

Prospective evaluation of GPE's country-level support to education

Country Level Evaluation: Nepal
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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIN	Association of International NGOs in Nepal
APFS	Annual Program Financial Statements
ASIP	Annual Strategic Implementation Plan
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BRM	Budgetary Review Meeting
CEHRD	Center for Education and Human Resource Development
CSEF	Civil Society Education Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEO	District Education Office/Officer
DLI	Disbursement Linked Indicators
DoE	Department of Education
DPs	Development Partners
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
EGMA	Early Grades Math Assessment
EGRA	Early Grades Reading Assessment
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Program
EI	Equity Index

EMIS	Education Management Information System
ERO	Education Review Office
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESIP	Equity Strategy Implementation Plans
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESPDG	Education Sector Plan Development Grant
ESPIG	Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant
ESR	Education Sector Review
EU	European Union
FPs	Financing Partners
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GA	Grant Agent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GNI	Gross National Income
GoN	Government of Nepal
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRA	Global and Regional Activities
HDI	Human Development Index
HR	Human Resource
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IMF	International Monetary Fund

INGO	International non-Governmental Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JFA	Joint Financing Agreement
JFP	Joint Financing Partner
JRM	Joint Review Meeting
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAS	Learning Assessment System
LEDPG	Local Education Development Partners Group
LG	Local Government
LEG	Local Education Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MTR	Midterm Review
NASA	National Assessment for Student Achievement
NCED	National Center for Education Development
NEGRP	National Early Grade Reading Program
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPR	Nepalese Rupee
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOSC	Out-of-School Children

PDG	Program Development Grant
PG	Provincial Government
PRF	Program Results Framework
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
QAR	Quality Assurance Review
RCs	Resource Centers
RP	Resource Person
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSDP-SC	SSDP Steering Committee
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
ToC	Theory of Change
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
TWG	Technical Working Group
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UMG	Universal Management Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank

Terminology

Alignment	Basing support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures. ¹
Basic education	Pre-primary (i.e., education before Grade 1), primary (Grades 1-6), lower secondary (Grades 7-9), and adult literacy education, in formal and non-formal settings. This corresponds to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 levels 0-2.
Capacity	In the context of this evaluation we understand capacity as the foundation for behavior change in individuals, groups or institutions. Capacity encompasses the three interrelated dimensions of <i>motivation</i> (political will, social norms, habitual processes), <i>opportunity</i> (factors outside of individuals e.g. resources, enabling environment) and <i>capabilities</i> (knowledge, skills). ²
Education systems	Collections of institutions, actions and processes that affect the educational status of citizens in the short and long run. ³ Education systems are made up of a large number of actors (teachers, parents, politicians, bureaucrats, civil society organizations) interacting with each other in different institutions (schools, ministry departments) for different reasons (developing curriculums, monitoring school performance, managing teachers). All these interactions are governed by rules, beliefs, and behavioral norms that affect how actors react and adapt to changes in the system. ⁴
Equity	In the context of education, equity refers to securing all children's rights to education, and their rights within and through education to realize their potential and aspirations. It requires implementing and institutionalizing arrangements that help ensure all children can achieve these aims. ⁵
Financial additionality	This incorporates two not mutually exclusive components: (a) an increase in the total amount of funds available for a given educational purpose, without the substitution or redistribution of existing resources; and (b) positive change in the quality of funding (e.g., predictability of aid, use of pooled funding mechanisms, co-financing, non-traditional financing sources, alignment with national priorities).

¹ OECD, Glossary of Aid Effectiveness Terms. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm>
GPE understands 'country systems' to relate to a set of seven dimensions: Plan, Budget, Treasury, Procurement, Accounting, Audit and Report. Source: Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators. Indicator (29) Proportion of GPE grants aligned to national systems.

² Mayne, John. *The COM-B Theory of Change Model*. Working paper. February 2017

³ Moore, Mark. 2015. *Creating Efficient, Effective, and Just Educational Systems through Multi-Sector Strategies of Reform*. RISE Working Paper 15/004, Research on Improving Systems of Education, Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom.

⁴ World Bank. 2003. *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Washington, DC: World Bank; New York: Oxford University Press.

⁵ Equity and Inclusion in Education. A guide to support education sector plan preparation, revision and appraisal. GPE 2010; p.3. Available at:

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/equity-and-inclusion-education-guide-support-education-sector-plan-preparation-revision-and>

Gender equality	The equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys, and equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. It encompasses the narrower concept of gender equity, which primarily concerns fairness and justice regarding benefits and needs. ⁶
Harmonization	The degree of coordination between technical and financial partners in how they structure their external assistance (e.g. pooled funds, shared financial or procurement processes), to present a common and simplified interface for developing country partners. The aim of harmonization is to reduce transaction costs and increase the effectiveness of the assistance provided by reducing demands on recipient countries to meet with different donors' reporting processes and procedures, along with uncoordinated country analytic work and missions. ⁷
Inclusion	Adequately responding to the diversity of needs among all learners, through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion from and within education. ⁸

⁶ GPE Gender Equality Policy and Strategy 2016-2020. GPE 2016, p. 5f. Available at: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2016-06-gpe-gender-equality-policy-strategy.pdf>

⁷ Adapted from OECD, Glossary of Aid Effectiveness Terms <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm>, and from Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators. Indicator (30) Proportion of GPE grants using: (a) co-financed project or (b) sector pooled funding mechanisms.

⁸ GPE 2010, p.3.

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Disclaimer

A draft version of this report was shared with the Secretariat, an Independent Technical Review Panel, and the Local Education Group in Nepal. The report was revised based on comments provided by the first two of these groups. The evaluation team appreciates the feedback received by stakeholders.

Executive summary

A) Overview

This is the last annual report to be submitted during the three-year prospective evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in Nepal – one of eight country prospective evaluations that will be complemented by a total of 20 summative country evaluations, to be carried out between 2018 and 2020. It follows a baseline report on Nepal that was submitted in May 2018 and a first annual report delivered in August 2018. This report presents the findings of the final prospective evaluation mission to the country, which took place from August 26–September 6, 2019. The report offers conclusions based on the data collection, monitoring and assessment undertaken throughout the evaluation period and is written as a standalone report for the Nepal Prospective evaluation 2017–2020.

B) Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the prospective evaluations was to assess whether GPE inputs and influence orient education sector planning, implementation and monitoring toward the intermediary outcomes outlined in its theory of change (ToC). In the first two years of the evaluation, the prospective evaluations were forward-looking and explored what happened while it happened. They closely observed initial decisions, documented the perspectives of decision makers and focused on the activities and involvement of key stakeholders early in the period under review in order to understand whether progress was being made and whether, and to what extent, GPE made a contribution. This report finalizes the evaluation for Nepal with a summative view of the 2017–2020 period.

Furthermore, the objective of the prospective evaluations was to assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE inputs at the country level, as well as the validity of GPE theory of change in light of the GPE Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The prospective evaluations seek to establish if and how GPE inputs and activities contribute to outcomes and potential impact at country level. They are designed to assess GPE progress on its goals and objectives.

C) Education in Nepal

Nepal's education sector has seen a series of important reforms over the past 15 years. Within the framework of the Education for All National Plan of Action (2001–2015), the Government of Nepal implemented two consecutive programs, Education for All (2004–2009) and School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP; 2009–2016). Both these programs focused on increasing access to primary and secondary education in Nepal and by the end of the SSRP, strong gains had been made in this area – net enrollment rate (NER) for primary education increased from 71.0 percent in 1998 to 96.9 percent in 2016, and the NER for girls increased from 61.0 to 96.6 percent in the same period.⁹

Despite this progress, at the end of SSRP implementation in 2015, the education system was still facing important challenges in terms of equitable access, internal efficiency and quality of the learning outcomes.

⁹ Midterm Review

These challenges were exacerbated by the 2015 earthquakes, which disrupted the provision of education services countrywide. Over 35,000 classrooms were either mostly or totally damaged, leaving over 1 million children without access to school and reversing progress in education access in the 14 most affected districts.¹⁰

The current Education Sector Plan of Nepal, the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP 2016–2021) seeks to translate gains in education access into improved, equitable learning outcomes. However, the SSDP is being implemented in the context of profound change and challenge. In addition to the 2015 earthquake and resulting reconstruction, a new constitution was promulgated which established a federal structure across all aspects of governance in Nepal, including the education sector. A new federalized government took office in February 2018, following elections at local, provincial and federal levels. Under this newly established federal system, authority for implementing the SSDP now resides at the municipal level with 753 autonomous local governments (LGs) now responsible for basic education provision. Previously, education was centrally managed through the Department of Education and 75 District Education Offices (DEOs; now formally disbanded). At the federal level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) serves as the executing agency for SSDP. Instead of the Department of Education, a newly established Center for Education Human Resource Development (CEHRD) will now be responsible for preparing annual work plans and budgets (AWPBs) and annual strategic implementation plans (ASIPs).

A Transitional Roadmap and Midterm Review of the SSDP have been conducted in order to align the SSDP to the new federal structure in Nepal (see Chapter 3). This is a work in progress as new legislation, institutions and administrative procedures of federalization are being progressively formalized. Presently, there remains a lack of clarity over roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability in the federalized education system.

The 2015 Constitution of Nepal guarantees the universal right to free, compulsory basic and secondary education for all children and youth. Basic education covers one year of early childhood education and development (ECED) and pre-primary education up to primary grade 8. Secondary education covers grades 9 to 12.¹¹

D) GPE in Nepal

Nepal has been a GPE member since 2009 and has benefited from three ESPIGs, two ESPDGs and Global and Regional Activities grants. GPE has also supported the National Campaign for Education Nepal through a series of Civil Society Education Fund grants (CSEF).

At country level, GPE provides a wide range of non-financial inputs, primarily through the work of the Secretariat, the grant agent and the coordinating agency. Country partners also benefit from GPE global-level engagement (e.g. technical assistance, advocacy, knowledge exchange, and capacity development). These non-financial elements form a part of the support that is being evaluated during the prospective evaluation in Nepal.

¹⁰ MTR

¹¹ First Annual Report (2018)

E) GPE contributions to sector planning

State of sector planning in Nepal from 2016 to 2019

Nepal is currently at the start of Year 4 of a five-year costed School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), which covers basic education (including early childhood) secondary education, and literacy and lifelong learning. The SSDP focuses on five “key dimensions”: equity; quality; efficiency; governance and management; and resilience. The SSDP Program Results Framework (PRF) is structured around 10 objectives which map onto these key dimensions.

Education sector planning in Nepal has been clearly structured, government-owned and coordinated for some years, through the SSRP (2009–2016) and now the SSDP (2016–2021) – both of which provided a framework for pooled funding by donors, including GPE financing. The quality of sector planning processes has remained high throughout the review period despite huge challenges including post-earthquake reconstruction and the federalization process that transformed educational governance. The Secretariat assessed the SSDP in 2018 as part of their results reporting, and found that the SSDP met all seven quality criteria as outlined in indicator 16 of the GPE Results Framework, meaning that the SSDP is guided by an overall vision; strategic; holistic; evidence-based; achievable; sensitive to context; and attentive to disparities.¹²

The SSDP will expire in 2021 and will be replaced by a document that draws on and provides an overall framework for education planning at the municipal level. The shape of this post-2021 plan, and its ability to reflect the diversity of Nepal’s 753 rural and urban municipalities, remains to be seen. A forthcoming Education Act will also serve to clarify roles and responsibilities for sector planning across all levels of government.

GPE contributions to sector planning

GPE has provided significant support to sector planning in Nepal. ESPIG funding requirements on credible sector plans, including a sector analysis, have resulted in stronger sector planning in Nepal. The Local Education Development Partners Group (LEDPG) has played a central role in ensuring that the SSDP is government-owned, evidence-based, adaptive and coordinated through technical support and quality assurance.

GPE support has been crucial to the creation of the Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal, adopted in 2014. This strategy fed into the sector planning process from the SSDP, particularly in terms of a targeted approach to out-of-school children. The Equity Index, whose impact on future education planning in Nepal is likely to be high, was only launched in 2017.

Implications for GPE

Responsibility for education planning is now shifting to the municipal level, with local governments and schools currently working to develop Education Plans and School Improvement Plans. The SSDP provides overall guidance for these plans, but adherence to SSDP targets and indicators cannot be guaranteed and

¹² *Quality Assurance Review 1: Initial Program Consultation: Nepal.* Washington, D.C.: GPE. Draft.

some gaps are anticipated. Currently, the LEDPG and LEG support education sector planning at central government level only. This new structure may challenge old assumptions about the role of the central government in education sector planning, as new local-level stakeholders assume authority in this area.

F) GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring

State of sector dialogue and monitoring in Nepal from 2016 to 2019

Sector Dialogue

The strength of education sector dialogue in Nepal is widely acknowledged by many stakeholders. The Local Education Development Partners Group (LEDPG) is composed of nine Joint Financing Partners (JFPs) and five non-Joint Financing Partners (non-JFPs) all of whom meet monthly to review progress on the Key Results Areas of the SSDP. The Local Education Group (LEG) is more broadly-based than the LEDPG and includes civil society organizations (organized under the National Campaign for Education Nepal), teacher associations, MOEST and CEHRD as well as LEDPG members. The LEG meets at least biannually for Joint Sector Reviews.

Despite the overall positive picture of sector dialogue in Nepal, concerns have been raised over inclusion of civil society organizations within the SWAp. Informants from the National Campaign for Education (NCE Nepal), the umbrella organization for education focused CSO and NGOs in Nepal, conveyed that they deliberately limited involvement in sector dialogue and that the space for civil society advocacy and participation is shrinking in Nepal. Members of the Teachers Federation expressed that they did not have the language skills or technical knowledge to meaningfully engage in sector dialogue.

Municipal education authorities are not involved in sector dialogue whereas members of the Association of Rural Municipalities stated that local governments should play a more active role in sector dialogue and planning but these processes are only coordinated within MOEST at the federal level. Local governments are involved in sector monitoring, but this is limited to a reporting role. Both municipal authorities and MOEST noted the need for improved dialogue mechanisms under the new federal structure; it is hoped that these will be formalized in the forthcoming Federal Education Act.

Sector Monitoring

The Program Results Framework (PRF) is the main instrument to monitor progress of the SSDP. It is structured around 10 objectives encompassing 72 indicators to monitor progress at output, outcome and impact levels. MOEST also releases annual status reports to detail the progress against the PRF. Biannual Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs) take place through Joint Review Meetings (JRMs), generally held in May-June, and Budget Review Meetings (BRMs) held in November. The recent GPE Quality Assurance Review III, conducted at the start of the current ESPIG, stated that “[sector] monitoring systems have been in place for many years and are working well.”

A web-based EMIS was introduced in Nepal in 2018. Nepal collects an impressive level of education data, including disaggregated enrollment data for different minority ethnic groups and students with different categories of disability. This data is consolidated and published annually through Flash Reports, which are publicly available on the MOEST website. Stakeholders at all levels report that EMIS data is used effectively for evidence-informed decision making, for example on scholarships, school meal provision and teacher allocation as well as for advocacy on the right to education.

National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) have been conducted since 2011 by the Education Review Office (ERO). These nationally administered curriculum-based tests currently assess student learning in Math, Nepali and Social Studies in grades 3, 5 and 8. NASA 2018 is the first and baseline assessment administered during the SSDP period for grade 5. Stakeholders deem the quality and reliability of NASA data to be high.

NCE Nepal conducts independent monitoring of education sector financing and implementation and this work is relatively robust. NCE conducts research on education financing as well as access, equity and quality of education in Nepal.¹³ This evidence is published in regular reports, available on their website, and is the backbone of their advocacy campaigns on education rights. Informants from the LEDPG recognized the quality of the monitoring evidence gathered and published by NCE.

GPE contributions to sector monitoring, dialogue and mutual accountability

GPE has made a significant contribution to sector monitoring and dialogue in Nepal through its emphasis on broad-based consultative and participatory dialogue. The GPE Secretariat encouraged greater civil society participation in sector dialogue through civil society involvement in the LEG and through three Civil Society Education Fund grants to NCE Nepal. The latter catalyzed civil society monitoring of the education sector in Nepal. It is worth re-stating that more needs to be done to ensure civil society actors are able to actively participate in sector dialogue, particularly teachers.

GPE focus on results through the variable tranche funding model also contributed to sector dialogue and monitoring. GPE's current ESPIG includes indicators, chosen by the LEG to facilitate local governments to align education planning and monitoring to the SSDP and to track the integration of SSDP activities in their annual work plans and budgets.¹⁴

Implications for GPE

The most significant GPE contribution to mutual accountability in Nepal's education sector is its facilitation of civil society engagement in sector dialogue. However, as noted, more work needs to be done in this area. Given the central role of teachers in education, as well as the concerns over low quality of learning in Nepal, it is crucial to allow the meaningful engagement of teachers through capacity building and JSR processes reform.

Federalization has the potential to improve education sector dialogue, monitoring and accountability by devolving authority to the local level, closer to the schools, students and communities impacted by education policy and practice and by strengthening social accountability and participation. Yet devolution challenges this model as GPE works at country level. In Nepal, GPE support, sector monitoring and dialogue are only at the central level. The robust JSR process is highly centralized, with participation of diverse stakeholders happening centrally and coordinated through the federal government. Therefore, GPE's approach to supporting dialogue and monitoring must also change if GPE is to remain relevant.

¹³ See for example NCE, 2018a and 2018b.

¹⁴ ESPIG application, p.19.

G) GPE contributions to sector financing.

State of sector financing in Nepal from 2016 to 2019

Domestic financing

Nepal's public education expenditure has followed a consistent upward trend through the review period, meeting the annual target of 1% increase per year and with a projected increase of 1.6% in 2019.¹⁵ This is particularly noteworthy given the context of the 2015 earthquake and subsequent reconstruction as well as the high costs associated with the federal transition.¹⁶ However, Nepal's education expenditure share has been decreasing annually and has reached a low of 10.6% in 2019. This drop must be understood in the context of rapidly increasing GDP, which has inflated the denominator against which the percentage spend on education is calculated. This makes the decrease appear more dramatic than would otherwise be the case.

The 2018 Status Report and NCE Nepal Education Finance Report, indicate that roughly 40% of public education spending comes from municipal governments. However, annual SSDP budgets **Error! Reference source not found.** do not include municipal funding under "public resources for school education". This means that figures on overall public expenditure in education are underestimated which is not surprising given how new federalization is. Yet, it does mean we have an incomplete picture of public spending on education in Nepal.

International financing

The share of international financing for Nepal's education sector has decreased over the past decade, although the figure has increased modestly since the start of the SSDP. International financing was 12.7% of the overall budget in 2009–2010; this dropped to 6.8% in 2014–2015,¹⁷ under the SSDP (2016–2021) the figure is 7.5%.¹⁸ A total of nine Joint Financing Partners and five non-Joint Financing Partners contribute to the international financing of the SSDP in Nepal. At the start of the SSDP, a Joint Financing Agreement between JFPs and the Ministry of Finance committed US\$429 million; this was expanded through an additional US\$78 million leveraged from JFPs in the first two years and a US\$15 million top-up from the GPE Multiplier Fund.

GPE contributions to sector financing (domestic and ODA)

GPE has contributed modestly to increasing education sector financing in Nepal. The current ESPIG and multiplier fund are designed to fill 10% of the US\$279 million SSDP financing gap. Additionally, there is some anecdotal evidence that the GPE target of 20% budget spend on education was a useful advocacy tool for increasing domestic financing. GPE financing model initiated in 2015 sees ESPIGs disbursed in two tranches, one fixed and one variable, with the variable component allocated through a results-based

¹⁵ GPE Nepal QAR 3.

¹⁶ The current federal transition also requires a large budget, with block grants (ranging from US\$1 million-US\$12.5 million) for the transition itself being provided to all 753 LGs as cited in GPE Nepal QAR. Please note that the evaluation was unable to find data on the costs of post-earthquake reconstruction, and the impact this has had on the education budget.

¹⁷ Nepal NEA Report, 2016.

¹⁸ BRM, 2019.

financing (RBF) model. Nepal is the first GPE developing country partner to have received a second round of funding through this new model, making it a useful case-study for the model's effectiveness at country level.

GPE has not had an observable impact on increasing international financing for education in Nepal. Nepal has been the recipient of a GPE Multiplier Fund totaling US\$15 million in 2017, which has contributed a small amount to closing the SSDP funding gap. However, the JFPs involved in this multiplier are reluctant to credit GPE with leveraging additional financing, arguing that these funds were already earmarked for the SSDP.

Implications for GPE

The Government of Nepal has noted that transaction costs for GPE grants are quite high for a comparatively small – and shrinking – amount of funds. Additionally, there is the burden of satisfying Grant Agent requirements as well as those of the GPE – a situation which has reportedly caused delayed disbursement. The MOEST continues to subscribe to what are seen as fairly burdensome GPE grant requirements showing the extent to which Government of Nepal values its partnership in the GPE; GPE may need to streamline its grant requirements in the spirit of true partnership.

The GPE may also need to adapt its funding model and mechanisms at country level in light of federalization. The GPE provides financial support to Nepal's education sector at the federal level only, but sector plan implementation is now at municipal level and local governments fund roughly 40% of public education expenditure. The federal government still has a central role to play in Nepal's education sector, that is providing overall guidance, management and systems-strengthening. The GPE could explore how best it can support both federal and local governments under the new federalized structure.

H) GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

State of sector plan implementation in Nepal from 2016 to 2019

Nepal made good progress on implementing SSDP activities and strategies for increasing equitable access to education, including expanding early childhood education centers and targeted interventions to bring out-of-school children into formal and non-formal learning centers.

Progress on the implementation of SSDP activities related to quality learning outcomes, such as an expansion of early grade reading programs and reforms to assessment and examination systems, has been modest. However, implementation of SSDP activities relating to teacher management has not yet been achieved. The federal government is providing financial incentive and technical support to facilitate implementation of the SSDP at local levels. A Program Implementation Manual is being developed for this purpose, which will link to an online resource library of toolkits to provide planning and implementation support to local governments. The federal government also provides conditional education grants to local governments based on the development of work plans and budgets aligned to SSDP activities and indicators.

GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

GPE provided significant support to sector plan implementation in Nepal. This support consisted of three ESPIGs (2010–2014, 2015–2018, 2019–2021) aligned to the SSRP and the SSDP. Both the previous and current ESPIG focused on sector priority areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes. Targets aim to increase the number of OOSC accessing education in the 10 most disadvantaged districts, expand early grade reading programs, and introduce efficiency measures in examination and accreditation systems. Targets for these priority areas were largely achieved under the previous ESPIG and have been further elaborated in the current ESPIG.

The current ESPIG also introduces new efficiency indicators designed to support Nepal in its federalization process. These include targets on the number of local governments aligning their annual education work plans and budgets to the SSDP, and the provision of open data on school grants by local governments to facilitate information for accountability.

Implications for GPE

Federalization will have profound implications on how GPE supports sector plan implementation in Nepal. Implementation of education sector plans now reside across 753 different municipalities with varying degrees of political will and skill to manage education sector planning, implementation and monitoring. The current ESPIG attempts to address this by incentivizing local governments to integrate SSDP activities and targets into the annual work plans and budgets. But municipal governments are constitutionally autonomous and cannot be forced to align with the SSDP; at best, this can only be a stopgap measure during transition.

I) System level change

Main trends

Nepal has strengthened its education system during the period 2016 to 2019 through the implementation of the SSDP 2016-2021. The main education system improvements took place in the area of access. There was also modest progress in terms of quality, equity and management.

In Nepal, the equitable access to education has improved, which was mainly achieved through the provision of scholarships targeting low-income children as well as girls and students from marginalized communities. Other important interventions which contributed towards this improvement were the provision of textbook grants, meal provisions and an expansion in the number of schools. Most of these national programs were implemented under the SSDP, which made equitable access one of its main priorities. However, the country still experiences large disparities among regions in terms of access to education, one example being the differences in the school-student ratio between provinces.

Nepal has seen some improvement in quality of education, including an increase in the proportion of trained teachers resulting in better student-trained teacher ratios. This was achieved mainly through the introduction of programs aimed at improving teachers' training and the introduction of a Competency Framework. Other relevant interventions aimed at improving the quality of education in Nepal are the National Early Grade Reading Program and a Model Schools Program, detailed later in this report. There

has also been improvement in the availability of learning materials for students, mainly through providing textbooks to the most disadvantaged.

The management of the education sector in Nepal has also experienced a few improvements over the last years, with a new web-based EMIS system and the establishment of the Equity Index, reforms that have resulted in more and better data being produced. Although the improvements are quite recent, there is evidence that suggest that the data is being used regularly to inform program and planning decisions. Teacher management remains a major challenge for the education system, with SSDPs such as the teacher rationalization and redeployment plan still to be implemented.

Likely links between sector plan implementation and system level change

The progress in equitable access, as well as the modest progress observed in quality and management, can be largely attributed to elements of the SSDP planning, monitoring and implementation. There were no observable system-level changes to the education sector that fell outside of SSDP implementation.

Implications for GPE

The observed improvements in the education system of Nepal, particularly in equitable access, support the GPE theory of change. A strategic and inclusive sector planning which resulted in the development of the SSDP was translated into the design of policies and programs which have been implemented and have led to system level changes. In addition, MOEST, local governments and schools appear aligned in their commitment to equity, data is reported widely through EMIS and is used to make informed decisions about scholarship provision, school meals and textbook allocation.

However, gains in access and equity had been already noted during the period of implementation of the previous education sector plan (SSRP) and the SSDP was designed not only to build on this success but to make improvements in learning outcomes. The SSDP proved to be more complicated to achieve and related interventions were difficult to implement, mainly due to political challenges of the newly-introduced federal system. GPE as a partnership and DPs individually will therefore have to re-think how to support Nepal in order to improve the quality of the education within its education system, tackling the major challenges such as teacher effectiveness and management. Nepal will soon be developing its post-SSDP sector plan under a fully federalized structure, and this new plan will need to move the needle on quality learning while not reversing gains in equity and access. More effective teacher management and professional development will need to be the overarching priorities of the new ESP in Nepal; GPE as a partnership and DPs individually will need to work with MOEST to develop focused and carefully aligned KPIs to this end.

J) Learning outcomes and equity

Changes in learning outcomes, equity and gender equality

Nepal has done a commendable job of increasing equitable access to education through the review period. Since 2012, Nepal has enrolled a high number of out-of-school children including children from

vulnerable groups and a high number of girls.¹⁹ The 2019 Status Report cites that Net Enrollment Rates (NER) for all primary school (Grades 1-8) grew from 89.4% to 92.3% from 2015/16 to 2017/18; enrollment in early childhood education programs grew from 81.0% to 84.1% in the same period.²⁰ Survival and dropout rates have also improved considerably over the review period at both primary and lower secondary levels.

Despite these positive signs in equitable access, there are still a significant number of children out of school in Nepal. The majority of OOSC are from disadvantaged groups²¹ and more than half are clustered around 10 districts in the Terai belt.²² Flash Report data indicates that roughly 1% of the student population have disabilities – far below global and regional estimates of 10-15% of students with disabilities. This indicates that many children with disabilities are not able to access education.

Nepal has made important progress in gender equity in the past decade, both in terms of education access and outcomes. Gender parity is largely achieved at basic and secondary levels, and the most recent NASA Report found that girls' and boys' performance on the standardized tests were almost equal in all subject areas and provinces. However, the NASA Report also underscores that learning levels are very low across Nepal, with well over half of students achieving below the basic level in Math and Nepali. Most worryingly, these results are very similar to those of the previous two NASA reports (NASA 2012 and 2015), indicating little progress in learning outcomes as a result of SSDP and SSRP programs.

Likely links to observed system level changes

The SSDP, and the SSRP which preceded it, introduced system-level changes to increase education access for marginalized communities, largely through provision of scholarships, school meals and other physical inputs (as discussed in the previous chapter). According to a World Bank Program Paper from March 2019, “the survival rate of both boys and girls in basic education can be attributed to a series of enabling strategies adopted by the national-level programs such as the SSRP, SSDP scholarships and incentives, girls' toilets, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities.”²³ The Equity Index, which draws on EMIS data to support Nepal's Consolidated Equity Strategy, was introduced in 2017. The Index now serves as a core planning and monitoring tool, and stakeholders report that data from the Equity Index is being used to make equity-focused decision making (e.g. on scholarship provision.) At the same time, it is difficult to directly attribute this change to the Equity Index or any other system-level changes.

The SSDP introduced several system-level changes to improve quality and relevance of learning in Nepal. These include a Teacher Competency Framework, Model Schools program and National Early Grade Reading Program. However, these have not translated yet into improved learning outcomes.

Implications for GPE

GPE support to develop the Equity Index and improve EMIS data has been catalytic. GPE can play a key role in continuing to support Nepal to improve education data, particularly on students with disabilities

¹⁹ SSDP MTR, 2019.

²⁰ 2019 Status report; also JRM AM November, 2018.

²¹ NASA, 2018.

²² SSDP Project Appraisal Document, cited in WB AF program document.

²³WB AF program doc p20

and on equitable outcomes. The new web-based EMIS aims to gather more disaggregated education data. This will improve the ability to track progress on equity and learning.

The most pressing need facing Nepal's education system is improving the quality of education and ensuring that equity in access is matched by equity in learning outcomes. GPE and other DPs have played a key role in helping Nepal expand educational access but improving quality will be a far more difficult task. The next ESP must tackle problems in teacher effectiveness and deployment head-on, to ensure that Nepali students benefit from relevant pedagogy and classroom learning environments. The GPE Secretariat needs to work further with MOEST and country stakeholders to develop KPIs that will advance and incentivize quality learning.

K) Conclusions and Strategic Questions

GPE contributions

Nepal has seen strong progress in many areas of its education system under the SSDP, and GPE contribution to this progress has been significant in many areas.

GPE has provided significant support to sector planning in Nepal. Although Nepal has a long history of strong and coordinated education sector planning, GPE ESPIG funding requirements on credible sector plans and analysis have further strengthened the planning environment. The Local Education Development Partners Group (LEDPG) has played a central role in ensuring that the SSDP is government-owned, evidence-based, adaptive and coordinated through technical support and quality assurance. GPE provided important support to the creation of the Consolidated Equity Strategy, which fed into the sector planning process from the SSDP.

GPE has made a significant contribution to sector monitoring and dialogue in Nepal through its emphasis on broad-based consultative and participatory dialogue. GPE's focus on results through the variable tranche funding model has also contributed to sector dialogue and monitoring. GPE's current ESPIG incentivizes local governments to aligning their education planning and monitoring to the SSDP.

GPE has contributed modestly to increasing education sector financing in Nepal. The current ESPIG and multiplier fund are designed to fill 10% of the US\$279 million SSDP financing gap. Additionally, there is some anecdotal evidence that GPE's target of 20% budget spend on education has been a useful advocacy tool for increasing domestic financing. However, **GPE has not had an observable impact on increasing international financing for education in Nepal.**

GPE has provided significant support to sector plan implementation in Nepal. Both the previous and current ESPIG have focused on sector priority areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes, and targets for these priority areas were largely achieved under the previous ESPIG. The current ESPIG introduces new indicators designed to support municipal governments to implement the SSDP at the local level.

Emerging good practice

The SWAp in Nepal is highly effective, with a long history of mutual trust, alignment to Government of Nepal objectives, and commitment to system strengthening. The LEDPG has played a central role in ensuring that the SSDP is government-owned, evidence-based, adaptive and coordinated through

technical support and quality assurance. Through the LEDPG and LEG, GPE provides financial support as well as frameworks and tools which MOEST uses to strengthen the education system in Nepal. Several good practices have emerged from this partnership:

- GPE focus on equity and inclusion is a major value-add to sector planning and implementation in Nepal, and GPE support for the Equity Index is seen as catalytic. A recent Global Education Monitoring Report policy paper argued that one of the strongest inputs donors can provide developing country partners is to build the capacity of national statistical systems in order to instill an overall result orientation and to provide data for evidence-informed decision making.²⁴ The Equity Index stands as a positive example of this kind of support, and one that could be replicated among other developing country partners.
- GPE support through CSEF grants have been transformative for NCE Nepal and has allowed a degree of civil society oversight and monitoring of the education system that would not otherwise be possible. Although there is noted room for improvement in terms of facilitating civil society (and particularly teacher) engagement in JSR processes, the monitoring and reporting work of NCE Nepal is of good quality and the network credits this with the support received through CSEF. There are surely lessons to be gleaned from this support and from how NCE Nepal has leveraged CSEF funds to strengthen mutual accountability.
- Nepal's active involvement in GPE regional and global networks is highly valued. Country stakeholders described this involvement (including sitting the Grants and Performance Committee, the Strategy and Impact Committee and as a Board-alternate) as being "like professional development for MOEST". This model of engagement could be usefully encouraged among other developing country partners.

Perceived relevance of GPE support

GPE support to Nepal's education sector has been both relevant and impactful since Nepal joined GPE a decade ago. As noted above, GPE grants, funding requirements, frameworks and technical support have contributed significantly to strengthening education sector planning, dialogue, monitoring and implementation. However, the transition towards a federalized system poses a challenge to the relevance of GPE's country-level model. Through federalization, authority over the education system is devolved to 753 municipalities each with varying priorities, capacities, and degrees of political will to manage the education sector. GPE currently has no mechanisms to directly support education planning, monitoring and dialogue at the municipal level.

The most recent ESPIG supports Nepal's federalization process by setting targets for the number of local governments aligning their education plans with the SSDP. However, responsibility for meeting these targets rests with the federal government as it is at the federal level where progress is assessed and ESPIG funds are disbursed. The federal government is currently incentivizing alignment to the SSDP through conditional grants; but municipalities are constitutionally autonomous, and questions have been raised as to the validity of the conditional grant model.

Nepal has made notable progress towards increasing equitable access to education. Sector priorities now shift towards quality learning and ensuring equity in outcomes as well as access. GPE support to learning

²⁴ Global Education Monitoring Report, 2018.

outcomes through ESPIG targets on early grade reading have not yet resulted in improved learning, and further focus is needed on improving teacher training, support and motivation if Nepal is to make improvements in quality learning. As Nepal prepares for its post SSDP sector plan, GPE as a partnership and donors individually must support MOEST to pivot to a focus on equitable, quality learning outcomes for all.

Strategic questions

Key strategic questions arise from this second-year country level evaluation of Nepal, and these can be grouped under two categories: those that impact GPE functioning in Nepal, and those that raise questions for GPE wider model and way of working.

Strategic questions: GPE functioning in Nepal

- How can the GPE model engage more effectively with municipal governments under Nepal's new federal structure? Local governments have formed two federations – one for rural municipalities and one for urban. What is the scope for GPE to engage these bodies as part of their commitment to support education sector planning, dialogue, monitoring, financing and implementation?
- Nepal has made commendable progress on increasing education access and achieving gender parity in basic and secondary education. How can GPE continue to provide incentives and support countries like Nepal that need to shift from a focus on access to one of quality learning outcomes?
- Federalization is presenting challenges for reporting, monitoring and accountability due to lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities across the three tiers of government. Yet, there is great potential for devolution to strengthen social accountability and citizen engagement. Can GPE build on its noted strengths in capacity building, support to civil society, and commitment to inclusive dialogue to help ensure the democratic promises of federalization are realized?
- Building from the above question: Can the GPE Education Out Loud fund to support advocacy and social accountability be leveraged in support of local civil society as part of broader efforts to strengthen accountability in federalization?
- GPE financial support to Nepal is small and shrinking, but its technical support, capacity-building and convening power are highly valued. How can the next GPE strategy capture and elevate this important role?
- Building from the above question: what role could Nepal play as a regional partner in GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) fund? Nepal's active role in GPE regional and global networks would suggest that Nepal could play a key leadership role in these new regional financing mechanisms.
- Transaction costs for GPE support are overly burdensome for a small amount of funds. How can the GPE ensure its support is better streamlined to MOEST priorities and less demanding of MOEST staff time?

Strategic questions: GPE wider partnership model and ToC

- Nepal's federal structure has profound implications for the way GPE can support education sector planning, monitoring and implementation. Other countries may also be undergoing shifts in political structure, and decentralization is an increasingly common political refrain. To what extent can the GPE ToC be flexible enough to adapt to different and shifting landscapes among its developing country partners? What aspects of GPE strategy and ToC are non-negotiable, and which can build in room for variance?
- The Grant Agent for the GPE ESPIG is the World Bank, and the Government of Nepal needs to satisfy two sets of requirements and conditions before the GPE ESPIG can begin to be disbursed – a situation flagged by MOEST as less burdensome. This raises questions about the Grant Agent model: What other network models could be explored or piloted to ensure that Developing Country Partners are not having to satisfy two sets of requirements – those of the GPE and those of the GA?
- The GPE new funding model is a shift towards results-based financing. However, some stakeholders in Nepal report that results-based financing feels donor-driven and punitive. This reflects global commentary on RBF as counter to principles of aid-effectiveness.²⁵ How can GPE build a results framework for its partnership that shifts from an emphasis on equitable access to one of equitable outcomes, while remaining committed to the principles of its country-driven approach?
- Government and non-governmental stakeholders confirm that Nepal has benefited enormously from involvement in the GPE network and Board committee structure. It is worth investigating the ways in which this involvement was beneficial for Nepal and if there is any learning that could be replicated with other developing country partners?

²⁵ Global Education Monitoring Report 2018; DFID 2018; Pearson, Johnson & Ellison, 2010; Oxman & Fretheim, 2009

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of the prospective evaluation

1. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is a multilateral global partnership and funding platform established in 2002 as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) and renamed GPE in 2011. GPE aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries, in order to ensure improved and more equitable student learning outcomes, as well as improved equity, gender equality and inclusion in education.²⁶ GPE brings together developing countries, donor countries, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector and foundations.²⁷
2. This evaluation is part of a larger GPE study that comprises a total of eight prospective and 20 summative country level evaluations (CLE). The overall study is part of the GPE monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy 2016–2020, which calls for a linked set of evaluation studies to explore how well GPE outputs and activities contribute to outcomes and impact²⁸ at the country level.
3. The objective of each prospective CLE is to assess if GPE inputs and influence are orienting education sector planning, implementation, financing and dialogue/monitoring toward the intermediary outcomes as outlined in the theory of change²⁹ (ToC). The prospective evaluations are forward-looking and explore what happens while it happens. They closely observe initial decisions, document the perspectives of decision makers and focus on the activities and involvement of key stakeholders early in the period under review in order to understand whether progress is being made and whether GPE is making a contribution.
4. In this context, GPE support is defined as both financial inputs deriving from GPE grants and related funding requirements, and non-financial inputs deriving from the work of the Secretariat, the grant agent and the coordinating agency, and from GPE's global-level engagement (e.g. technical assistance, advocacy, knowledge exchange, quality standards and funding requirements).

Box 1 – Scope of this prospective evaluation

This prospective country evaluation is focused on eliciting insights that can help GPE assess and, if needed, improve its overall approach to supporting developing country partners. It does not set out to evaluate the performance of the Government of Nepal, other in-country stakeholders, or of specific GPE grants.

²⁶ Global Partnership for Education (2016): GPE 2020. Improving learning and equity through stronger education systems.

²⁷ Information on GPE partners can be found at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/about-us>

²⁸ In the context of this assignment, the term 'impact' is aligned with the terminology used by GPE to refer to sector level changes in the areas of learning, equity, gender equality and inclusion (reflected in GPE Strategic Goals 1 and 2 described in the GPE 2016–2020 Strategic Plan). While the country evaluations examine progress towards impact in this sense, they do not constitute formal impact evaluations, which usually entail counterfactual analysis based on randomized control trials.

²⁹ The GPE theory of change is shown in Annex B.

The core review period for the evaluation is 2016–2019. This period is covered by a baseline report and two annual reports, which aim to track changes resulting from GPE activities. This report presents a stand-alone summative perspective at the end of the evaluation period, and addresses changes between reporting periods in Section 6.

1.2 Methodology overview

5. The methodology for the prospective evaluations is a theory-based contribution analysis approach, and the guiding framework is provided in an evaluation matrix and a generic country-level ToC, developed according to the existing overall ToC for the GPE Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The evaluation methodology envisages a seven-stage process. The first four stages focus on establishing a solid baseline for each country and the subsequent three stages constitute iterative annual country-level reporting. This is further described in Annex C and in the inception report.

6. There are three key evaluation questions for the GPE country-level evaluations (both the prospective and summative evaluation streams), which are presented below. The full details of the evaluation questions are presented in an evaluation matrix (included in Annex A). Figure 1 represents how these key evaluation questions relate to the contribution claims³⁰ investigated in the evaluation:

- Key Evaluation Question I: Has GPE support to Nepal contributed to achieving country-level objectives related to sector planning, sector plan implementation, sector dialogue and monitoring, and more/better financing for education?³¹ If so, how?
- Key Evaluation Question II: Has the achievement of country-level objectives³² contributed to making the overall education system in Nepal more effective and efficient?
- Key Evaluation Question III: Have changes at education system level contributed to progress toward impact?

7. The guiding frameworks for the evaluation are the evaluation matrix (Annex A) and the country-level theory of change for Nepal (Annex B). A brief summary of the country evaluation methodology is provided in Annex D. For further details, please refer to the Inception Report for the overall assignment (January 2018), and the revised approach for Years 2&3, published November 2018.³³

8. This approach is consistent with that of the summative evaluations and thus contributes to their final combination in a 2020 synthesis report. In the application of contribution analysis, the prospective evaluations in Year 1 of the evaluation were forward looking and assessed if inputs and influence in the education sector planning were conducive to intermediary outcomes, as per the ToC. Conversely, the summative evaluations trace the ToC ex-post the contribution of inputs to intermediate outcomes, outcomes and impact. These final prospective evaluations combine the forward-looking prospective

³⁰ The contribution claims are the theoretical mechanisms for change through GPE inputs. These are explained in more detail in Annex C.

