9

Reduced early marriage and teen pregnancy

In Ghana, a review of complementary basic education models across 32 research sites found evidence of a reduction in marriage among girls aged 10-15 years

10

Demonstrated cost-effectiveness

The unit cost of Ghana's accelerated complementary basic education program in 2019-2020 was 21.4% lower than the unit cost for the regular system, excluding the cost of teacher training.

11

Enhanced policies and guidelines on AEPs

Evidence from the GPE KIX research informed development of government policies and guidelines on AEPs in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

These highlights are drawn from the GPE KIX report [Education Options for Out-of-School Children and Those at Risk of Dropping Out: A Research Synthesis](#)

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is a joint endeavour between GPE and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) that aims to ensure partner countries have and use the evidence and innovation they need to accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century.

Five synthesis reports were commissioned by GPE KIX to consolidate evidence across research projects conducted between 2020 and 2024. Topics included: data systems and data use; early learning; gender equality, equity and inclusion; teacher professional development; out-of-school children and youth.



Photo Credit: GPE/ Rodrig Mbock

Sources:

- ^{1,2,3} UNESCO. (2024). Out-of-School Rates. Retrieved from <https://education-estimates.org/out-of-school/>
- ⁴ Save the Children. (2023). Unprotected. Special Edition: Analysis of funding for child protection in armed conflict in 2021 and 2022
- ⁵ UNESCO. (2022). New estimation confirms out-of-school population is growing. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382577>
- ⁶ UNESCO. (2023). Completion Rate. Retrieved from <https://education-estimates.org/completion/>