

The Netherlands Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policy

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE) INPUTS FOR ONLINE CONSULTATION - April 2022

QUESTION 1 - How can Dutch businesses become more involved in the twin transition in (low and) middle-income countries?

- As a member of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) since 2002, the Netherlands can make the most of GPE's global convening role and tackle this twin transition. Dutch businesses, along with GPE, can respond to climate change challenges and make the most of the digital transition.
- Firstly, a quality education directly impacts the sustainability transition, as it equips people with knowledge to advance climate change mitigation and develop skills to build green economies.
 - Dutch private foundations and tech-savvy partner companies have a unique potential to bring strategic capabilities that help education ministries strengthen their data systems. These systems are critical to providing insight, evidence and analysis for ministries of education to improve education quality and reach, ultimately boosting the resilience of students and their communities to adapt and respond to climate change.
 - This is where the GPE Match mechanism can provide matching funds for in-kind contributions of strategic capabilities for qualifying partner-country initiatives. This mechanism is available only to private foundations and the business community and can be used for a donor country and private sector/ foundation to match funding to GPE.
- Secondly, GPE is in a unique position to bring together the Dutch business community, private foundations and others, including their expertise and innovation in EdTech. There is a misconception that technology can replace teachers – it can't. But with the right training and accessibility, technology enhances children's learning experience.
 - With GPE, Dutch businesses can use shared knowledge and explore ways to make the most of the digital transition in low and middle-income countries.
 - Through private sector funds, this support includes providing tech tools and digital devices to ensure teachers monitor student performance and identifying children at risk of dropping out; make the most of in-service teacher training on the use of information and communication technology (ICT); and influencing policy reform around the increased use of technology to improve the quality of learning. In this process, the active participation of several stakeholders, including civil society, in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring processes is critical.
 - GPE has a private sector/ foundations board constituency and a civil society constituency, including teachers.

QUESTION 2 - How can government, industry and knowledge institutions work better together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals?

- It is imperative that we highlight and put into practice moving from the idea that the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals is only on governments. The industry, knowledge institutions, business community and several other stakeholders have a responsibility too – and incredibly valuable contributions to share when joining forces.
- These key actors include civil society organizations (CSOs), whose experience and direct links with those most vulnerable must always be taken into consideration. Through its longstanding support to CSOs, GPE works to strengthen national advocacy efforts to protect education budgets and ultimately impact the achievement to the SDGs.

- The financing gap for low- and lower-middle income countries to achieve SDG4 is currently \$148 billion/year (UNESCO 2020). And due to COVID-19, this gap could increase by 1/3.
- Through GPE funds, financial co-investment opportunities for Dutch companies and private foundations support initiatives that can help advance partner countries' strategies and priorities, in partnership with governments from donor countries as well as those from developing countries.

QUESTION 3 - How can the aforementioned Dutch commitment to policy coherence for development be further strengthened or improved?

- The strengthening of synergies and cooperation amongst various stakeholders is a central part of GPE's mission.
- The Netherlands, as a member of GPE since 2002, can continue making the most of GPE's unique position to support greater coherence at policy level and beyond, across the sector. This is due to GPE's convening role: we bring together teachers, civil society, donors, United Nations agencies, development banks, businesses and philanthropists behind partner country leadership.
- Programs funded through GPE's are based on assessments carried out in continuous contact several stakeholders, strengthening overall coherence, synergies and cooperation. GPE's emphasis on government leadership and local coordination, including the local education group (LEG), is central to the design and implementation of approaches that enhance developing countries' opportunities for development. In this context, civil society organizations (CSOs) make meaningful contributions to policy discussions and education planning, as well as enhance mutual accountability. Sector coordination ensures alignment with national priorities and a development coherence, while promoting sustainability. This is done through a country ownership and shared bottom-line approach.
- The Dutch action plan on policy coherence can be further strengthened through a more active role of Netherlands through its embassies in-country in the local education groups. A joint and strengthened support to global cooperation can accelerate progress against the global education goals and having a ripple effect on key policy themes such as climate change, girls' education, sexual and health reproductive rights and many more.

QUESTION 5 - On which themes or sectors do you see opportunities for international business?

- As stated by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Liesje Schreinemacher, "When we [the Netherlands] cooperate in the region, aid and trade go hand in hand". In line with this, international business' role in contributing to the prospects for the local population through country compacts is directly linked to access to quality education from the beginning.
- Education is an investment in our most valuable resource –children and young people. If we don't boost investments in education, 825 million children and young people in low- and middle-income countries will not gain the skills they need to successfully enter the job market by 2030. A fully funded GPE could add \$164 billion to GPE partner economies, lift 18 million people out of poverty, and protect two million girls from early marriage. In particular, girls' education is one of the smartest investments a country can make: it boosts economic growth, curbs infant mortality and improves child nutrition. Twelve years of quality education for every girl would boost economies by as much as \$30 trillion in increased lifetime earnings. One additional school year can increase a woman's earnings by 10% to 20%; women with secondary education may expect to earn twice as much as women with no education. Limited educational opportunities for girls are costing countries between \$15 trillion and \$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.
- There are valuable opportunities in fostering partnerships and alignment between businesses, GPE and partner countries. This results in empowering girls and boys through mentoring, leadership training, apprenticeships and fostering future women leaders in the workforce. GPE has hardwired gender across

the whole strategic plan and has a specific girls education financing window (Girls Education Accelerator)

- Investing in girls' education is a business imperative for the private sector. It is an opportunity to align investments/initiatives with government strategies to achieve the transformational impacts at scale.
- GPE has experience co-hosting a business dialogue on girls' education, focused on bringing together major regional and global companies, amongst which the Netherlands has the opportunity of being a key player, and country partners to explore ways to align corporate initiatives with country priorities on girls' education.