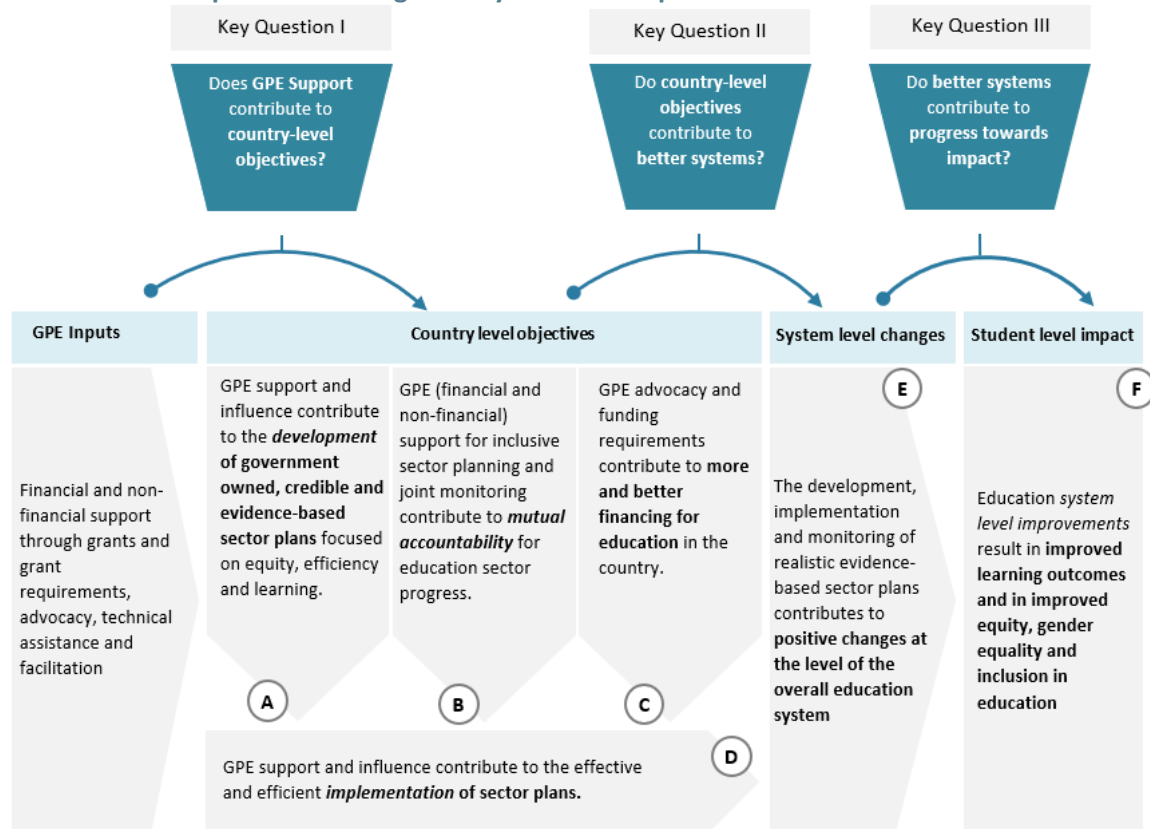
³¹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

³² GPE country-level objectives related to sector planning, plan implementation, and mutual accountability through sector dialogue and monitoring.

³³ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/modified-approach-country-level-evaluations-fy-ii-2019-and-fy-iii-2020>

evaluations from previous evaluation years with a final retrospective evaluation of what has taken place since the previous annual report. The methodology for weighing, confirming and refuting evidence is presented in Annex F.

Figure 1 The evaluation presents findings on key evaluation questions and contribution claims



9. The focus for data collection and analysis is relevant to the key indicators in the GPE results framework and additional indicators described in the respective countries' ESPs. The evaluation team has not collected primary quantitative data but instead has drawn upon secondary data to base the evaluation findings on a solid quantitative basis. In addition, two rounds of data collection were conducted in 2018 and 2019. Each of these contributes to this final report.

10. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted twice during the present evaluation in Nepal (in 2018 and in 2019) and gathered information on the following main lines of inquiry:

- Education planning;
- The implementation of the ESP (including the stage of implementation against plans and implementation challenges);
- Sector dialogue;
- Monitoring (including the strengths and weaknesses of monitoring systems, both in terms of data production and transparency);
- Education financing;
- GPE financial and non-financial support in relation to the above topics; and
- Donor partner activities.

Box 2 – Color ratings in the CLEs

Throughout the report, we use tables to provide readers with broad overviews of key CLE findings on the respective issue. To facilitate quick orientation, we use a simple color-coding scheme that is based on a three-category scale in which green equals ‘strong/high/achieved’, amber equals ‘moderate/medium/partly achieved’, red signifies ‘low/weak/not achieved’, and grey indicates a lack of data. In each table, the respective meaning of the chosen color coding is clarified. The color coding is intended as a qualitative orientation tool to readers rather than as a quantifiable measure.

11. For this Year 2 evaluation report, the evaluation team consulted a total of 73 stakeholders from the federal government (including MOEST and CEHRD), local government (including municipal mayors, the federation of rural municipalities, and municipal education officers), provincial government, Development Partners (including joint-financing and non-Joint Financing Partners), civil society organizations (including national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs; INGOs) and the Teachers Federation) and school-level actors (including teachers, school leaders, school management committees (SMCs) and private education providers). A full list of stakeholders is in Annex G.

12. The Year 2 evaluation team benefited from a wider array of KIs than was the case in Year 1, including a field visit to Province 5. This field visit allowed for interviews with those now responsible for devolved education implementation – rural and urban municipal governments, school leaders and SMCs. Additionally, the review drew on a wide range of relevant documents, databases, websites as well as selected literature. An in-country debrief was held on 5 September with representatives from MOEST, CEHRD and the World Bank (which currently serves as the GPE Grant Agent and Coordinating Agency in Nepal).

Purpose of Year 2 Evaluation

13. The value of prospective reporting is the room allowed for investigation of unexpected changes and the examination of trends between years. This report is designed as a standalone final evaluation of GPE contribution to education in Nepal but will also work in reflections on changes over time between the baseline and this final report. It also builds on the first-year report by looking in more detail at the strength of evidence for claims made in Year 1, as well as a deeper testing of the assumptions underlying the GPE theory of change.

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

14. This review encountered a few limitations in data that impacted analysis.

15. Evaluators were unable to find any data on education spending by local governments. Since 2018, roughly 40% of education financing is through local governments, who mobilize these funds through taxation. Given how new devolved education financing is in Nepal, it is not surprising that data on local education spending is not yet available – this created a significant gap in our understanding of domestic education financing in Nepal. In the absence of this data, the review was unable to assess differences in patterns of spending between municipalities and how that may impact on education equity and quality between regions.

16. There is very little evidence to assess teacher quality in Nepal beyond that which interviewees supplied. While results of national learning assessments are available, as well as data on student-teacher ratios and percentage of teachers receiving training, the data do not help us understand low and stagnant learning levels in Nepal. Moreover, data on teacher absenteeism, time-on-task, the number of support or

mentoring programs for teachers was not available and thus our ability to understand the low quality of learning in Nepal remains limited.

17. Finally, there is limited data on students with disabilities. Flash reports indicate data on enrollment for students with disabilities, and these figures can be compared across time. But data on OOSC, learning outcomes, test scores and access to early childhood education are not disaggregated by disability, nor by ethnicity, social caste or region making it difficult to assess how geography, social status and disability impact learning in Nepal.

1.3 Structure of the report

18. Following this introduction, **Section 2** presents the country context in which GPE support to country takes place. It documents: The broad political and geographical context of Nepal. An overview of the education sector in Nepal; and an outline of GPE financial and non-financial support to Nepal.

19. **Section 3** presents the evaluation findings related to GPE contributions to sector planning; mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and sector monitoring; sector financing; and sector plan implementation.

20. **Section 4** discusses education system-level changes in Nepal during the period under review 2016–2019 and likely links between these changes and progress made towards the country-level objectives.

21. **Section 5** presents an overview of the impact-level changes observed in Nepal.

22. **Section 6** presents the changes observed over time in Nepal.

23. Finally, **Section 7**, presents overall conclusions of the evaluation and outlines several strategic questions for GPE.

2 Context

2.1 Overview of Nepal

24. This section provides the context to the evaluation, including the relevant historical, political and economic background, as well as that of the education sector and GPE involvement in Nepal. Its main features are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Summary of Country and Education Context

Context area	Features
Country Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia located between India and China with an annual population growth of 5.7% in the period 2008-2018.³⁴ - The total population in 2018 was 29.38 million with 30.2% being under 14 years old.³⁵ - 80.26% of the population lives in rural areas, with a decrease of 3.64% since 2010 to 2018.³⁶ - Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) took a value of 0.574 in 2017, which positioned the country in the Medium Human Development category. The country ranked 149 out of 189 countries and territories.³⁷ - The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita was US\$2,748 in 2017.³⁸ - Agriculture is the main sector of the economy and provides a livelihood for almost two-thirds of the population, but it represents less than a third of the GDP.³⁹ - The country is undergoing a transition toward a federal system following the reform of the Constitution in 2015, which presents political and economic opportunities as well as challenges. - By the end of 2017, elections were successfully held at the federal, state, and local tiers, and a historic majority brought a new government in February 2018.⁴⁰ - A devastating series of earthquakes in 2015 killed thousands of people, damaged and destroyed infrastructure and homes and set back economic development.
Education Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a share of the national budget, Nepal's spending on education has decreased from a high of 20.4% in 2016 to 10.6% in 2019. However, this is partly impacted by faster than expected GDP growth as well as ongoing costs of post-earthquake reconstruction. Furthermore, in real terms the budget has increased by at least 1% per year in this period. - Support of the main donors to the education sector is framed around a Joint Financial Agreement (JFA) with the Government of Nepal (GoN). - The education system in Nepal has made significant gains in access over the past 10 years.

³⁴ World Bank Country Profile: Nepal. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/country/nepal>

³⁵ Nepal Demographics Profile 2018. Available at https://www.indexmundi.com/nepal/demographics_profile.html

³⁶ World Bank Country Profile: Nepal. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/country/nepal>

³⁷ Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update: Nepal. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/NPL.pdf

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ CIA Factsheet Nepal. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/np.html>

⁴⁰ The World Bank in Nepal. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/overview#1>

Context area	Features
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nepal has made great strides in gender equity in education and has reached gender parity in basic and secondary education. However, large disparities remain between regions and social groups, with people living in remote rural areas, ethnic minorities, Dalits and children with disabilities extremely disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment.⁴¹ - Quality learning outcomes remain a major challenge for Nepal at all education levels. - Since joining the Fast Track Initiative in 2009, Nepal has received 5 grants (3 ESPIGs and 2 ESPDGs) from GPE, as well as one Civil Society Education Fund allocation. - The 2015 Constitution of Nepal guarantees the universal right to free, compulsory basic and secondary education for all children and youth. Basic education covers one year of early childhood education and development (ECED), one year of pre-primary education and 8 years of primary (grades 1- 8). Secondary education covers grades 9 to 12.⁴² - Nepal is now in a challenging transition to a very different set of structures and systems as responsibility for basic and primary education is shifted to the 753 municipalities and the district structures that have played a major role to date are dismantled.⁴³

Source: Author's Elaboration

Country Context

25. Nepal is a landlocked country located in South-Asia with a total population of 29.38 million (2018).⁴⁴ The life expectancy is 69 and 72 for males and females respectively.⁴⁵ The annual population growth was 5.7% in the period 2008-2018. With a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of US\$2,748 in 2017, it is among the least developed countries in the world and about a quarter of its population lives under the poverty line.⁴⁶

26. Gross domestic product (GDP) in Nepal is estimated at 7.1% in 2019 and is projected to be an average of 6.5% in the medium term, driven by services and underpinned by a steady inflow of remittances.⁴⁷ Nepal's economy is highly dependent on remittances, which amount to as much as 30% of GDP. Agriculture is the main sector of the economy and provides a livelihood for almost two-thirds of the population,⁴⁸ aid and tourism are also crucial for the national economy. Some of the main challenges to Nepal's growth include its landlocked geographic location, inconsistent electricity supply, and underdeveloped transportation infrastructure.⁴⁹

27. Cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity is a key characteristic of Nepal. There are 125 ethnic groups speaking 123 languages. Dalits (people of the lowest caste, previously "untouchables") occupy the lowest sociocultural and economic status and are often effectively restricted to certain occupations facing

⁴¹ Appraisal of SSD Plan report p.26.

⁴² First Annual Report (2018).

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Nepal Demographics profile 2018. Available at: https://www.indexmundi.com/nepal/demographics_profile.html

⁴⁵ WHO Nepal country profile. Available at: <https://www.who.int/countries/npl/en/>

⁴⁶ World Bank Country Profile: Nepal. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/nepal>

⁴⁷ World Bank Nepal development update. Available at:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/publication/nepaldevelopmentupdate>

⁴⁸ CIA The world factbook Nepal. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/np.html>

⁴⁹ Ibid

discrimination in many aspects of societal life. Those living in rural areas are significantly more disadvantaged than the urban population and rank lower in almost all health and education indicators.⁵⁰

28. In 1990, the country transformed to a multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy.⁵¹ In 1996 conflict broke out between Maoist insurgents and the government; a peace agreement was signed in 2007, along with an interim Constitution that declared Nepal a federal democratic republic. A new federal Constitution was promulgated in 2015. The constitution provided for a transitional period during which three sets of elections (local, provincial, and national) had to happen. The first local elections in 20 years took place in three phases between May and September 2017, and state and federal elections proceeded in two phases in November and December 2017. A new government took office in February 2018 and K. P. Sharma Oli was appointed Prime Minister. The most pressing challenge for the Oli government – and for Nepal more widely - is to adjust the legal, political and social systems to the federal structure. This includes amending or creating new legislation, restructuring the civil service at all levels, devolving fiscal management, and determining the division of funds, functions, and functionaries between various levels of government.

29. In addition to the political and social challenges of managing a post-conflict state and new governance system, Nepal was devastated by a series of earthquakes in 2015. Thousands of people were killed, infrastructure and homes were damaged or destroyed and economic development was stalled or reversed in many regions. Over 35,000 classrooms were either mostly or totally damaged – roughly 35% of the total number of schools – leaving over one million children without access to school and reversing progress in education access in the 14 most affected districts.

2.2 Education sector in Nepal

Structure and Features of the Education System

30. The GoN aims to graduate Nepal from being one of the least developed countries by 2022. Strengthening the education system and re-orienting it towards quality learning outcomes is central to this ambition.⁵² The 2015 Constitution of Nepal guarantees the universal right to free, compulsory basic and secondary education for all children and youth.

31. Basic education covers one year of early childhood education and development (ECED) and pre-primary (up to age 5), primary education (grades 1-5) and lower secondary (grades 6-8). Secondary education encompasses grades 9-10, and higher secondary grades 11-12. The language of instruction in primary and secondary education is Nepalese, while higher education is offered in English and Nepalese. Table 2 presents an overview of figures regarding students, teachers and schools in the system as per 2018). University or higher education begins after 12 years of schooling. Three years make up the first level of higher education (four years in technical areas) for a Bachelor's degree. Followed by a two-year Master's degree which is preceded by a Doctoral or Ph.D. degree. Presently there are nine universities in the public sector and one university in the private sector.⁵³

⁵⁰ Taken from "Nepal - QAR Phase III Final Readiness Review Report - 27 March 2015" p1

⁵¹ BBC Nepal country profile <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12511455>

⁵² Nepal Education Sector Analysis (2017).

⁵³ Nepal Flash Report, 2017.

Table 2 Education background data by education level

LEVEL	GRADE LEVELS	AGE GROUP (YEARS)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS (2018)	NET ENROLLMENT RATE (%) (2017)	NUMBER OF TEACHERS (2017)	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS (2017)
Preschool / Pre-primary	-	3-4	1,097,101	59.59	47,802	36,568
Primary	1-5	5-9	2,822,320	96.33	197,797	35,211
Secondary	6-12	10-16	4,403,663	57.51	115,759	28,860
Total			8,323,084	92*	361,358	100,639

* Average

Source: UIS data (extracted 20 November 2019) and Nepal Flash Report 2017

32. Since 2018, authority for implementing the SSDP has been at the municipal level: 753 autonomous local governments (LGs) will be responsible for basic education provision, whereas previously education was centrally managed through Department of Education and the 75 District Education Offices (DEOs; now formally disbanded). At the federal level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) serves as the executing agency for SSDP. Instead of the Department of Education, a newly established Center for Education Human Resource Development (CEHRD) is tasked with preparing annual work plans and budgets (AWPBs) and the annual strategic implementation plans (ASIPs).

National policies and plans

33. Nepal's education sector has seen a series of important reforms over the past 15 years. Within the framework of the Education for All National Plan of Action (2001-2015), the Government of Nepal implemented two consecutive programs, Education for All (2004-2009) and School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP 2009-2016). The School Sector Reform Plan was the first ESP in Nepal to cover the entire education sector (grades 1-12) as well as early childhood education and development (ECED) and non-formal education and it was completed in June 2016. Under the SSRP, Nepal made significant gains in improved educational access, particularly for girls. However quality learning outcomes remained stagnant throughout this period.⁵⁴

34. The current education sector plan (School Sector Development Plan 2016-2021) continues the government's efforts to ensure access to quality education for all. Table 3 shows the most recent education related policies and official documents. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, a Transitional Roadmap and Midterm Review of the SSDP were conducted in order to align the SSDP to the new federal structure on Nepal. This is a work-in-progress: new legislation, institutions and administrative procedures of federalization are being progressively formalized.

Table 3 Education and related policies and official documents

Policy	Year
Strategy Paper for Early Childhood Development in Nepal	2004
School Sector Reform Plan	2009-2015
Vulnerable Community Development Framework (VCDF) ⁵⁵	2009

⁵⁴ NASA, 2018.

⁵⁵ See VCDF, 2009, p. 5.

Policy	Year
Environmental Management Framework for School Sector Reform Plan Nepal	2009
Gender and Inclusion Policy	2013
Gender and Inclusion Strategy	2015-2020
Early Grade Reading Program	2014/15-2019/20
Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal ⁵⁶	2014
Education (Eighth Amendment) Act ⁵⁷	June 2016
Teacher Rationalization and Redeployment Plan	2016/17-2023
School Sector Development Plan	2016-2023
Education (Ninth Amendment) Act Bill passed	August 2017
Transitional Arrangements for Implementation of SSDP in Federal Setup	October 2018
Midterm Review of SSDP	June 2019
Federal Education Act	In progress

35. Nepal benefits from a long-standing and robust Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp)⁵⁸ in education, since 2004. The Education SWAp in Nepal includes nine Joint Financing Partners (JFPs) which are coordinated and aligned with the priorities of the Government of Nepal and directly support the implementation of the government's sector plan. For the SSDP, they signed a Joint-financing agreement (JFA) which included a number of sub-disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) or annual targets agreed across 10 broader result areas: 1) Strengthening early grade reading skills; 2) Strengthening curriculum and teaching learning materials; 3) Strengthening teacher professional development and management; 4) Strengthening learning assessment and examination; 5) Strengthening quality of teaching learning process through model schools; 6) Reduced disparities in access, participation and learning outcomes; 7) Increased attainment through need based targeting of scholarship; 8) Increased comprehensive school safety; 9) Strengthened public financial management; and 10) Enhanced reliability and transparency of the education management information system.

36. The main dialogue structures in the education sector in Nepal are the Local Education Development Partners Group (LEDPG) and the Local Education Group (LEG). The composition and functionality of these groups is further developed in subsequent sections.

2.3 GPE in Nepal

37. Nepal joined the Fast Track Initiative in 2009 and has been receiving support since 2010 when the country received its first Education Sector Implementation Grant (ESPIG). GPE engagement in the country is facilitated through a Grant Agent (The World Bank) and a Coordinating Agency (currently also World Bank, but previously UNICEF). The Secretariat has a Nepal Country Lead based in Washington, who is recognized by all stakeholders as dedicated and effective.

⁵⁶ See Consolidated Equity Strategy

⁵⁷ 1971 Education Act.

⁵⁸ A SWAp is a process in which funding for the sector – whether internal or from donors – supports a single policy and expenditure program, under government leadership, and adopts common approaches across the sector. It is generally accompanied by efforts to strengthen government procedures for disbursement and accountability. https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P534_PPM_K3637-Demo/unit1/page_12.htm

38. All the grants awarded to Nepal by the GPE are outlined in Table 15. During the evaluation period, GPE has provided two ESPIGs to support the implementation of the SSDP (2015-2019 and 2018-2020) as well as an ESPDG aimed at supporting the development of the transitional roadmap to adapt the SSDP to the new federal system. The previous ESPIG (2015-2019) was developed in the final year of the SSRP and served as a foundation for the SSDP, encompassing two sets of targets; one covering July 2015-2017, the first year of devolved implementation and the second covering July 2017-2018. It was finally extended for one year until 2019. The aim of the ESPIG was to support implementation of Nepal's ESPs during the transition in plan periods and in the early stages of federalization. It focused on sector priority areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes. The current ESPIG, made up of a regular country allocation of US\$9.2 million as well as a Multiplier grant of US\$15 million, was approved in 2017 to cover the period 2018-2020. As with the previous ESPIG, it supported the implementation of the SSDP, and aligned to the SSDP priorities of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes.

39. GPE also provided three grants through the Civil Society Education Fund to the National Campaign for Education – Nepal (NCE Nepal) in 2016, 2017 and 2018. CSEF grants have been used to support NCE Nepal's engagement in education sector policy dialogue and citizens' voice in education quality, equity, and financing and sector reform.⁵⁹

40. In addition to the financial support, GPE provides various learning, sharing and advocacy functions, mainly through the work of the Secretariat, the Grant Agent, the Coordinating Agency, and from GPE global-level engagement (e.g. technical assistance, advocacy, knowledge exchange, quality standards and funding requirements). Through the GPE, Nepal has access to global and regional networks and opportunities for knowledge exchange. Nepal has been involved in the GPE Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program, which supports research, capacity development and knowledge sharing at the regional and global levels through technical workshops, peer-learning events and conferences, focusing on learning outcomes, education financing, and out-of-school children.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ First Annual report, 2018.

Table 4 Timeline of key events in the education sector in Nepal

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Legislation							Constitution of Nepal Education Act 8th Amendment		Education Act – 9th Amendment			
Planning	SSRP 2009-2016							SSDP 2016-2021				
GPE Grants	Joins EFA FTI	EFA FTI Grant/ESPIG				PDG	ESPDG	ESPIG 2015-2019		ESPIG 2019-2021		
Key Education Policies	Vulnerable Community Development Planning Framework (VCDF)					Consolidated Equity Strategy (2014)						
			Literate Nepal Mission 2012- 2015 / TVET Policy									
				13th National Plan 2013/14								
							Gender and Inclusion Policy 2015-2020					
							14th National Plan, 2016/17- 2018/19					
							Teacher Rationalization and Redeployment Plan 2016/17- 2023					
Review processes	JCM	JAR	JAR	JAR + MTR of SSRP	JAR	JAR + EGRA	JAR	JRM	JRM + BRM	JRM + BRM	JRM + BRM + MTR	
Other programs							National Early Grade Reading Program 2015-2020					
							Education for All Early Child Development Program 2016-2021					
							Food for Education (midday meal) program 2016 -2021					

3 GPE contributions to sector planning, dialogue/monitoring, financing and implementation.

3.1 Introduction

41. This section summarizes findings related to **Key Evaluation Question I** of the evaluation matrix: “Has GPE support to Nepal contributed to achieving country-level objectives related to sector planning, sector plan implementation, sector dialogue and monitoring, and more/better financing for education? If so, how?”⁶¹

42. The GPE country-level ToC, developed in the inception report and adapted to the Nepal context outlines four contribution claims related to GPE influence on progress towards achieving country-level objectives (one claim per objective). Each contribution claim is based on several underlying assumptions (see Annex C).

43. This section is structured around four contribution claims. Each sub-section assesses the contribution claim by answering two sub-questions. Firstly, what changed in sector planning, mutual accountability, sector financing or ESP implementation respectively during the period under review? And secondly, has GPE support contributed to observed changes in (and across) these areas?

3.2 GPE contributions to sector planning^{62/63}

44. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector planning during the review period is provided in Table 5. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

⁶¹ Improved planning, dialogue/monitoring, financing, and plan implementation correspond to Country-Level Objectives (CLOs) 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the GPE 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

⁶² This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 1.1 a and 1.2 a, as well as (cross cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

⁶³ This section triangulates findings on RF indicators 16a, 16b, 16c, 16d and 17.

Table 5 Overview – CLE findings on sector planning and related GPE contributions

PROGRESS TOWARDS GOVERNMENT-OWNED, CREDIBLE AND EVIDENCE-BASED SECTOR PLANS FOCUSED ON EQUITY, EFFICIENCY AND LEARNING. ⁶⁴	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION ⁶⁵	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS HOLD ⁶⁶				
Strong: Nepal's SSDP is government-owned, credible and evidence-based. It meets all seven GPE ESP quality criteria and is focused on three Key Results Areas: equity, efficiency and learning.	Strong: GPE has contributed significantly to education sector planning in Nepal. Financial contributions include two ESPDGs; technical contributions include support on indicator development, sector analysis and grant management.	1	2	3	4	5
		STRENGTH OF THE CONFIRMING/REFUTING EVIDENCE				
		1	2	3	4	5

Characteristics of sector planning during the review period (2016-2019)

Finding 1: Nepal has a history of strong, government-led, and coordinated education sector planning. The SSDP is an integral part of GoN's efforts to improve socio-economic development in Nepal, and thus focuses on improving the quality of education while safeguarding the gains in access achieved under the SSRP.

45. Nepal is currently at the start of Year 4 of the five-year costed School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). The SSRP (2009-2016) and now the SSDP (2016-2021) provided a framework for pooled funding by donors, including GPE. The quality of sector planning processes has remained high throughout the review period despite huge challenges including post-earthquake reconstruction and the federalization process that has transformed educational governance.

46. The goal of the SSDP "to contribute to socio-economic development and reduce disparities in the country through the continuous and inclusive development of its human resource capacity by facilitating all citizens with opportunities to become functionally literate, numerate, and to develop the basic life skills and knowledge required to enjoy a productive life, taking into account the diversity of context and

⁶⁴ In this case, the objective is considered 'achieved' if a sector plan underwent a rigorous appraisal process, as per GPE/IEEP guidelines, and was endorsed by development partners in country.

⁶⁵ This assessment is based on whether the CLE found evidence of (i) GPE support likely having influenced (parts of) sector planning; (ii) stakeholder perceptions on the relevance (relative influence) of GPE support (iii) existence or absence of additional or alternative factors beyond GPE support that were equally or more likely to explain (part of) the noted progress.

⁶⁶ For sector planning, the five underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) country level stakeholders having the *capabilities* to jointly improve sector analysis and planning; (2) stakeholders having the *opportunities* (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so; (3) stakeholders having the *motivation* (incentives) to do so; (4) GPE having sufficient leverage within the country to influence sector planning, and (5) Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Learning Assessment System (LAS) producing relevant and reliable data to inform sector planning.

needs and the forthcoming federalization of the country.”⁶⁷ To achieve this goal, the SSDP developed five “key dimensions”, which cover basic education (including early childhood) secondary education, and literacy and lifelong learning:

- *Equity*, focused on ensuring that the education system is inclusive and equitable in terms of access, participation and learning outcomes, with a special focus on reducing disparities among and between groups with the lowest levels of access, participation and learning outcomes;
- *Quality*, targeted on increasing students’ learning by enhancing the relevance and quality of the learning environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning materials (including textbooks), teaching methods, assessment and examinations;
- *Efficiency*, which addresses strengthening and reorienting governance and management systems in the education sector to make them robust and accountable to local governments, while achieving the agreed overall minimum standards in the teaching and learning processes and the learning environment;
- *Governance and management*, which emphasizes the need to accommodate the political and administrative restructuring of the education sector in line with the identified needs and the federal context, and to ensure sustainable financing and strong financial management by introducing a cost-sharing modality between central, provincial, and local governments; and
- *Resilience*, which mainstreams comprehensive school safety and disaster risk reduction in the education sector by strengthening school-level disaster management and resilience amongst schools, students and communities to ensure that schools are protected from conflict.

47. The SSDP Program Results Framework (PRF) is structured around 10 objectives which map onto these key dimensions; these are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Objectives and planned outcomes of SSDP Program Results Framework⁶⁸

SSDP Objective	Outcome
Objective 1: Basic education (estimated five-year budget \$3,782 million)	1.1. Improved quality of basic education
Objective 2: Secondary education (estimated five-year budget \$1,727 million)	2.1. Improved access and equity in secondary education
	2.2. Improved quality of secondary education
Objective 3: Literacy and lifelong learning (estimated five-year budget \$69 million)	3.1 Increased functional literacy and reading and learning habits cultivated among youths and adults

⁶⁷ SSDP

⁶⁸ MTR; adapted from SSDP.

Objective 4: Teacher professional development (estimated five-year budget \$129 million)	4.1. Increased provision of qualified and trained teachers 4.2. Strengthened teacher management and accountability
Objective 5: Governance and management (estimated five-year budget \$50 million)	5.1. Adequate resources and infrastructure are being efficiently used
Objective 6: Disaster risk reduction and school safety (estimated five-year budget \$1,014 million)	No specific outcome in SSDP PRF for Objective 6
Objective 7: Monitoring, evaluation and assessment (estimated five-year budget \$33 million)	No specific outcome in SSDP PRF for Objective 7
Objective 8: Examination and accreditation (budget included under M&E)	No specific outcome in SSDP PRF for Objective 8
Objective 9: Capacity and Institutional Development (estimated five-year budget \$69 million)	9.1. Sufficient institutional capacity at all levels to implement the SSDP
Objective 10: Finance	10.1 Sufficient and predictable budget allocated at national level to implement the SSDP and priorities of the GoN.

48. The Secretariat assessed the SSDP in 2018 as part of their results reporting, and found that the SSDP met all seven quality criteria as outlined in indicator 16 of the GPE Results Framework, meaning that the SSDP is guided by an overall vision; strategic; holistic; evidence-based; achievable; sensitive to context; and attentive to disparities.⁶⁹ Official endorsement of the SSDP by the LEDPG was given on 21 November 2016.⁷⁰ Subsequently a Joint Financing Agreement⁷¹ was put in place. Further information on the SSDP, including its results framework, can be found in Annex L.

Finding 2: The SSDP has been re-evaluated in light of the federalization process, but this has not changed sector planning or the program results framework. The upheaval of federalization is impacting sector monitoring and implementation, but the SSDP remains broadly relevant as a sector plan.

49. There have been no significant changes to sector planning in terms of the objectives and outcomes of the SSDP PRF since the start of the review period. However, there have been two important junctures for

⁶⁹ QAR 1: *Initial Program Consultation: Nepal*. Washington, D.C.: GPE. Draft.

⁷⁰ School Sector Development Plan endorsement letter from the Nepal Local Education Development Partner Group.

⁷¹ Draft SSDP Joint Financing Agreement, 1 March 2017.

sector planning during the review period which have changed the character of sector planning since Year 1 of this country-level evaluation effort. The first of these is the SSDP Transitional Roadmap, which was developed by MOEST with input from the Local Education Development Partners Group (LEDPG) and finalized in August 2018. The Transitional Roadmap was recommended after the 2017 Joint Review Meeting (JRM) and 2018 Budget Review Meeting (BRM), where concerns were raised that the transition to federalization posed risks to education service delivery. The Roadmap is not a review or revision of the SSDP, but rather “seeks to clarify accountability mechanisms in the changed structure, reaffirm roles and responsibilities of new and existing institutional structures, and clarify the measures and safeguards that have been put in place where uncertainties pose a risk to service delivery.”⁷² The Roadmap outlines a number of provisions and constraints, with regard to human resources at local level. These will be discussed in more detail in following sections and chapters.

50. The second significant moment for education sector planning during this review period is the Midterm Review (MTR) of the SSDP, which was completed in June 2019 by a team of independent consultants. This review was a central component of a broader restructuring of the SSDP as outlined in the Transitional Roadmap and was guided by a SSDP Restructuring Committee. As part of this restructuring, and in recognition that federalization requires new sector planning, the SSDP end date has been shifted ahead by two years to 2021.⁷³ The Midterm Review highlighted that the SSDP is relevant, broadly-owned and well-supported by a range of stakeholders, including the LEDPG. This review underscored a number of important issues for the education sector in Nepal, which will be discussed in section 3.5 on sector plan implementation.

GPE contributions to sector planning

Finding 3: Sector planning in Nepal has been well-coordinated and aligned to Government of Nepal priorities through a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) since 2009. This predates Nepal’s membership in the GPE and thus the strength of sector planning cannot be attributed to GPE. However key informants noted that the GPE process-oriented approach and technical support on sector analysis and indicator development are beneficial to sector planning.

51. Nepal has been in receipt of education sector planning support from GPE since 2010. The first Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG), which supported the development of the SSDP, was received in 2015. A second ESPDG was awarded in 2018 to support Nepal in reviewing and adapting the SSDP in light of federalization, and to develop the SSDP Transitional Roadmap.⁷⁴ The most recent ESPDG encompassed two financing windows: the first for conducting a sector analysis, and the second for revising the SSDP program, including the Program and Results Framework and DLI Framework.⁷⁵ Nepal also received three Education Sector Plan Implementation Grants (ESPIGs), the two most recent of which are under the new financing model of fixed and variable tranche funding. One requirement of the ‘fixed part’ is the

⁷² Transitional Roadmap, p. 7.

⁷³ The SSDP originally covered a five-year costed plan (2016-2021) and a seven-year vision (2016-2023). On the recommendation of the Restructuring Committee, the SSDP will now cover only the five-year costed planning cycle and will expire in 2021.

⁷⁴ ESPDG application.

⁷⁵ ESPDG application.

endorsement of a quality education sector plan – an incentive to strengthen sector planning and to ensure that the SSDP is credible and robust. An independent appraisal of the SSDP was conducted in May 2016⁷⁶ in order to allow the LEG to endorse the SSDP. The appraisal found the SSDP to be technically sound and relevant, but identified potential political, governance and fiduciary risks. Based on the recommendations from the appraisal, a set of program action plans were developed to improve the SSDP in these core areas. As the appraisal followed GPE guidelines on quality sector planning, the recommendations and subsequent revisions to the SSDP can be understood as a direct contribution of the GPE to strengthened sector planning.

52. GPE grants to Nepal are coordinated through a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp), pooled with that of eight other Joint Financing Partners (JFPs), and aligned through a Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) that includes a set of ten disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) developed as a sub-set of the SSDP Program Results Framework.⁷⁷ The strength of the SWAp in Nepal is widely recognized and ensures that GPE support, like that of other donors, is coordinated and aligned with the priorities of the Government of Nepal and directly supports the implementation of the government’s sector plan. Although the degree of coordination has been an asset to sector planning, it does make it difficult to assess Contribution Claim A, that GPE support and influence have contributed to the development of government owned, credible and evidence-based sector plans (Figure 1). This evaluation tested the claim in two ways: first by assessing the extent to which the LEDPG, which itself constitutes the Partnership at the county level, has fulfilled this contribution claim; secondly through interviews with key informants who helped identify the unique contribution of GPE in supporting sector planning.

53. As alluded to above, the LEDPG constitutes the country-level education partnership in Nepal, and benefits from the participation of the Grant Agent (GA) and Coordinating Agency (CA), two key roles in the GPE model. For most of the review period, UNICEF acted as CA and World Bank as the ESPIG GA. The World Bank now fills both these roles, as decided by the country partners who are in charge of appointing both agencies. This is an unusual situation; however, informants did not indicate any education sector planning issues arising from having the World Bank holding these two positions in Nepal. The LEDPG has played a central role in ensuring that the SSDP is government-owned, evidence-based, adaptive and coordinated through technical support and quality assurance. LEDPG members, including UNICEF and the World Bank, are active on all twelve SSDP Technical Working Groups and have been since the start of the SSDP period;⁷⁸ all Joint Financing Partners subscribe to the SSDP Program Result Framework (PRF) and disburse based on its satisfactory progress; and Biannual Joint Sector Reviews allow the LEDPG to regularly review the SSDP annual plan and budget.

54. Key informants identified a few non-financial ways in which GPE has offered unique support to education sector planning in Nepal. MOEST highlighted GPE focus on equity and inclusion as a major value-add to sector planning in Nepal. With GPE support, MOEST developed the Consolidated Equity Index to identify OOSC and to adopt targeted policies to bring OOSC in the most disadvantaged districts to either formal schools or non-formal learning centers.

55. Members of the LEDPG also mentioned that the GPE process-oriented approach, including on indicator development and grant management, had a significant impact on sector planning. Although development partners were already shifting towards results-based financing, GPE support helped zoom

⁷⁶ Juho Uusihakala Consulting, SSDP Appraisal, 2016.

⁷⁷ Joint Financing Agreement (JFA, 2017).

⁷⁸ TWG ToRs.

in on indicator development. An informant highlighted that “This was crucial in shift from SSRP to SSDP, that we came in with a skeleton list of agreed indicators, and GPE’s process-oriented approach made a tangible difference here”.

56. ESPDG funding supports sector analysis as a crucial first step in sector planning. A former Ministry of Education (MoE) employee who was closely involved in SSDP development recalled that GPE ESPDG funds allowed country-level partners to hire a sector analysis expert as part of the SSDP development process. This is very important as it helped MoE estimate growth and budget needs. This informant also stated that development partners are very “hands on” and work well together which is not the norm in other sectors, and it has created a stronger education system in Nepal”.

57. Despite the strength and coordination of education sector planning in Nepal, it is worth noting that learning outcomes have not improved through the SSDP period. As previously noted, Nepal made great gains in access through the SSRP, and the SSDP was designed to translate these gains into improved quality and learning. That gains in these areas have not materialized is a significant concern and raises questions about whether planning has adequately addressed the learning needs of Nepal’s children and youth. The ongoing challenges in learning and SSDP implementation are discussed in further detail in subsequent sections.

Table 7 GPE contributions to sector planning during the 2012-2018 review

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPDG and ESPIG funding: ESPIG funding requirements on credible sector plan (including a sector analysis) and ESPDG funding resulted in stronger sector planning in Nepal. • Focus on inclusion and equity: GPE support has been crucial to the creation of the Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal, adopted in 2014. This strategy fed into the sector planning process from the SSDP, particularly in terms of a targeted approach to OOSC. The Equity Index was launched only in 2017; its impact on future education planning in Nepal is likely to be high.
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE technical support: Key informants noted that the Secretariat provided important technical support on indicator development and sector analysis, but this evaluation was unable to determine specific impacts on sector planning.
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING
N/A
NOT APPLICABLE / TOO EARLY TO TELL
N/A

Unintended negative/unplanned positive effects of GPE support

58. No unintended or unplanned effects/consequences of GPE support to sector planning were identified in this review.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

59. As noted, GPE support to Nepal is through a coordinated group of joint-financing and non-joint financing partners supporting education sector planning in Nepal. This support is pooled by the GoN and aligns with government priorities. Thus, there are many factors contributing to successful education planning in Nepal, not least of which is the commitment of the government to improving the education system, and the active support of LEDPG in supporting this goal. Different donors have brought attention and resources to specific areas of the education system. For example, USAID, with GPE support, introduced a focus on early grade reading and Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided specific support to create model schools. These inputs are reflected in the planning priorities and activities of the SSDP as well as in the set of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) which JFPs subscribe to.

60. It is not surprising that the DLIs reflect the different priorities of different development partners therefore, the degree to which donors are harmonized in their support to Nepal may need to be looked into. Although it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to analyze the support of all LEDPG members, the fact that DLIs reveal the ‘fingerprints’ of different donors suggests that education planning in Nepal may be an example of a ‘fragmented alignment’, this may place unnecessary reporting burdens on GoN. Furthermore, the 10 DLIs, each of which has a set of sub-indicators, could perhaps benefit from simplification and streamlining. However, it is important to recognize that LEDPG colleagues have been working well together and with MOEST under the SWAp arrangement, despite differing institutional priorities. It is also important to note that the SWAp underscores that all partners, including the GoN, have been learning and adjusting their successive education sector plans; the process has been iterative rather than static, which shows the broad commitment to education reform among all partners.

Implications for GPE ToC and country level operational model

Box 3 Planning - Testing assumptions and assessing strength of evidence

This review finds that four of the five assumptions underlying sector planning in the GPE country-level evaluation ToC in Nepal hold. For sector planning, the five underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) country level stakeholders have the capabilities to jointly improve sector analysis and planning; (2) stakeholders have the opportunities (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so; (3) stakeholders have the motivation (incentives) to do so; (4) GPE has sufficient leverage within the country to influence sector planning, and (5) Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Learning Assessment System (LAS) producing relevant and reliable data to inform sector planning.

Assumptions 1, 2 and 3 hold. Education sector planning in Nepal is government-owned, collaborative and coordinated. Country level stakeholders are actively involved in planning through the SWAp, through regular Joint-Sector Reviews and technical working groups (discussed in detail in the following section). The review found a high degree of motivation and commitment from LEDPG members, the LEG and GoN, and these stakeholders benefit from a long-established sense of mutual respect and trust. As will be discussed in the following section, some concerns have been raised on the degree to which civil society can genuinely engage in sector dialogue, but this caveat does not undermine the credibility of assumptions 1-3.

Assumption 4 holds. Although GPE support to education sector planning in Nepal is pooled with that of the other JFPs and coordinated by the GoN, stakeholders on all sides agreed that GPE has had a positive influence on sector planning. Its focus on indicator development, sector reviews, participatory dialogue and education equity were highlighted as important to the overall strength of planning processes.

Assumption 5 holds moderately. While EMIS quality showed improvement over the review period, there are still concerns raised on the quality and reliability of EMIS data, as will be discussed later in this chapter as well as Chapter 5. Federalization has been a challenge for EMIS, as responsibility for data collection has shifted to the municipal level. At the same time, the new web-based EMIS had 90% of schools reporting, and stakeholders at all levels reported using EMIS data regularly for decision-making, for example around scholarship provision.

The evidence for assessing changes in education sector planning in Nepal is strong. There is a strong history of coordinated planning in Nepal, supported by both documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews. There was no divergence in stakeholder perspectives across stakeholder groups regarding the state of education sector planning and GPE contributions to planning.