QUESTION 7 - What do you think the Netherlands is good at in the field of development cooperation? On which themes could the Netherlands play a driving role?

- The Netherlands can play a driving role in the field of global education and climate adaptation, and the achievement of the SDGs. Education is the natural bridge between both priorities.
- The Netherlands could also take up a leadership role in focusing on increasing youth skills of the most marginalised children in least developed countries through global education/ GPE.
- The Netherlands is a country of reference in the promotion of sustainable inclusive growth and climate action worldwide, playing a major role in achieving the Paris and Glasgow climate goals. For this, it is paramount to highlight the importance of putting education at the top of the international agenda as the world seeks to respond to and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In relation to the Dutch commitment to the SDGs, at a leadership level several government officials have 'adopted' one or several SDGs. While this is a clear signal of the already strong Dutch commitment, this has the potential to be strengthened by the adoption of more SDGs, including SDG4.
- The financing gap for low- and lower-middle income countries to achieve SDG4 is currently \$148 billion/year. The Netherlands can make the most of its strong voice in the global geopolitical sphere, as well as its historic tradition of protecting those most vulnerable.
- Through the GPE, the Netherlands can leverage its strengths and develop optimized approaches to advance SDG 4 and provide inclusive and equitable quality education for all, especially the most marginalized children in crisis situations.

QUESTION 8 - In what way and in what area can Dutch development cooperation innovate even more?

- The Netherlands has strong potential to further explore innovative approaches within the field of global education. This can be done in several ways through the already existing membership of the Global Partnership for Education. GPE's unique model drives innovation to transform their education systems removing stubborn barriers to learning.
- While Dutch development cooperation already brings expertise, experience, energy and innovation into the education space, this can be enhanced in the frame of a multistakeholder platform such as GPE. The convening role of GPE brings together several partners' experience and knowledge of educational systems, including CSO networks that strengthen national and global linkages. This translates in knowledge sharing, including on how to: build educational systems from the ground up; implement innovative solutions into the education system in terms of digital learning start-ups; leverage educational technology companies that are providing solutions as well as exporting those solutions.
- With GPE's innovative financing tools such as the Multiplier, GPE will use these funds to leverage an additional \$3 billion in donor funding to support transformational change. This is an example of how the Netherlands can play a central role in innovative approaches.
- Dutch development cooperation is in a privileged position to also leverage the innovative education financing mechanism International Finance Facility for Education (IFFED), which aims to unlock at least US \$10 billion of new funding by 2030, making it possible to get every child in school and learning.

- The Netherlands can also showcase bold innovation by incorporating the youth's passion and unique lived experiences that make them a critical voice for development cooperation advocacy. Young people are leading the charge to solve today's greatest challenges in their communities and globally, from climate change and gender inequality to conflict and inequitable access to education. GPE provides a platform and support for young people to realize their own ambitions for social transformation and to harness their passion to drive real change in global education.

QUESTION 9 - In what way/in which area can the Netherlands, as a donor, show even more courage?

- The Netherlands has great potential to show even more courage by supporting young voices and fully investing in education as the critical tool to achieve system transformation. That way, education will be leveraged as the cross-cutting theme it is to all Dutch traditional priority themes.
- The importance of global education financing is directly linked to the Dutch own development and foreign policy agenda. The Netherlands needs to step up and show more courage and ambition in order to overcome the intertwined challenges that all countries face, such as: recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, tackling both climate change impact and the education emergency, overcoming poverty, create a more peaceful and equal world, and sustainably mitigating inequalities.
- Within Dutch cross-party priorities, education must remain at the top political; the longer schools remain closed, the greater the damage will be. Confronted with armed conflict, high poverty rates, the devastating impact of climate change and the deepening of existing inequalities, all governments in these countries need urgent support to accelerate progress and deliver on the promise of a quality education for every child. When schools are closed or destroyed, students become vulnerable to violence, permanent displacement, early marriage, forced labor, and recruitment. Against this backdrop, innovation and efficiency in achieving education for all are no longer optional.
- Investments in education strengthen the fight to end poverty and curb climate change, save lives and create a better common future for all. This approach is not about "checking boxes", but rather working together to achieve real system transformation addressing the systems that perpetuate poverty and inequality.

QUESTION 10 - Do you have any other points of attention that you think should be included in the new policy document?

- The education of girls needs to be included as a key element of the new policy document, reflecting the Netherlands' commitment to gender equality. All girls should be educated, healthy and safe and the new policy for Foreign Trade & Development Cooperation is a unique opportunity to reflect this.
- Gender equality is a precondition for ending poverty, building peaceful and more resilient societies, and achieving sustainable development. Eliminating education gaps between girls and boys is a powerful way to prevent persistent inequalities from repeating from one generation to the next.
- Educating girls generates huge dividends for economic prosperity, gender equality, climate resilience, public health, and lasting peace and stability; its impact goes beyond the individual, cascading into her family and her community.