61. Nepal has a long history of well-coordinated and government-owned education sector plans. GPE is one of eight joint-financing partners⁷⁹ who support education sector planning in Nepal. GPE processes have integrated into this already-strong sector planning landscape with the effect of improving the quality of education sector plans through the introduction of (modest) additional financing, support for sector analysis and indicator development and focus on equity and inclusion.

62. Responsibility for education planning has now shifted to the municipal level, with local governments and schools currently working to develop Education Plans and School Improvement Plans. The SSDP provides overall guidance for these plans, but adherence to SSDP targets and indicators cannot be guaranteed and some gaps are anticipated. As noted, the SSDP will expire in 2021, two years ahead of original plans, and will be replaced by a document that draws on and provides an overall framework for education planning at the municipal level. The shape of this post-2021 plan, and its ability to reflect the diversity of Nepal’s 753 rural and urban municipalities, remains to be seen. How will GPE and other DPs support education sector planning under a devolved federal structure? This new structure may challenge old assumptions about the role of the central government in education sector planning, as new local-level stakeholders assume authority in this area.

3.3 GPE contributions to mutual accountability through sector dialogue and monitoring^{80/81}

63. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on mutual accountability for education sector progress and on related GPE contributions during the review period is provided in Table 8. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

⁷⁹ GPE is not a “partner” but a “partnership”; however, for the purposes of Nepal’s SWAp, GPE is considered one of the joint-financing partners.

⁸⁰ This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, as well as to (cross cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

⁸¹ This section triangulates the findings on RF indicators 14, 18 and 19

Table 8 Summary of progress and GPE contributions to mutual accountability through sector dialogue and monitoring

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY (SECTOR DIALOGUE)	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION (SECTOR DIALOGUE)	PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY (SECTOR MONITORING)	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION (SECTOR MONITORING)	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS HOLD ⁸²
<p>Modest: Although sector dialogue is coordinated and frequent in Nepal, there are concerns that some civil society actors, particularly teachers, are not well engaged. Municipal education authorities are not included in sector dialogue.</p>	<p>Strong: GPE strengthens sector dialogue through its partnership model at country level, including participation in the LEDPG, support for LEG and particularly civil society engagement.</p>	<p>Modest: Sector monitoring is generally good in Nepal, but concerns remain over inclusion of civil society actors in monitoring processes. Furthermore, federalization has challenged sector monitoring due to lack of clarity on reporting lines and accountability.</p>	<p>Strong: GPE strengthens sector monitoring through active participation in JSR processes and through its support to civil society monitoring. GPE supports EMIS quality through certain components of the ESPIG grants; despite some concerns on EMIS quality sector monitoring in Nepal is evaluated as sufficiently evidence based.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p>
				<p>STRENGTH OF UNDERLYING EVIDENCE</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>

Characteristics of sector dialogue

Finding 4: Nepal has a long history of coordinated and sector-wide dialogue in education: The Local Education Development Partners Group (LEDPG) meets monthly and participates in a range of technical working groups; the LEG meets at least twice per year for Joint Sector Meetings and Budget Review Meetings.

64. The LEDPG is composed of nine joint-financing partners (including GPE) and five non-Joint Financing Partners. Joint Financing Partners have developed a shared set of disbursement-linked Indicators (DLIs) which support the Key Results Areas of the SSDP as developed by the GoN. The LEDPG meets monthly to review progress on SSDP DLIs, and members of the LEDPG are active in all 12 SSDP Technical Working Groups.

⁸² For sector dialogue and monitoring, the four underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) GPE has sufficient *leverage* at global and country levels to influence LEG existence and functioning; (2) country level stakeholders have the *capabilities* to work together to solve education sector issues. (3) Stakeholders have the *opportunities* (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so; (4) stakeholders have the *motivation* (incentives) to do so.

65. The Local Education Group (LEG) is more broadly-based than the LDPG and includes civil society organizations (organized under the National Campaign for Education Nepal), teacher associations, MOEST and CEDHR as well as LEDPG members. The LEG meets at least twice per year for biannual Joint Sector Reviews.

66. The strength of education sector dialogue in Nepal is widely noted by many stakeholders. Collaboration among donors and the GoN has a long history, with the first education SWAp initiated in 1999.⁸³ As described above and in the previous report, the LEDPG is active, meets monthly, and plays an instrumental role in supporting education sector planning, implementation and monitoring. The more broadly-based LEG participates in both the Budget Review Meeting (BRM) and the Joint Sector Meeting (JSM) and gathers for ad-hoc meetings as needed. Key informants in MOEST and LEDPG have expressed pride in the strength of the SWAp in Nepal, which they believe has been the product of many years of partnership and trust-building. One informant reflected that this may have originally been down to specific personalities in the LEDPG but has transcended that to become part of the institutional culture of the education sector in Nepal.

Finding 5: Civil society organizations report that they struggle to engage meaningfully in sector dialogue. Members of National Campaign for Education (NCE) Nepal argue that their participation is deliberately limited; members of the Teachers' Federation feel ill-equipped to meaningfully engage in sector review. Municipal governments are not at all involved in sector dialogue, even though they are responsible for sector plan implementation.

67. Despite the overall positive picture of sector dialogue in Nepal, interviews raised a few concerns over inclusion of civil society organizations within the SWAp. Informants from CSOs, NGOs and the Teachers Federation described feeling that their involvement was limited in that they were given very little opportunity to genuinely engage with or feed into sector meetings. One informant added that meetings are conducted in English, making engagement very difficult. Although it should be noted that simultaneous translation is now a feature of JSRs, for some informants it is not necessarily the language of communication but also the degree of technical know-how that prevents active participation. As LEDPG members meet monthly, they have a long-established rapport and a high degree of comfort with the technical aspects of sector dialogue. This may inadvertently disadvantage those outside the LEDPG.

68. The National Campaign for Education (NCE Nepal) is the umbrella organization for education focused CSO and NGOs in Nepal. NCE members interviewed as part of this evaluation conveyed a high degree of knowledge about education financing and SSDP implementation and their independent sector monitoring appears robust and of good quality. It should therefore not be difficult for NCE Nepal to engage meaningfully in sector dialogue and to bring expertise and experience to the table. NCE members conveyed a sense that their involvement was deliberately limited and that the space for civil society advocacy and participation is shrinking in Nepal.

69. The story is somewhat different for members of the Teachers Federation and private education providers interviewed for this evaluation. These stakeholders expressed that they did not have the language skills or technical knowledge to meaningfully engage in sector dialogue. Given the central role of teachers in education systems, as well as the concerns over learning quality in Nepal, it is crucial that JSR processes are reformed and that capacity-building is undertaken to allow the meaningful engagement of teachers.

⁸³ Internal SWAp presentation.

70. The evaluation team brought these concerns over representation of civil society to the LEDPG and MOEST during the evaluation debrief. Several members of the LEDPG agreed that civil society organizations, and teachers, could be better engaged in sector dialogue. The sense was that these actors needed some capacity development to engage more meaningfully, and that there are often different individuals attending each meeting, so there is no opportunity for them to ‘grow into the role’ or to build up institutional memory and skills. Other LEDPG members as well as MOEST felt that civil society was adequately involved in sector dialogue.

71. Interviews with municipal education authorities revealed that these local-level stakeholders are not involved in sector dialogue mechanisms. Members of the Association of Rural Municipalities stated that local governments should be playing a more active role in sector dialogue and planning, but these processes are coordinated only within MOEST and at the federal level. Local governments are involved in sector monitoring, but this is limited to a reporting role: LGs are expected to report their annual education work plans and budgets to MOEST as well as EMIS data gathered at school level. Both LGs and MOEST noted the need for improved dialogue mechanisms under the new federal structure, these will be formalized in the forthcoming Federal Education Act.

72. This Year 2 review did not uncover any significant changes in sector dialogue across the review period, although the sense that civil society organizations were struggling to engage in sector dialogue did not come through as strongly in the previous year’s evaluation. This is likely because Year 2 evaluators benefited from meetings with the Teachers Federation and private sector representatives as well as the National Campaign for Education and Association of International NGOs (AIN) Education Group. Additionally, the Year 2 evaluation team benefited from interviews with a variety of local government representatives who expressed concerns over their involvement in sector dialogue.

Characteristics of sector monitoring

Finding 6: Monitoring systems have been in place in Nepal for many years and are working well: Current sector monitoring is based on the SSDP Program Results Framework and takes place through biannual Joint Sector Reviews; EMIS data is collected regularly at school level and used to produce annual Flash reports; National learning assessments are conducted periodically through the National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA)

SSDP Results Framework, Monitoring Plans, and Periodic Reports

73. The SSDP Program Results Framework (PRF) is the main instrument to monitor progress of the SSDP. It is structured around 10 objectives and related planned outcomes, Table 6. For each of these objectives, main strategies, components and activities have been developed and served as a basis for the estimated budget cost of the five years of implementation of the program. A total set of 72 indicators is used to monitor progress at output, outcome and impact levels.

74. Key informants indicate that the PRF indicators are considered relevant and reasonable and are developed and reviewed through the active involvement of SWAp stakeholders. However, the MTR noted some concerns with the PRF – including a lack of alignment between inputs and results – for instance, teacher deployment and professional development; the MTR also noted that several indicators are not fully adapted to monitor progress.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ MTR

75. MOEST develops Annual Strategic Implementation Plans and Annual Work Plan and Budgets (ASIP/AWPBs) as part of the Joint Sector Review process. These plans provide detail on annual targets and activities based on the PRF. MOEST also releases annual Status Reports to detail the progress and challenges against the ASIP/AWPBs and PRF. The Status Report depicts implementation status, allocation of budget and expenditure, component-wise progress status, and physical progress against annual targets.

Joint Sector Reviews

76. Biannual Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs) take place through Joint Review Meetings (JRMs) and Budget Review Meetings (BRMs). The latest JRM took place in November 2018; a BRM was held in May 2019. Sector stakeholders participate in Joint Quarterly Meetings to monitor the progress of SSDP implementation and hold a Joint Consultative Meeting each December. Various technical working groups allow for more detailed consultation and monitoring on issues like early grade reading, teacher professional development and the EMIS. The recent GPE Quality Assurance Review III, conducted at the start of the current ESPIG, stated that “[sector] monitoring systems have been in place for many years and are working well.”

77. Indicator 18 in the GPE results framework relates to the achievement of quality standards for joint sector reviews (JSRs), based on assessment of five aspects of performance. Table 9 shows the assessment of the JRMs from 2016 to the last one held in May 2018.

Table 9 Comparison of GPE RF assessment of the JRM over time, and evaluators’ assessment of 2018 JRM

JSR QUALITY STANDARDS ⁸⁵	GPE RF DATA			EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT OF 2018 JRM AND 2019 BRM BASED ON DOCUMENTS (E.G. JSR AIDE MEMOIRES, ETC.) AND CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS
	2016	2017	2018	
Participatory and inclusive	Not met	Not met	Not met	Documentary evidence reveals that both NCE Nepal and AIN are involved in biannual JSRs, and their participation can be viewed as somewhat active given that both presented on their work at the most recent BRM in May 2019. Additionally, members of NCE and AIN are active in some of the SSDP Technical Working Groups, which monitor progress on specific SSDP objectives. However, there is less evidence of teachers being actively involved in JSRs. Furthermore, members of NCE Nepal and the Teachers Federation expressed that their participation is limited.
Evidence-based	Met	Met	Met	Document review and stakeholder interviews confirm that sector review processes have been consistently evidence-based. The GoN collects detailed education data through annual Flash

⁸⁵ JSR quality standards have evolved over time. The five JSR quality criteria scored by GPE RFI 18 are (1) participatory and inclusive, (2) evidence-based, (3) comprehensive, (4) a monitoring instrument and (5) anchored into effective policy cycle (source: GPE, Methodological Guidelines, version 8, June 2017, 47). The five dimensions of an effective JSR outlined in GPE’s guide for effective JSRs are (1) inclusive and participatory, (2) aligned with shared policy frameworks, (3) evidence-based, (4) a monitoring tool and (5) an instrument for change embedded effectively into a policy cycle (Source: GPE, Joint Sector Review in the Education Sector: A Practical Guide for Organizing Effective JSRs, July 2018, 20).

JSR QUALITY STANDARDS ⁸⁵	GPE RF DATA			EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT OF 2018 JRM AND 2019 BRM BASED ON DOCUMENTS (E.G. JSR AIDE MEMOIRES, ETC.) AND CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS
	2016	2017	2018	
				Reports, and these data are used to review progress against the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan/Annual Work Plan and Budget (ASIP/AWPB). A review of FLASH data and progress against SSDP targets happens biannually at JRMs and BRMs.
Comprehensive	Met	Met	No data	Document review and stakeholder interviews confirm that JSRs in Nepal have consistently been comprehensive in that they address all SSDP priority areas and assess against the full SSDP PRF. Furthermore, the JSR process is led and owned by MOEST.
Aligned with shared policy frameworks	No data	No data	Met	JSR processes are wholly aligned with the SSDP and benefit from a robust SWAp.
A monitoring tool	Met	Met	Met	Both Joint Sector Meetings and Joint Budget Meetings are used as an opportunity to review progress on SSDP results framework and to revise program implementation as needed. Stakeholders confirm that JSRs are crucial to sector monitoring and to ensuring that the SSDP is responsive.
An instrument for change anchored in an effective policy cycle	Met	Met	Met	Biannual JSRs are anchored to the SSDP policy cycle and both document review and stakeholder interviews confirm that JSRs link directly to policy progress. For example, the most recent BRM in May 2019 was designed to coincide with and provide feedback on the Midterm Review of the SSDP.

78. The 2017 indicator 18 scores for Nepal were positive. For four of the five quality standards, joint sector reviews in Nepal were found to be fully satisfactory: “evidence-based”; “comprehensive”; “monitors sector performance and key indicators”; and “anchored into an effective policy cycle”. Nepal JSRs were not scored as fully satisfactory on one standard, “participatory and inclusive: the JSR includes effective participation from all education sector stakeholders transparently. It sets the stage for a reinforced mutual accountability framework”.⁸⁶ This reflects the above-mentioned concerns on civil society participation. Given the low learning levels and the SSDP priority on learning although both NCE Nepal and AIN are participants in the JSRs, greater participation of teachers (and teacher trainers/pedagogical advisors) in sector planning and monitoring is worth considering.

EMIS, Flash Reports and Learning Assessment

79. Until 2017, EMIS was managed by District Education Offices (DEOs) – units which have been disbanded as part of the federalization process. In 2018, Nepal shifted to a web-based EMIS, where school level data is collected at the municipal level and then fed upwards to the federal government. EMIS data is consolidated and published annually through Flash Reports. These reports are separate to the Status Reports, which review progress on the SSDP program results framework. Flash Reports report on a wide range of education data as reported through EMIS, and are reviewed at JSRs and are publicly available on MOEST website.

⁸⁶ GPE data and Results Framework Indicators: Methodological Briefs, page 47.

80. Last year's CLE raised concerns that this federal transition could undermine data quality and disrupt data flows. However, the Year 2 review of EMIS data through Flash Reports did not find any quality concerns. Both the GoN and the LEDPG remain committed to strengthening EMIS, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. Furthermore, stakeholders at all levels report that EMIS data is used effectively for evidence-informed decision making, for example on scholarships, school meal provision and teacher allocation as well as for advocacy on the right to education.

81. National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) have been conducted since 2011 by the Education Review Office (ERO). These nationally administered curriculum-based tests currently assess student learning in Math, Nepali and Social Studies in grades 3, 5 and 8. NASA 2018 is the first and baseline assessment administered during the SSDP period for grade 5. NASA results are reviewed during JSRs. Stakeholders deem the quality and reliability of NASA data to be high.

Civil Society Monitoring

82. GPE also supported sector monitoring through CSEF grants, which have been used to support NCE Nepal to monitor education equity, quality and financing at federal and local levels. NCE Nepal has received three CSEF grants in total (2016, 2017 and 2018) NCE Nepal conducts independent monitoring of education sector financing and implementation in Nepal, and this work is relatively robust. NCE conducts research on education financing as well as access, equity and quality of education in Nepal.⁸⁷ This evidence is published in regular reports, available on their website, and is the backbone of their advocacy campaigns on education rights. Informants from the LEDPG recognized the quality of the monitoring evidence gathered and published by NCE.

GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring

Finding 7: GPE contributes to sector dialogue and monitoring through the active involvement of its Coordinating Agency (CA) and Grant Agent (GA) in LEDPG monthly meetings, and through the LEG and providing support to civil society monitoring through the CSEF grants to NCE Nepal.

83. As discussed, Nepal benefits from strong sector dialogue with a long-standing SWAp, active LEDPG and regular joint sector meetings. During this evaluation period, all development partners have continued to support sector monitoring by regularly reviewing progress on the 10 DLIs during joint sector meetings, monthly LEDPG meetings, and SSDP technical working group (TWG) meetings. Although Nepal's SWAp predates Nepal's GPE membership, stakeholders attest that GPE helped shape the current SWAp through its emphasis on broad-based consultative and participatory dialogue, its commitment to evidence-based education policy and programming, and its focus on results through the variable tranche funding model. The role of the CA and GA in the LEDPG was also important.

84. Informants identified GPE focus on capacity-building as crucial to the overall strength of sector dialogue in Nepal. According to the NCE as well as LEDPG members, GPE support to NCE Nepal through the Civil Society Education Fund was crucial to improving civil society engagement in sector dialogue and monitoring through LEG and LEDPG. Bearing in mind that more needs to be done, GPE entry into SWAp introduced a step change in civil society participation and capacity development.

⁸⁷ See for example NCE 2018a and 2018b.

85. GPE ESPIG contributes to improvement in sector dialogue and monitoring through a series of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) linked to the SSDP ‘efficiency’ strategy, including tracking the integration of SSDP activities by local governments in their annual work plans and budgets.⁸⁸ Thirty percent of the grant disbursement is linked to the achievement of targets assigned to the indicators. The LEG chose this as a new ESPIG indicator to help ensure that local governments integrate SSDP into their annual work plans and as a key means to maintain implementation standards through the federalization process.

86. This evaluation was not able to verify the number of local governments integrating SSDP into their annual work plans, and evidence from stakeholder interviews is somewhat mixed. On the one hand, MOEST provides education grants to local governments which align their work plans and budgets to the SSDP, and at least one municipal education officer verified that local education planning and monitoring were based on SSDP guidelines. Moreover, monitoring and reporting to MOEST was burdensome and separate to the day-to-day functioning and monitoring of the local schools. This gap between federal and local government monitoring is discussed further in Chapter 4.

87. MOEST is in the process of developing a mechanism to rationalize reporting systems, and have suggested that GPE and other DPs could provide technical support in this area, particularly in light of their role in JSRs and monitoring progress on DLIs.

Table 10 GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring during the 2015-2019 review period

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GA and CA participation in the LEDPG: Active participation GPE GA and CA in LEDPG, TWGs and biannual JSR meetings. ▪ Secretariat and CA advocacy: Particularly its advocacy for the inclusion of civil society actors in the LEG (through NCE Nepal and Teachers Federation) and LEDPG (through AIN). ▪ ESPIG funding to Federal government: Support for improving EMIS through ESPIG grants, including development of Equity Index. ▪ ESPIG Variable Tranche: The linking of key SSDP targets to funding has been an important factor in promoting accountability and transparency at federal level in Nepal. ▪ CSEF funding: NCE receives a large portion of its core funding from the CSEF grants through GPE. without this support, it would not be able to engage in the LEDPG or have as strong a role in independent monitoring.
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESPIG funding to local governments: GPE’s current ESPIG contributes modestly to improving mutual accountability by supporting local governments to integrate SSDP activities in their annual work plans and budgets.
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
n/a

Unintended negative/unplanned positive effects of GPE support

88. This evaluation did not uncover any unintended or unplanned effects of GPE support.

⁸⁸ ESPIG application, p.19.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

89. Federalization has introduced challenges as well as opportunities for improved sector dialogue, monitoring and mutual accountability. Although the Transitional Roadmap outlines a direct reporting line from municipal-level education units to the federal MOEST, the LEDPG states that “according to the constitutional provision both provincial and local governments are autonomous governments, and hence such direct line relationships may neither be appropriate nor be feasible”. Similarly, the Midterm Review of the SSDP found that: “Within the current situation, no clear reporting mechanisms have been defined between the different layers of government and confusion remains regarding the exact roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. This situation presents a high risk of duplicated investments within the education sector, and a further increase of disparities between localities and schools”.⁸⁹

90. The lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting was echoed by many stakeholders during interviews. At the same time, there is a sense of optimism that, if the Federal Education Act can offer defined monitoring and reporting structures, mutual accountability will be improved through devolved decision making. Informants from municipal government and non-state actors alike expressed the belief that devolution would open opportunities for communities, schools and civil society organizations to be more engaged with education sector monitoring and decision making, and that local government would be more responsive due to their proximity to the school level. GPE could provide targeted support for capacity building at the local level, both for government and for civil society, to ensure the promises of devolution are realized.

Implications for GPE ToC and country level operational model

Box 4 Mutual accountability - Testing assumptions and assessing strength of evidence

For sector dialogue and monitoring, the four underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) GPE has sufficient leverage at global and country levels to influence LEG existence and functioning; (2) country level stakeholders have the capabilities to work together to solve education sector issues. (3) Stakeholders have the opportunities (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so; (4) stakeholders have the motivation (incentives) to do so. The final assessment at the end of the final year of this evaluation is:

Assumption 1 holds. GPE leverage in Nepal is strong with regard to dialogue and monitoring. LEG and LEDPG members noted that GPE principles and frameworks for facilitating broad participation in LEG and SWAp have improved mutual accountability in Nepal’s education sector.

Assumption 2 and 3 are mixed. Civil society actors, including the Teachers Federation, report that they do not feel empowered to participate actively in sector dialogue. For some, language is a barrier to participation; for others it is a matter of feeling they do not have the necessary skills and experience to engage actively. As noted, DPs have a long history of working together and benefit from a strong rapport. However, this can make it difficult for civil society organizations to ‘break in’, suggesting that more could be done to create a conducive and enabling environment. Both NCE Nepal and LEDPG members noted that GPE could play an important role in capacity development to ensure that participation moves from tokenism to genuine partnership. MOEST also noted that GPE’s role in capacity development is an important aspect of sector accountability but that more could be done in this regard.

Assumption 4 holds. Despite the above concerns on civil society participation, there is no reason to believe that all stakeholders are not committed to strengthening sector dialogue and monitoring. All parties

⁸⁹ MTR, p.4-5.

recognize the limitations of civil society participation, and all independently note that GPE support has been and could continue to be catalytic in improving mutual accountability.

The evidence for assessing education sector dialogue and monitoring in Nepal is moderately strong. Both documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews confirm that dialogue is frequent, aligned, coordinated and strategic and all stakeholders appear motivated to work together to address sector challenges. However, there was discrepancy between civil society organizations, government and some LEDPG members as to whether civil society actors are able to truly engage in sector dialogue.

91. Federalization is changing the nature of sector dialogue and monitoring in Nepal, and GPE’s approach to supporting dialogue and monitoring must change as well if it is to remain relevant. Federalization has the potential to improve education sector dialogue, monitoring and accountability by devolving authority to the local level, closer to the schools, students and communities impacted by education policy and practices. Social accountability and participation can be greatly strengthened through this political change. Yet this presents a challenge for GPE’s way of working at country level. Nepal’s partnership in GPE exists only at the central level, as does the sector monitoring and dialogue which GPE supports. The robust JSR process is highly centralized, with participation of diverse stakeholders happening centrally and coordinated through the federal government. Will devolution challenge this model? And to what extent can GPE’s ToC be flexible enough to adapt to different and shifting political structures?

3.4 GPE contributions to sector financing⁹⁰

92. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector financing and related GPE contributions during the review period is provided in Table 11. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

Table 11 Progress made and GPE contributions to sector financing

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MORE/BETTER EDUCATION SECTOR FINANCING (2009-2019)					LIKELIHOOD OF GPE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ⁹¹ :		
Total domestic educ. expenditure	Education share of domestic budget	Met 20% Goal? ⁹²	Total intl. education financing to country	Quality of intl. financing	Amount of domestic financing	Amount of intl. financing	Quality of intl. sector financing
Increase in the last years, with a projected	Decreasing since 2016 although as a	No, decreased from 20.4% in	Decreased from 2014-2016; increased	No change: international financing has been	Modest	Low	Modest
					STRENGTH OF UNDERLYING EVIDENCE		
					1	2	3

⁹⁰ This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 1.5 and 1.6, as well as to (cross cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

⁹¹ Assessment is based on (i) existence/absence of positive change in respective area; (ii) stakeholder views on likelihood of GPE support/funding criteria having influenced domestic or international funding decisions; (iii) absence or existence of additional factors that are as/more likely than GPE support to explain noted trends.

⁹² One of GPE’s ESPIG funding requirements is that 20 percent of government expenditure be invested in education, or that government expenditure on education show an increase toward the 20 percent threshold.

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MORE/BETTER EDUCATION SECTOR FINANCING (2009-2019)					LIKELIHOOD OF GPE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ⁹¹ :		
increase of 1.6% in 2019	consequence of the high increases in general budget	2016 to 10.6% in 2019 because of high increases in the general budget	sharply in 2017 to above 2014 levels	coordinated through a pooled fund and aligned to GoN priorities since 2009.	ASSUMPTIONS ⁹³		
					1	2	3

Characteristics of sector financing during review period⁹⁴

Amount and quality of public expenditure on education

Finding 8: Nepal continues to increase its annual expenditure on education, with a projected increase of 1.6% in 2019. As a percentage of the overall budget, spending on education decreased from a high of 20.4% in 2016 to 10.6% in 2019, but this change reflects faster-than-expected GDP growth as well as high expenditures on federalization and post-earthquake reconstruction. The percentage of education budget allocated at the local level has increased dramatically throughout the review period – a reflection of the federalization process. However there remains a significant funding gap to achieve the objectives of the SSDP.

93. Nepal's public education expenditure followed a consistent upward trend through the review period, meeting the annual target of 1% increase per year and with a projected increase of 1.6% in 2019.⁹⁵ This is particularly noteworthy given the context of the 2015 earthquake and subsequent reconstruction as well as the high costs associated with the federal transition.⁹⁶ As a percentage of overall budget, Nepal's education expenditure share has been decreasing annually from 20.4 percent in 2016, to 19.0 percent in 2017, to 13.9 percent in 2018, and to 10.6% in 2019. This drop reflects the ongoing costs of federalization and reconstruction, as noted above, but also must be understood in the context of a rapidly increasing GDP: the SSDP planned for an annual GDP growth of 5.4% by 2022, but GDP growth has already reached 6.5% in 2019. This means that the denominator against which the percentage spend on education is calculated has been inflated, so budgetary numbers need to be re-worked.

94. The total SSDP budget for 2016-2021 (the five year 'costed plan') is US\$6,461 million. The Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) for 2018-19 indicated that the SSDP had a funding gap of US\$272 million, (3.7% of the total SSDP budget). A presentation prepared by MOEST for GPE board meetings in May 2019

⁹³ 1: GPE has sufficient leverage to influence the amount and quality of domestic education sector financing, 2: External (contextual) factors permit national and international stakeholders to increase/improve the quality of sector financing, 3: stakeholders have the opportunities (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so.

⁹⁴ Use data template document as guideline for figures to include in this section.

⁹⁵ GPE Nepal QAR 3.

⁹⁶ The current federal transition also requires a large budget, with block grants (ranging from US\$1 million-12.5 million) for the transition itself being provided to all 753 LGs. As cited in GPE Nepal QAR, the evaluation was unable to find data on the costs of post-earthquake reconstruction, and the impact this has had on the education budget.

noted that some of the SSDP funding gap had been filled by US\$93 million additional funding leveraged from JFPs, including the GPE Multiplier fund. However, the 2019 Budget Review Meeting (BRM) and Midterm Review project higher costs of implementing the SSDP through to 2021, and estimate that the funding gap will grow to US\$322 million due to the increasing costs of federalization.⁹⁷ The Midterm Review warned that SSDP activities cannot be fully implemented without an increase in funding.

95. An important characteristic of education funding in Nepal over the review period is that an ever-greater share of education expenditure is being allocated at the local level. In 2017-2018, 75.19% of the annual SSDP budget was allocated at local level and 24.81% at the federal level.⁹⁸ In 2018-19, these figures jumped to 91.58% and 8.13% respectively;⁹⁹ in 2019-2020 local allocation expanded to 95.36% of the SSDP budget, with just 4.33% allocated at the federal level.¹⁰⁰ Since 2018-19, a small percentage of SSDP allocation has also gone to the provincial level government, but this represents roughly 0.3% of the SSDP budget. Funds for local government are allocated through conditional grants that incentivize local governments to align their annual work plans with the targets and indicators of the SSDP.

96. The SSDP budget is allocated largely to basic education, which is defined in the budget as grades 1-8. Over half – 54.7% of the SSDP budget is spent at this level; by comparison 25.4% of the budget goes to secondary education and 3.8% to early childhood and pre-primary education.¹⁰¹ Notably, the SSDP chose to incorporate one year of pre-primary education into the basic education cycle, however this is not reflected in the budget figures for basic education. Thus, the actual amount spent on basic education is most likely higher than 25.4% if we include the additional year of pre-primary. This review was unable to find data on allocation of education financing prior to the start of the SSDP and cannot make any conclusions about how this has changed over time. It is clear, however, that the SSDP places priority on basic education and school readiness.

97. Another important feature of education financing in Nepal is the high percentage of the budget allocated to recurrent costs, particularly teacher salaries. 9.1% of the SSDP budget covered capital costs over the first three years, but this would decline after that point. However, the 2017-18 Status Report found that over 99% of the SSDP budget that year was spent on recurrent costs.¹⁰² A report from NCE Nepal found that roughly 70% of the SSDP budget goes to teacher salaries, and that this figure has remained steady from 2012-2017.¹⁰³ A slightly smaller figure is provided by the 2018-19 AWPB, which indicates that roughly 65% of the budget is spent on teacher salaries (US\$570 million out of an annual budget of US\$885 million).

⁹⁷ Presentation on Nepal SWAp by MOEST, May 2019.

⁹⁸ Status Report, 2017-18.

⁹⁹ ASIP/AWPB, 2018-19.

¹⁰⁰ ASIP/AWPB, 2019-20.

¹⁰¹ SSDP.

¹⁰² Status Report, 2017-18.

¹⁰³ NCE Nepal, Research Report on Financing Gap in Education, 2018.

Finding 9: Nearly half of education expenditure (from primary to tertiary levels) is borne by families. Households are funding school fees as well as additional costs such as uniforms and textbooks. There is no data on what share of basic education expenditure is covered by families.

98. Nepal is one of only eight pilot countries to have participated in the 2015 National Education Account (NEA) initiative, led by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and funded by GPE through a Global and Regional Activities (GRA) grant. This exercise allowed countries to gain a complete picture of education spending through an analysis that covers all education levels, all sources of funding and all types of education providers. Nepal's NEA found the national expenditure in absolute terms (from government as well as private sources and households) increased by 85% from 2009/10 to 2014/15, an average of 13% per year. When inflation rates are accounted for, the overall increase for the period is 28%, an average of 5% per year.¹⁰⁴

99. Table 10 illustrates this annual expenditure growth. GoN expenditure on education experienced a similar trend to that of the total national expenditure as it almost doubled from 2010 to 2015. However, there was some fluctuation in 2013 and 2015 when expenditure by the GoN on education decreased. In 2015, the decrease was because education resources were deviated to reconstruction following the earthquake disaster. If compared to the total expenditure of the GoN, the share allocated to education decreased from 18.6% in 2010 to 16.1% in 2015, attributable to the post-earthquake increase in GoN expenditure.

Table 12 Annual education expenditure in million NPRs and USD

Category	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
National expenditure in education	106,258.6 (US\$ 1,001.4)	119,209.9 (US\$ 1,123.45)	139,606.6 (US\$ 1,315.68)	158,183.7 (US\$ 1,490.75)	185,302.0 (US\$ 1,746.32)	196,684.3 (US\$ 1,853.59)
National expenditure at 2014/15 prices	153,993.0 (US\$ 1,451.26)	155,907.1 (US\$ 1,469.30)	171,222.1 (US\$ 1,613.63)	182,033.4 (US\$ 1,715.52)	196,172.1 (US\$ 1,848.76)	196,684.3 (US\$ 1,853.59)
National expenditure in education growth rate at constant prices	-	1.2%	9.8%	6.3%	7.8%	0.3%
Average per capita (NPRs current)	4,048 (US\$ 38.15)	4,500 (US\$ 42.41)	5,200 (US\$ 49)	5,813 (US\$ 54.78)	6,719 (US\$ 63.32)	6,942 (US\$ 65.42)
GoN expenditure on education	48,351.3 (US\$ 455.67)	57,513.1 (US\$ 542.01)	64,962.7 (US\$ 606.20)	65,324.3 (US\$ 615.63)	81,525.5 (US\$ 768.31)	83,905.4 (US\$ 790.74)
GoN expenditure on education growth rate at constant prices	-	7.3%	5.9%	-5.6%	14.8%	-2.8%

¹⁰⁴ Nepal NEA Report, 2016.

GoN expenditure on education as share of total GoN expenditure	18.6%	19.5%	19.2%	18.2%	18.7%	16.1%
Total education expenditure as % of GDP	8.9%	8.7%	9.1%	9.3%	9.5%	9.3%

Source: Nepal National Education Account Report 2016¹⁰⁵

101. In the National Education Account, the national expenditure in education covers expenditure from all public, private and external sources of funding, for all levels of education from pre-primary to university, and all categories of education providers, public and private. This includes funding for teachers' salaries, administration, school meals as well as direct expenditure by families when required by school attendance like the purchase of uniforms, school supplies, transport to school and private tuition. It thus represents a figure beyond the focus of this evaluation, which is concerned with financing of basic education through the SSDP.

102. However, in considering the broader picture of education financing in Nepal, the NEA report illustrates an important trend – the very large share of education financing borne by families. Public authorities fund 43.8% of education expenditure at all levels – from pre-primary to tertiary – through central ministries, local governments and development partners, and this is largely to cover the costs of teacher salaries. Parents are contributing 97.4 billion Nepalese Rupee which makes up for about half (48.8%) of the total funding. Households pay fees, mainly for private providers (48.7% of their education expenditure) and the purchase of related goods and services (35.8%). However, the proportional costs borne by the government are higher at primary and lower secondary levels.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, there is no data to show the percentage of basic education costs borne by families.

Finding 10: Roughly 40% of public education expenditure comes from local governments, who raise these funds through tax mobilization. The total amount spent by local governments is not currently included in SSDP expenditure reporting, so conclusions cannot be made on changes over time or between districts.

103. The Status Report 2018, and NCE Nepal's Education Finance Report indicate that roughly 40% of public education spending comes from municipal governments. Yet figures on public funding for education do not take this amount into account: annual SSDP budgets, as reported in the ASIP/AWPBs, **Error! Reference source not found.** do not include municipal funding under 'public resources for school education'. Thus, figures on overall public expenditure in education are underestimated. There was no data on the amount raised by local governments, how this has changed over time and how it differs between regions. This is a significant, though not surprising gap, particularly given concerns over education equity between regions and federalization. The SSDP Transitional Roadmap notes that the mechanisms for sub-national education spending are not yet set up, but are expected in the future. Note, provincial governments do not currently provide any public funding for education in Nepal.

104. The Midterm Review offers specific recommendations to ensure that all provincial and local education expenditures are included within SSDP perimeters. These include adjusting the current SSDP costing framework and ensuring financial reporting mechanisms are put in place at provincial and local

¹⁰⁵ Available at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/nepal-nea-report.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Nepal NEA Report, 2016.

government levels. CEHRD could also consider collecting financial information from the schools and could integrate schools' income and expenditure information within the EMIS system.

Table 13 Funding of school education, USD millions

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	Budget	Revised budget	Budget
SSDP perimeter¹⁰⁷	789.46	855.14	853.32
Federal budget	789.46	212.19	69.38
Conditional grants to PGs	No data	642.94	2.45
Conditional grants to LGs	No data	No data	781.49
Of which JFPs	70.70	71.96	84.33
Other public funding for school education	29.43	33.60	127.76
PGs from equalization grant	No data	No data	55.95
LGs from equalization grant	No data	No data	45.45
On-budget non-JFPs	7.59	8.52	1.85
Off-budget external funding	21.84	25.08	24.52
Total public resources for school education	819.83	969.41	979.17

*2016 Exchange rate

Source: MTR, drawn from SSDP simulation model and ASIP 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19

Amount and quality of international financing

Finding 11: International financing to Nepal's education sector decreased from 2014 – 2016, but increased modestly in 2017 (data is not yet available for 2018-2019). As a share of total ODA, international financing for education has decreased annually since 2014. International financing is pooled and coordinated by the GoN, which has remained aligned throughout the review period.

100. The share of international financing for Nepal's education sector has decreased over the review period, although the figure has increased modestly since the start of the SSDP (see Table 14). International financing was 12.7% of the overall budget in 2009-10; this dropped to 6.8% in 2014-15¹⁰⁸; under the SSDP (2016-2021) the figure is 7.5%.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ The perimeter used for the analysis is formed by the upper part of the table for expenditure identified within the GoN budget, with some references to off-budget support.

¹⁰⁸ Nepal NEA Report, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ BRM, 2019.

Table 14 ODA to Nepal 2014-2018, USD millions¹¹⁰

Category	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total ODA	937.839	1,375.613	1,252.666	1,438.686
Total Education ODA	146.868	140.513	130.967	149.194
Education ODA as share of total ODA	15.66%	10.21%	10.46%	10.37%

101. A total of nine Joint Financing Partners (including GPE) and five non-Joint Financing Partners contribute to the international financing of the SSDP in Nepal. At the start of the SSDP, a Joint Financing Agreement between JFPs and the Ministry of Finance committed JFPs to US\$429 million; this has been expanded through an additional US\$78 million leveraged from JFPs in the first two years and a US\$15 million top-up from GPE Multiplier Fund.¹¹¹

102. The pooled nature of international education financing in Nepal aligns with the principles of aid effectiveness as stated in the Paris Convention.¹¹² It promotes government ownership and coordination of the development process, enhances donor alignment with national objectives and systems, harmonizes donor procedures and promotes the mutual accountability of development partners. Development partners and the GoN generally collaborate constructively, as evidenced by annual BRM reports that include reference to the coordination and independent verification of DLIs. “The SSDP makes high use of the national systems of programming, accounting, auditing, procurement, reporting etc....It scores high on the [GPE] Secretariat’s alignment assessment.”¹¹³

GPE contributions to sector financing

Finding 12: GPE funding to Nepal has been shrinking despite the increasing need posed by federalization and post-earthquake reconstruction. Transaction costs for these GPE funds are burdensome and – coupled with the shift towards results-based financing – may undermine GPE partnership and country-ownership model. GPE support to NCE Nepal through three rounds of CSEF is seen as catalytic.

103. Nepal has received support from GPE and from its precursor the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) since 2010. A full list of GPE grants to Nepal is provided in Table 15. GPE funding to Nepal has decreased significantly through this period, and this has been particularly challenging as Nepal undergoes its federal transition while still dealing with the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake. Interviewees at MOEST point out that government priorities have had to shift tremendously in the past five years and, although financing partners have been understanding, more support and patience is needed.

¹¹⁰ Creditor Reporting System (CRS), OECD.

¹¹¹ SWAp presentation.

¹¹² Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Available at:

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>

¹¹³ 2018 Budget Review Meeting Aide Memoire.

Table 15 GPE Grants to Nepal (in \$US)

Type of Grant	Date	Allocation	Disbursements as of June 2019
Implementation Grant (ESPIG)	2010-2014	117,760,473	117,760,473
Program Development Grant (PDG)	2014	179,700	155,322
Program Development Grant (ESPDG)	2015	465,774	365,559
Implementation Grant (ESPIG)	2016-2019	59,300,000	45,389,006
Implementation Grant (ESPIG)	2019-2021	24,200,000*	
Program Development Grant (PDG)	2018-2019	130,000	
Civil Society Education Fund I	2016	86,306	86,306
Civil Society Education Fund II	2017	89,395	89,395
Civil Society Education Fund III	2018	91,720	91,720

* includes a regular implementation grant of US\$9.2 million and a Multiplier grant of US\$15 million

104. GPE financing initiated in 2015 sees ESPIGs disbursed in two tranches, one fixed and one variable, with the variable component allocated through a results-based financing model. Nepal is the first GPE developing country partner to have received a second round of funding through this new model, making it a useful case-study for the model's effectiveness at country level. When asked to reflect on the effectiveness of the variable tranche funding, MOEST noted that results-based financing has helped stakeholders in Nepal focus collectively on results against key performance indicators. However, informants also noted that the variable tranche had placed a significant reporting and administrative burden on MOEST. These informants also expressed that the variable tranche felt somewhat punitive: donors have helped to construct an education plan and results framework but then withhold funds when results are not realized. As one interviewee put it "it is like asking for exactly so much sugar in my tea, and then refusing to pay because it is too sweet." Another informant from MOEST argued that the variable tranche is less effective for outcomes that are long-term in nature and that shift from access to quality. This aligns with wider concerns in the global education community that RBF can incentivize short-term and easily measurable indicators over sustained improvements to learning quality.¹¹⁴

105. Taken together these comments suggest that the variable tranche may be diverting focus away from long-term improvements to quality learning outcomes and may also serve to damage the sense of partnership and country-ownership in the GPE model. The GoN also noted that transaction costs for GPE grants are quite high for a comparatively small – and shrinking – fund. The MOEST continues to subscribe to what are seen as fairly burdensome GPE grant requirements showing the extent to which Government of Nepal values its partnership in the GPE and GPE's non-financial support (as discussed below).

106. Although GPE advocates for increased, harmonized, and better aligned international financing for education, the alignment mechanisms described above were in place before GPE began its partnership in Nepal. It is therefore difficult to attribute the success of SWAp financing arrangements to GPE. Furthermore, several stakeholders from the GoN noted that GPE funding requirements were not altogether aligned with that of its GA, the World Bank. The ramifications of this is that the GoN needs to satisfy both GPE and World Bank requirements before the ESPIG can officially begin – a situation which has reportedly caused delays and additional burdens on an already-stretched MOEST.¹¹⁵

107. GPE aims to leverage additional financing for Nepal's education sector through advocacy and through the GPE Multiplier, which provides financial resources to catalyze further investment in education. Nepal has been the recipient of a GPE Multiplier totaling US\$15 million in 2017 (thanks to the

¹¹⁴ Global Education Monitoring Report, 2018.

¹¹⁵ Interview with MOEST and debrief session feedback.

mobilized resources from ADB and USAID), which has contributed a small amount to closing the SSDP funding gap. However, the JFPs involved in this multiplier are reluctant to credit GPE with leveraging additional financing, arguing that these funds were already earmarked for the SSDP. One development partner noted some bilateral donors have even reduced their funding to Nepal because they contribute through the GPE.¹¹⁶ Now that GPE has reduced its funding, the informant raised the question of how GPE can account carefully for its role in overall education sector financing. It should be emphasized that this is a single and unverified comment from one JFP, and assessing its veracity is outside the scope of this evaluation. However, the comment has been included as it highlights an area GPE may want to investigate further.

108. Informants from civil society and development partners agreed that GPE’s indicator of 20% budget spend on education is a very useful advocacy tool, providing a way for these non-state actors to pressure the MoF and MOEST to increase the education budget allocation. NCE regularly campaigns for increased domestic financing for education using the 20% share benchmark. In the words of one LEDPG member, “because of this indicator, government is constantly reminded of allocation to education sector, and perhaps as a result the absolute allocation is increasing satisfactorily every year.” Even an interviewee from the Ministry of Finance acknowledged that there was considerable momentum around the 20% target and that GPE was responsible for this.

109. GPE’s non-financial support to Nepal is highly valued. MOEST noted that Nepal’s involvement in the global GPE governance structure is a crucial aspect of its partnership with GPE, including sitting on the Grants and Performance Committee, the Strategy and Impact Committee and as a Board-alternate. They were also very positive about GPE hosting 2019 GPE board meetings in Nepal, and Nepal’s attendance at the GPE Dakar Replenishment Conference. Informants from MOEST characterized these as opportunities for knowledge transfer and networking and expressed interest in further engagement of this sort. Members of the LEDPG similarly noted that being a GPE member has brokered Nepal’s involvement in wider global education convenings and networks and this has been an overall asset to sector strengthening.

110. Members of NCE Nepal highlighted GPE’s support through CSEF grants were transformative to their organization, offering that “NCE Nepal would either not exist, or would be very much weaker, if it were not for CSEF funding.” Considering the active role NCE Nepal plays in sector monitoring, advocacy, coalition building and capacity-building of smaller CBOs, this aspect of GPE financing should be considered catalytic. It is difficult, however, to link NCE advocacy to changes in domestic financing in Nepal so CSEF funding cannot be characterized as significant contribution to domestic financing.

111. Nepal received a GRA grant covering the period of 2014-2016. The purpose of this grant was to conduct a National Education Account (implemented jointly with IIEP and UIS). This included conducting initial mapping of all sources and channels of funding, followed by school visits to understand financial flows from their perspective. Three dissemination workshops were carried out by the project. The NEA report was officially launched in July 2016, after being validated by the Ministry of Education.

¹¹⁶ This comment was raised by a key informant but not validated; it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess trends in bilateral education aid to Nepal.

Table 16 GPE contributions to sector financing during the 2012-2018 review period

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSEF funding. GPE support to NCE Nepal through CSEF is crucial to the existence and functioning of this civil society network. NCE Nepal play an important role in education sector monitoring and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESPIG funding. GPE's current ESPIG (plus multiplier) is designed to fill just 10% of US\$279 million financing gap; as this gap is expected to grow due to increasing costs of federalization, GPE funds do not represent a significant contribution to sector financing. GPE ESPIG criteria. GPE's target of 20% budget share to education has not had an observable impact on domestic education spending, as Nepal is not meeting this target. Some stakeholders believe the 20% target is an important advocacy tool for ensuring overall increase in education spending, but this cannot be verified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE contribution to the SWAp. International financing to Nepal's education sector has been well aligned and coordinated by GoN for many years. GPE is part of this well-functioning and effective international financing landscape but cannot be said to have had any contribution to creating or sustaining it. GPE ESPIG criteria. Some concerns have been raised that the GoN must satisfy both GPE and World Bank requirements in order to receive GPE funds, which suggests a negative impact on quality and efficiency of international financing. Multiplier fund. There is no evidence to suggest that GPE has leveraged additional international financing for education
NOT APPLICABLE / TOO EARLY TO TELL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	

Unintended negative/unplanned positive effects of GPE support

112. An unintended impact of GPE financing and the role of GPE Grant Agent, the World Bank is that the GoN needs to satisfy both GPE and World Bank requirements before GPE funds are released by its GA, a situation which has reportedly caused delays and additional burdens on an already-stretched MOEST.

113. A further unintended consequence of GPE's funding model stems from the fact that several of the JFPs contribute to GPE as donor partners in addition to their support for Nepal's SSDP. One development partner noted that some of these JFPs have reduced their funding to Nepal because they contribute through the GPE. Now that GPE has reduced its funding, the informant raised the question of how GPE can account carefully for its role in overall education sector financing.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

114. As discussed above, GPE is only one of nine joint-financing partners and its funding to Nepal's education sector is a small percentage of the overall education budget. The current ESPIG and multiplier

fund are designed to fill just 10% of US\$279 million SSDP financing gap. As noted above, the GoN expects this gap to grow to US\$322 million by 2021 due to increased costs of federalization. It is the GoN that overwhelmingly finances the education system, and the level of domestic financing continues to be influenced by post-earthquake reconstruction, the costs of the federal transition, and the faster than expected growth in GDP.

115. Furthermore, implementation of the SSDP now resides at the local level, and local governments' education budgets vary in size and scope. Roughly 60% of local education budgets come from federal funds; the remainder is mobilized at the local level through taxation. Federal funding for education is earmarked for teacher salaries, scholarships, textbooks and some infrastructure, but all else must be paid for through the local budget. This makes it difficult to grasp the overall picture of education spending in Nepal and underscores that federalization may further exacerbate equity between districts.

Implications for GPE's ToC and country level operational model

Box 5 Financing - Testing assumptions and assessing strength of evidence

For sector financing, the three underlying assumptions in the country level ToC are: 1: GPE has sufficient leverage to influence the amount and quality of domestic education sector financing; 2: External (contextual) factors permit national and international stakeholders to increase/improve the quality of sector financing, 3: stakeholders have the opportunities (resources, time, conducive environment).

Assumption 1 holds modestly: GPE's target of 20% budget share to education has been an important advocacy tool. Although Nepal is not meeting this target (and is in fact decreasing the percentage allocation to education), some stakeholders believe the 20% target helps in ensuring overall increase in education spending. Additionally, GPE support through CSEF as well as its non-financial support are seen as having a positive impact on education system strengthening.

Assumption 2 and 3 hold: The long history of sector coordination and alignment produce an environment that encourages more and better financing for education. As discussed above, JFP funding is pooled and coordinated by the GoN, aligning to principles of aid effectiveness. Joint budget meetings involving MOEST, LEDPG and LEG happen annually, in addition to annual JRMs and monthly LEDPG meetings.

The evidence for assessing education financing in Nepal is moderately strong. Overall there is strong data on international and domestic financing in Nepal. The absence of data on local government education expenditure is a significant limitation given federalization.

116. The GPE may need to adapt its funding model and mechanisms at country level in light of federalization. The GPE provides financial support to Nepal's education sector at the federal level only. As discussed throughout this review, sector plan implementation now resides at the municipal level, and local governments also fund roughly 40% of education expenditure at this level – the remaining 60% comes from the federal government. The federal government plays a key role in supporting systemic development of sector planning objectives and monitoring progress on these objectives across districts, provinces and the country as a whole. The GPE may want to explore how it can best support both federal and local governments under the new federalized structure.

117. The GPE funding model relies on a GA to administer its grants, a situation which is reportedly causing an extra burden of time and reporting and leading to delayed disbursement. Furthermore, GPE transaction costs are seen as much higher than other donors despite the fact that grant sizes are comparatively small.

118. While some MOEST staff saw value in result-based funding that focused the government on outcomes, others indicated that the results-based funding modality can feel punitive. In particular, some MOEST staff members noted that development partners are very active in defining and shaping the disbursement-linked indicators but then withhold funding when these are not fully realized. Nepal is in a period of profound political transition as well as coping with the aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes. In this context, results-based financing may not provide Nepal with the steady support it needs. These concerns raised by some MOEST staff echo the growing concern in the education community that results-based financing poses serious challenges for developing country governments and may be at odds with a country-driven approach. A recent Global Education Monitoring Report policy paper raised concerns that RBF places the burden of risk on developing country partners and asked “if the aim is to achieve a stronger government focus on results...it would be better for donors to build the capacity of national statistical systems rather than hoping that results-based aid contracts will instill an overall result orientation”.¹¹⁷ GPE is already providing important support to Nepal’s EMIS system through its catalytic support for the Equity Index; this is perhaps an area that could use further financial backing in order to strengthen the GoN’s capacity to assess and address concerns over quality, equitable learning.

119. Finally, it is worth restating that GPE non-financial support to Nepal, including capacity development, technical support to MOEST and NCE Nepal, and its role facilitating Nepal’s participation in the wider partnership and global network, is highly valued by all stakeholders. GPE role as a hub of knowledge-exchange and technical support could be further developed in Nepal, and Nepal could stand as a case study of the value of non-financial support to GPE developing country partners.

3.5 GPE contributions to sector plan implementation¹¹⁸

120. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector plan implementation and on related GPE contributions during the review period is provided in Table 17. These observations are elaborated through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

Table 17 Progress made and GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS HOLD ¹¹⁹				
		1	2	3	4	5
Modest: Good progress has been made on SSDP implementation related to	Modest: GPE made important contributions towards equitable access was strong, with clear, achievable targets on OOSC and support for the					

¹¹⁷ Global Education Monitoring Report, 2018.

¹¹⁸ This section addresses evaluation questions 1.3 and 1.4, as well as to (cross cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

¹¹⁹ For sector plan implementation, the five underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) Relevant country-level actors have the technical capabilities, motivation (political will, incentives) and opportunity (funding, conducive environment) to implement all elements of the sector plan; (2) Available domestic and international funding is sufficient in quantity and adequate in quality to implement all elements of the sector plan; (3) Country-level development partners have the motivation and opportunity (e.g. directive from respective donor government) to align their own activities with the priorities of the sector plan and to work through the LEG as a consultative and

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS HOLD ¹¹⁹				
<p>improving equitable access to education from preschool to secondary levels.</p> <p>Little progress has been made on achieving targets related to teacher allocation and professional development.</p> <p>Federalization is impacting progress on implementation, as LGs may lack capacity to deliver on SSDP implementation plans.</p>	<p>development of the Equity Index. GPE contributed to efficiency through a target on single-subject certification at secondary school. The overall rating is modest, however, because these only represent small components of the SSDP; furthermore, GPE contribution to learning outcomes through the Early Grade Reading Program cannot yet be assessed.</p>	STRENGTH OF THE CONFIRMING/REFUTING EVIDENCE ¹²⁰				
		1	2	3	4	5

Characteristics of sector plan implementation

Finding 13: Nepal has made good progress on SSDP indicators related to equity and access, particularly in the expansion of pre-primary and early childhood education. Quality learning outcomes remain a challenge. Teacher deployment and professional development is at the heart of this challenge, and federalization adds a layer of complexity to this issue.

121. Overall, Nepal has made good progress on the implementation of most SSDP key priority areas related to equitable access, but progress on quality learning has been less satisfactory. The 2017-2018 Status Report as well as the 2018 Joint Sector Review provide the most up-to-date evidence on implementation progress of the SSDP. The former focused on assessing progress against the indicators in the SSDP Program Results Framework (PRF), while the latter assessed progress against the 10 disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) jointly developed by the JFPs and MOEST. Both highlight the good progress made under the SSDP in achieving the physical and financial targets for 2017-18, as well as steady progress on SSDP KPIs related to access and equity. Targets relating to education quality have proved more challenging, largely due to delays in implementing interventions aimed at resolving teacher redeployment and improving classroom teaching-learning processes.¹²¹

122. Important progress has been made in implementing SSDP activities and strategies for increasing equitable access to education, which are covered under Indicators 1.1-1.4 of the SSDP PRF. The expansion of early childhood education centers is particularly noteworthy: the 2017-18 Status Report showed that

advisory forum; (4) Country-level stakeholders take part in regular, evidence-based joint sector reviews and apply recommendations deriving from these reviews to enhance equitable and evidence-based sector plan implementation; and (5) The sector plan includes provisions for strengthening EMIS and LAS to produce timely, relevant and reliable data.

¹²¹ 2018 JSR Aide memoire; Status Report 2017-18.

36, 586 ECED/PPE centers had been created, exceeding the target of 32, 000 by 2021. Targets have also been met in regard to training for ECED facilitators.

123. The SSDP has also implemented targeted interventions to bring out-of-school children into formal and non-formal learning centers (covered under both indicator 1.4 in SSDP PRF; DLI 6). The Equity Index has been used to identify targeted districts, and activities have included needs-based planning at local level, provision of scholarships, midday meal and several rounds of enrollment campaigns.¹²² However, given federalization, there is a need to adapt the Equity Strategy into local government annual work plans and implementation plans to ensure progress is not stalled or reversed.

124. There has been some progress on the implementation of SSDP activities related to quality learning outcomes. Early Grade Reading Assessments (CB-EGRA) have been carried out in 3,046 community schools in 2017-18 – exceeding the DLI 1 target of 3,000 and reaching 72,538 students in 12 districts in grade 2 and 3.¹²³ However, due to the lack of data of previous years, this evaluation was not able to verify whether this has translated into improved reading ability over time. Reforms to assessment and examination systems (DLI 4) have been largely achieved, as MOEST has developed and approved the single subject certification policy for grades 11 and 12, and NASA achievement tests have been conducted for the third time.

125. Implementation of SSDP activities relating to teacher management have not yet been achieved, although guidelines for Time-Spent-Teaching (TST) have been developed and finalized. MOEST is reviewing the teacher deployment and rationalization plan, but at the time of this evaluation, no evidence was available on the implementation status of any SSDP indicators related to teacher management and deployment. It is worth noting that teacher deployment is a source of tension between federal and municipal governments; this will be discussed in further detail in the following sections of this evaluation.

126. A new National Curriculum Framework has been approved by the Curriculum and Evaluation Council; changes to textbooks and classroom curriculum are yet to be finalized, but progress is on track for the development and disbursement of activity-based kits for grade 6-8 Math and Science.¹²⁴

127. Table 18 below outlines the major achievements and progress to date of the SSDP implementation plans. This data is taken from the most recent Status Report, which covered the first two years of the SSDP (2016-17, 2017-18) and was published in January 2019.

Table 18 Implemented Activities by SSDP priority area, 2016-2018.

SSDP PRIORITY AREA	IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS
BASIC EDUCATION (Grades 1-8)	
Equity and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and disseminated ECED/PPE orientation materials and packages for local bodies in 30,448 ECED centers. • Provision of midday meals to 618,222 targeted children via cash and in-kind support.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ 2018 JSR Aide Memoire.

¹²⁴ Status Report 2017-18.

SSDP PRIORITY AREA	IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Enrollment Campaign carried out in 77 districts. • Equity index based additional support for out-of-school children targeted intervention – 258,000 additional children have enrolled. • 350 completed grants aimed at support for out-of-school children (OOSC). • 85 proposal-based grants to Community Learning Center for bringing out-of-school children into mainstream classrooms. • 847 grants completed aimed at providing support for Religious School (grade 1-5 running schools). • Mobile school grants given to children in 16 districts. • Marginalized group basic education scholarship (non-residential grades (1-8) provided to 122,670 children. • Basic education grants provided to 30,495 children with disabilities. • Open school grants for level 1 and 2 (grade 6-8) provided to 69 schools. • Day meal grant to students in malnutrition area schools (grades 0-5) – provided to 227,125 children. • Day meal grant support for extremely marginalized and endangered caste students (grades 0-5) given to 67,916 children. • Day meal grant support for Karnali zone areas school students (grades 0-5) provided to 87,181 children.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher training for ECED/PPC facilitator delivered to 6,663 professionals. • 14 days training for ECED/PPC facilitator provided to 600 professionals. • Material support grants for ECED/PPE based on per-child fund provided to 638,863 people. • School performance grants - Classroom Based Early Grade Reading Assessment provided to 3,046 schools.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMIS strengthening and extra-curricular activities, workshop in 1,053 schools. • Operational Cost of Resource Center implemented in 1,053 schools. • Performance-based incentives implemented in 1,893 schools.
SECONDARY EDUCATION	
Equity and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,904 Residential scholarships for students from disadvantaged communities • 451 Scholarships for Marty’s family children (non- residential). • 87,483 secondary education scholarships (non-residential grade (9-10) • 2,234 Marginalized group secondary education scholarships (nonresidential grade 9-12) • 1,500 Pro-poor targeted girls’ scholarships for grade 11 and 12 science students.

SSDP PRIORITY AREA	IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31,111 Pro-poor targeted scholarships (2,075 BS grade 9) for students in selected districts.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of grade 6-8 Math learning kit materials. • Development of grade 6-8 Science learning kit materials. • Procurement of consultancy service for master plan and drawing design estimate preparation. • 168 Grants for quality enhanced and improving minimum facilities to Model school. • 322 Learning achievement improvement grants for underachieving schools. • 311 Incentive grants for high learning achievement performer school. • 1,997 Library equipment and management grants. • 637 Learning improvement grants to support under-achiever girls in grade 10.

Source: Status report 2017-18

Finding 14: Federalization has brought fundamental changes to education sector plan implementation since the start of the review period. Authority for implementation has moved from the federal government to 753 autonomous municipal governments; alignment to the SSDP as well as capacity and skill to implement education systems is uneven at local levels.

128. Sector plan implementation has undergone massive change during the evaluation period, as federalization has shifted authority for implementation from the federal government to 753 autonomous municipal governments. At the federal level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) serves as the executing agency for SSDP. Instead of the Department of Education, a newly established Center for Education Human Resource Development (CEHRD) is tasked with preparing annual work plans and budgets (AWPBs) and the annual strategic implementation plans (ASIPs). The role for Provincial Governments is not yet clear; according to interview informants, provincial government responsibility in education is mainly at the tertiary level, and the Federal Education Act may stipulate a role for PGs in teacher training. As discussed previously, federalization is a work in progress and clear roles and responsibilities for sector implementation across the three tiers of government are yet to be finalized.

129. The first year of devolved authority over education sector plan implementation occurred in 2017/18. The first GoN Status Report, analyzing implementation of the SSDP during this first year of federalization, was produced in January 2019. Echoing the 2018 JRM, this report found good financial and physical progress against SSDP annual targets, citing achievements in access and textbook allocation. The report did note challenges with human resource capacity and municipal levels and a lack of clear reporting and monitoring mechanisms, as discussed above and in the following chapter.

130. In addition to the GoN's own status report, an independent Midterm Review of the SSDP was commissioned in 2018 and finalized in June 2019. The MTR found that the timeframe for engaging in reforms and implementing them at different levels of the education system was not fully adequate, and this raises concerns about adverse effects on SSDP implementation and more broadly on learning outcomes. In particular, the MTR noted limitations in terms of human and financial resources, including

at school level, and lack of clear reporting and accountability guidelines across the three tiers of government.¹²⁵ District Education Offices have been dissolved, but their function as a link between federal and local government, as well as their responsibilities for monitoring, reporting, and resource support, have not been fully allocated elsewhere. One interviewee noted that some 30% of municipal governments still do not have anyone appointed to lead on education planning and policy.

131. The federal government is providing financial incentive and technical support to facilitate local governments to develop education sector plans that align with the SSDP. A Program Implementation Manual is being developed for this purpose, which will link to an online resource library of toolkits to provide planning and implementation support to local governments. The federal government also provides conditional education grants to local governments based on the development of work plans and budgets aligned to SSDP activities and indicators. However, as municipal governments are autonomous according to the 2015 Constitution, financial incentives for alignment may prove politically and practically difficult.

132. Furthermore, in interviews with municipal mayors, education officers and SMCs, understanding of and alignment to the SSDP was very uneven. At least one expressed that the MOEST requirements were seen as being only partially related to the actual business of implementing an education system. Almost all local government and school representatives noted that the federal government retains control over teacher deployment and that this limits their constitutional rights as education authorities – an issue which appears to cause significant tension. It is worth noting again that roughly 40% of education expenditure at municipal level comes from their own resources; this advances the autonomy of local government but possibly at the expense of aligned education planning and implementation.

GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

Finding 15: GPE has had a significant effect on education equity-related policies and measures in Nepal, particularly through its catalytic support for the development of the Equity Index. Impact on learning outcomes has been negligible: although ESPIG targets on early grade reading assessments have been met, there is not yet evidence on whether these have translated into improved learning outcomes (as discussed in Chapter 5).

133. GPE support to sector plan implementation in Nepal has consisted of financial support through three ESPIGs (2010-2014, 2015-2018, 2019-2021) aligned to the SSRP and the SSDP. The World Bank has functioned as Grant Agent for all three ESPIGs, and all have contributed to the Joint Financing Arrangement which supports the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) to fund the SSRP/SSDP.¹²⁶ In addition to this, support to implementation is provided through CA/Secretariat inputs to the LEG/LEDPG as well as CA/Secretariat support to JRM processes. Table 19 outlines the strength of various GPE contributions to sector plan implementation.

¹²⁵ MTR

¹²⁶ While the ESPIGs have their own PADs and ISRs/ICRs – they are part of the generalized support program covered by the SWAp, meaning they have no individual names/designations. In this text they will be referred to by the time span that they covered (which defined the selection of targets).

Table 19 GPE contributions to sector plan implementation during the review period (2015 – 2019)

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG variable part component 1 (equity): GPE support to develop an equity index (considering socio-economic-geographical status of children and their access to basic education) was considered catalytic in that it allowed identification and targeted support for 10 most disadvantaged districts, to reintegrate OOSC into basic education, and to provide non-formal education. • ESPIG variable part component 2 (efficiency): GPE supported the transition from the pass-fail assessment system to single subject certification for the grade 10 school leaving certificate (SLC) and higher secondary school exams. • ESPIG variable part component 3 (learning outcomes): Target surpassed for number of EGRAs conducted (though impact on reading proficiency yet to be assessed). • Support through CA/Secretariat for LEG and LEDPG: As discussed under Sector Dialogue, GPE contributes to inclusivity of JSR processes, which monitor and strategize on SSDP implementation
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
n/a
NOT APPLICABLE / TOO EARLY TO TELL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG funding for Improvements to management and governance, including grant management, fiduciary management and institutional capacity under devolved system are yet to be developed.

134. The previous ESPIG (2015–2018) straddled one year of the SSRP and two years of the SSDP. It encompassed two sets of targets, one covering July 2015-2017, and the second covering July 2017-2018, the first year of devolved implementation. Its aim was to support implementation of Nepal’s ESPs during the transition between plan periods and in the early stages of federalization. The grant had a ‘fixed’ portion of 70% of the total grant; the remaining 30% was a variable tranche subject to achievement of DLIs (1–3). Due to the fact that the fixed part was delivered through the longstanding pool funding mechanism, it is difficult to assess precisely its effect in the progress of the education sector. However, the effect can be tracked more easily in the case of the variable part.

135. ESPIG 2015-2018’s variable part focused on sector priority areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes. The table below shows the main components and targets of the variable part of this ESPIG, which were largely achieved the targets for efficiency and learning outcomes were achieved and the funds for these indicators have been fully disbursed. The disbursement for the equity indicator was proportional to the 93 percent achievement of the target.

Table 20 ESPIG 2015-2018 implementation and contribution to overall ESP implementation: Variable Part¹²⁷

ESPIG COMPONENT	ESPIG ACHIEVEMENTS	ESP PRIORITY AREA
ESPIG PROGRAM COMPONENT ONE: EQUITY		

¹²⁷ Adapted from GPE Quality Assurance Review Phase 3, December 2018.

ESPIG COMPONENT	ESPIG ACHIEVEMENTS	ESP PRIORITY AREA
Strategy: Develop an equity index (considering socio-economic-geographical status of children and their access to basic education) and provide targeted support to 10 most disadvantaged districts, to reintegrate OOSC into basic education, and to provide non-formal education.		
Period 1 (July 2015-July 2017) targets: Development of an equity index. Use index to design and implement interventions to reduce OOSC in 5 most disadvantaged districts. (US\$700,000).	Equity index has been developed. Targeted interventions implemented in the 5 selected districts using the index. (US\$700,000 disbursed).	Equity
Reduce OOSC by 20 % in targeted districts. (US\$2,200,000).	Partially achieved. 18.2 % reduction in the aggregate number of OOSC in these 5 districts. (US\$2,002,000 disbursed on a pro-rata basis).	Equity
Period 2 (July 2017- July 2018) targets: Use index to design and implement interventions to reduce OOSC in 10 most disadvantaged districts (US\$700,000); Reduce OOSC by 20 % in targeted districts (US\$2,200,000)	TBD. To date, household census was conducted to collect detailed information on OOSC in all five additional districts ¹²⁸	Equity
ESPIG PROGRAM COMPONENT TWO: EFFICIENCY		
Strategy: Transition from the pass-fail assessment system to single subject certification for the grade 10 School Leaving Certificate (SLC) and higher secondary school exams.		
Period 1 (July 2015-July 2017) target: Implementation of single subject certification in the SLC issued to 2016 and 2017 SLC exam candidates. (US\$3,000,000)	Achieved. SLC certificates issued to 2016 and 2017 SLC exam candidates as per single-subject certification policy. (US\$3,000,000 disbursed).	Efficiency
Period 2 (July 2017- July 2018) target: Single subject certification policy approved for higher secondary school examinations (US\$ 3,000,000)	Achieved. Single subject certification policy approved for grades 11 and 12. (expected disbursement of US\$ 3,000,000)	Efficiency
ESPIG PROGRAM COMPONENT THREE: LEARNING OUTCOMES		
Strategy: Mobilize parents in the early grade reading assessments (EGRA) as observers, and improve pupils' reading skills through sharing and discussion of results between parents and teachers.		
Period 1 (July 2015-July 2017) target: Community schools where standardized classroom-based early grade reading assessments for Grade 2 & Grade 3 are conducted by teachers, observed by parent representatives, and results are shared/discussed with parents: 2,600 community schools (US\$3,000,000).	Achieved. Assessment conducted in 2,605 community schools. (US\$3,000,000 disbursed).	Learning Outcomes

¹²⁸ According to the latest JRM Aide-Memoire from November 2018, an achievement report on the equity target in the variable part will be verified in 2019. This data was not yet available at the time of evaluation.

ESPIG COMPONENT	ESPIG ACHIEVEMENTS	ESP PRIORITY AREA
<p>Period 2 (July 2017- July 2018) target: Community schools where standardized classroom-based early grade reading assessments for Grade 2 & Grade 3 are conducted by teachers, observed by parent representatives, and results are shared/discussed with parents: 3,000 community schools (US\$3,000,000).</p>	<p>Achieved. Assessment conducted in 3,046 community schools and shared with parents. (expected disbursement of US\$3,000,000).</p>	<p>Learning Outcomes</p>

136. The current ESPIG was approved in 2017 to cover the period 2018-2020. The World Bank is again the Grant Agent for this ESPIG. It consists of a regular country allocation of US\$9.2 million as well as a Multiplier grant of US\$15 million. The ESPIG will comprise two parts: a Fixed Part, with intermediate indicators amounting to 60 percent of the total grant and a Variable Part, with output/outcome-level indicators related to equity, quality, and efficiency amounting to 40 percent of the total grant.

137. A significant change with the current ESPIG is that the LEG made the decision to have the grant fully results-based, including the Fixed Part, and a larger percentage of the Variable Part at 40 percent of the grant amount. This despite concerns raised by some MOEST staff members that RBF was challenging in the current political and post-earthquake context. The Fixed Part comprises what the World Bank refers to as Intermediate disbursement-linked results (DLRs) and the Variable Part comprises output/outcome-linked DLRs or “stretch indicators”¹²⁹ related to equity, quality, and efficiency. However, in substance, only the efficiency indicators/targets to support the federal transition are new, while the equity and learning indicators/targets are existing SSDP program DLIs, and extensions of the 2015 ESPIG VP indicators/targets.

138. The current ESPIG fixed part (60%, or US\$14.2 million) is designed to support LGs to prioritize SSDP activities and maintain focus on learning. The fixed part encompasses DLR 1.7: SSDP activities have been integrated in annual work plan and budget (AWPB) by at least 75 LGs (US\$7,100,000); and DLR 1.9: SSDP activities have been integrated in AWPB by at least 140 LGs (US\$7,100,000). These DLRs are designed to align LGs’ incentives with SSDP goals and to “strengthen ownership and credibility of the SSDP among LGs as well as to incentivize LGs to pursue quality and equity improvements through activities embedded in SSDP.”¹³⁰ These activities include implementing targeted scholarship schemes for poor and marginalized children at the secondary level, expanding school-based early childhood education, tracking the amount of time teachers spend teaching (TST), conducting social audits, and administering conditional grants to community schools. By incentivizing LGs to incorporate these activities into their annual implementation plans, the current ESPIG aims to align local education programs with SSDP goals.

139. The decision to include indicator 1.7 (tracking percentage of LGs who have incorporated SSDP into their annual work plans) came from MOEST, who decided to incentivize local governments through this results-base indicator. This is an indication of the GoN’s commitment to leverage GPE funds to strength local-level implementation. It is worth noting however, that even if DLR 1.7 targets are met, only

¹²⁹ Stretch indicator is defined as an action, strategy or policy in the three areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes that is likely to lead to substantial progress in the medium term and hence to be transformational (Nepal PAD 2019).

¹³⁰ World Bank PAD, 2019.

roughly one-fifth of the 753 municipal governments would be aligning their education work-plans and budgets to the SSDP. As the SSDP is ending in 2021, this underscore concerns about its implementation at local level.

140. The current ESPIG’s variable tranche (VT) (US\$9.8 million) is designed to “ensure provision of open data on school grants by local governments to facilitate information for accountability...it is expected to lay the foundation for boosting accountability through information at the local level and support meaningful engagement by schools and the community”¹³¹ The VT is also designed to continue addressing ongoing concerns on the part of MOEST and development partners on the number of OOSC, particularly in light of fears that the federal transition will impact education access for the most vulnerable children and youth.¹³² DLIs build off those of the previous ESPIG in tracking the reduction in OOSC in 15 targeted districts. Additionally, the current ESPIG seeks to support the GoN’s ongoing efforts to improve learning outcomes through targets related to the National Early Grade Reading Program. The DLIs that encompass the current ESPIG are summarized in the table below.

Table 21 ESPIG 2018-2020 Program Components/DLIs: Summary (drawn from PAD 2019 and QAR 3 2018)

Components/DLIs from SSDP five-year Program	Indicators to be supported by the GPE ESPIG 2018-2020		
	Year 3 (July 2018–July 2019)	Year 4 (July 2019–July 2020)	Year 5 (July 2020–Closing Date)
EFFICIENCY Strengthened governance, fiduciary management, data systems, and institutional capacity for results-based program implementation ¹³³	Fixed Part		
	SSDP activities have been integrated in annual work plan and budget (AWPB) by at least 75 LGs	SSDP activities have been integrated in AWPB by at least 140 LGs	N/A
	Variable Part		
	Data on conditional grants released to individual schools, consistent with the Grant Management Guideline, is made public on user-friendly websites (or accessible spaces) by at least 200 LGs	Data on conditional grants released to individual schools, consistent with the Grant Management Guideline, is made public on user-friendly websites (or accessible spaces) by at least 300 LGs	Data on conditional grants released to individual schools, consistent with the Grant Management Guideline, is made public on user-friendly websites (or accessible spaces) by at least 400 LGs
EQUITY	Variable Part		

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ DLI 1 in World Bank Parent program/AF.

Components/DLIs from SSDP five-year Program	Indicators to be supported by the GPE ESPIG 2018-2020		
	Year 3 (July 2018–July 2019)	Year 4 (July 2019–July 2020)	Year 5 (July 2020–Closing Date)
Improved access to basic and retention in secondary schools¹³⁴	30% reduction in OOSC in 15 targeted districts (based on equity index)	N/A	OOSC of basic education age reduced to 5% in the relevant age group nationwide
<u>LEARNING</u> Proficiencies and habits strengthened in early grades¹³⁵	Variable Part		
	National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP) minimum package implemented in at least 80% of community schools by LGs in at least 20 districts	NEGRP minimum package implemented in at least 80% of community schools by LGs in at least 29 districts	NEGRP minimum package implemented in at least 80% of community schools by LGs in at least 38 districts

141. Nepal is the first GPE developing country partner to receive a second round of ESPIG funding under the new financing model of fixed and variable tranche funding. This review sought to determine if there were lessons learned from the previous ESPIG that could be applied more broadly across the partnership. However, objective evidence on the impact and lessons learned from the new financing model proved hard to find. Assessments of the 2015-2018 ESPIG noted that targets were largely achieved, and the World Bank rated the program as moderately satisfactory or higher.¹³⁶ This suggests that the new financing model was effective in achieving results and encouraging a results-focus within the MOEST. Although it is not possible to assess whether similar results would have been achieved in the absence of any results-based funding modality, the fact that the LEG opted for the current ESPIG to be fully results-based certainly indicates that LEG members believe in the value of this model, despite concerns raised by some in MOEST.

142. For MOEST, however, the value of the RBF model is more ambiguous. When MOEST staff were asked to comment on the lessons learned from the previous ESPIG and the value of the variable tranche, the reactions were somewhat mixed. There was recognition that results-based financing does encourage policymakers to focus on indicators and results. However, this focus did not just come from GPE's ESPIG and new financing model; joint-financing partners developed a set of 10 DLIs and have long encouraged a results-orientation in Nepal's education sector. Furthermore, some MOEST staff expressed that results-based financing can be very punitive, particularly when financing partners are so active in developing indicators but then will not pay if results are not achieved. This can damage the sense of partnership and country-ownership so central to the SWAp in Nepal. These differing perspectives on RBF indicate that the country partners do not speak in a unified voice, and that even within government different opinions can be heard. The LEG and the LEDPG, the latter of which is far more active in the Nepal SWAp, are in favor of RBF and MOEST staff are also able to point to the positive impact a results-focus. But this does not negate the sense among many in MOEST that RBF is a donor-driven approach that can at times feel punitive.

¹³⁴ DLI 2 in World Bank Parent program/AF.

¹³⁵ DLI 7 in World Bank Parent program/AF.

¹³⁶ PAD, 2019.

Unintended negative/unplanned positive effects of GPE support

143. This review did not find any unintended or unplanned effects of GPE support.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

144. As noted throughout this report, the most significant factor impacting SSDP implementation is the federal transition. Although GPE's latest ESPIG is designed to support local governments in SSDP implementation, this support is only a small part of a very complex picture. Federalization has the potential to strengthen Nepal's education system by bringing policy, planning and implementation closer to school level and by opening opportunities for schools and communities to engage directly with decision-makers in municipal governments. However, human resource and capacity gaps, inequality between regions, and tensions over teacher allocation and monitoring are all major obstacles to a smooth transition. The GPE is well aware of both the potential and the challenges of federalization. However, their role can only be one of support to the GoN through this transition period.

Implications for GPE ToC and country level operational model

Box 7 Implementation - Testing assumptions and assessing strength of evidence

For sector plan implementation, the five underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) Relevant country-level actors have the technical capabilities, motivation (political will, incentives) and opportunity (funding, conducive environment) to implement all elements of the sector plan; (2) Available domestic and international funding is sufficient in quantity and adequate in quality to implement all elements of the sector plan; (3) Country-level development partners have the motivation and opportunity (e.g. directive from respective donor government) to align their own activities with the priorities of the sector plan and to work through the LEG as a consultative and advisory forum; (4) Country-level stakeholders take part in regular, evidence-based joint sector reviews and apply recommendations deriving from these reviews to enhance equitable and evidence-based sector plan implementation; and (5) The sector plan includes provisions for strengthening EMIS and LAS to produce timely, relevant and reliable data.

Assumption 1 does not hold: Federalization has devolved authority for education implementation to local governments; human resource capacity and skills are uneven across the 753 municipalities. Municipal governments may be highly motivated to implement quality education systems, but do not necessarily have the capabilities, the human resources nor the funding required to do so. Furthermore, authority over teacher deployment remains held at the federal level. This is causing significant political tension between levels of government, and several local-level informants claimed that the federal government did not have the political will to let go of control over this and aspects of education implementation.

Assumption 2 does not hold: As discussed under 'Sector Financing' the SSDP has a funding gap of US\$322 million until 2021. The federal government is increasing annual spending on education but as a share of the total budget this figure is falling. Local governments finance roughly 40% of education budgets through their own resource mobilization, which means that poorer areas are likely to find it difficult to adequately fund their education sectors. As focus shifts from access to quality, governments at all levels will need to put additional resources into teacher professional development and classroom learning environments.

Assumptions 3 and 4 hold: As discussed under 'Sector Dialogue and Monitoring', development partners and LEG members work together through a long-established SWAp, which aligns to GoN priorities. Stakeholders take part in regular meetings to review sector plan implementation progress, including annual Joint Review Meetings and Budget Review Meetings.

Assumption 5 holds: the SSDP has a strategic focus on improving education data and management. The new web-based EMIS is functioning well with 90% of schools reporting data. Concern has been raised over the quality and coverage of data input; this review assessed EMIS data as reported in Flash reports and did not find any cause for quality concerns.

The evidence for assessing education sector implementation in Nepal is strong. There is ample and robust documentation on SSDP implementation, including through annual work plans and budgets and biannual JSRs.

145. As discussed throughout this report, the GPE country level operation model needs to adjust in light of federalization. The ToC rests on an assumption of political will and conducive environment, but in Nepal this now comprises of 753 different environments with varying degrees of political will and skill to manage education sector planning, implementation and monitoring. GPE funding and technical inputs as operationalized by the GA/CA/LEDPG only meaningfully exist at the federal level, but implementation no longer resides at this level. The current ESPIG attempts to work around this by incentivizing LGs to integrate SSDP activities and targets into the annual work plans and budgets. But municipal governments are constitutionally autonomous and cannot be forced to align with the SSDP; at best, this can only be a stopgap measure during transition. Financial incentives to align with federal government priorities may be constitutionally challenged in the coming years.

146. As GPE considers its post-2020 strategy and ToC, it will need to respond to diversity within and across its member countries. Devolution is an increasingly common political arrangement in other country contexts, and this will challenge GPE's operating model at country level. GPE partnership model in Nepal relies on a Grant Agent, Coordinating Agency and LEDPG/LEG that function at the central level and coordinate through the MOEST. It is difficult to see how this model will engage meaningfully with a highly decentralized education system spread across 753 municipalities. As Nepal has thus far been a strong example of centrally coordinated sector planning and monitoring, it will provide an interesting case study for the extent to which GPE's partnership model can be flexible to new political arrangements.

4 Progress towards a stronger education system¹³⁷

4.1 Introduction

147. This section summarizes evaluation findings related to **Key Evaluation Question II** from the evaluation matrix: “Has the development, implementation and monitoring of realistic evidence-based sector plans contributed to positive changes at the level of the overall *education system*?”

148. Progress towards a stronger education system is measured by drawing on evidence of achievements as outlined in the SSDP annual work plans and Status Reports as well as EMIS and NASA data. The analysis focuses on changes that go beyond specific activities or outputs, and, instead, constitute changes in the existence and functioning of relevant institutions (e.g., schools, ministry), as well as changes in relevant rules, norms and frameworks (e.g., standards, curricula, teaching and learning materials) that influence how actors in the education sector interact with each other.¹³⁸

4.2 Progress towards a stronger education system

149. This chapter will examine system-level improvement in the key areas of access, quality and relevance, equity and gender equality and management. It will attempt to link observed changes to SSDP planning, monitoring and implementation. **Error! Reference source not found.** provides an overview of system-level improvements observed in selected key aspects, whether the respective issue had been addressed in the SSDP, and whether SSDP implementation likely contributed to the observed changes.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ This section triangulates findings against RF indicators 11, 12, 13, 15.

¹³⁸ Please see definition of ‘education systems’ in the terminology table of this report. The GPE 2020 corporate results framework indicators defines six indicators for measuring system-level change: (a) increased public expenditure on education (RF10, covered in section 3.3 on education financing); (b) equitable allocation of teachers (RF11, covered here under Access and Equity); (c) improved ratios of pupils to trained teachers at the primary level (RF12, covered below under Quality and Relevance); (d) reduced student dropout and repetition rates (RF13, covered in section 5); (e) the proportion of key education indicators the country reports to UIS (RF14, covered here under Sector Management), and (f) the existence of a learning assessment system for basic education that meets quality standards (RF15, covered below under Quality and Relevance).

¹³⁹ The fact that a certain issue had been addressed in the ESP does not guarantee that related changes occurred because of ESP implementation.

Table 22 Assessment of the contribution of ESP implementation to system level change

PROGRESS/IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING REVIEW PERIOD	HAD ISSUE BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE SSDP?	LIKELIHOOD OF SSDP IMPLEMENTATION HAVING CONTRIBUTED TO NOTED IMPROVEMENTS	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS HOLD ¹⁴⁰			
Access: Strong. Nepal has introduced several successful programs and policies to improve equitable education access, including for early childhood education and development. Although the number of schools at all education levels over the last years has increased, there is still disproportion between the education levels and disparities among regions.	Yes	High: The SSDP, and the SSRP which preceded it, introduced programs such as targeted scholarships, school meals and textbook provision. These are assessed as having contributed positively to increased access.				
Quality and Relevance: Modest. Nepal has introduced some system-level changes to address low learning levels, including a National Early Grade Reading Program, National Teacher Competency Framework and a Model Schools Program. Some of the measures have been translated into higher proportion of teachers trained and better students-trained teachers ratios.	Yes	High: Under the SSDP, programs focused on quality learning and teaching have been implemented such as NEGRP and Model Schools.				
Equity: Modest. Nepal has developed a consolidated Equity Index and introduced an Inclusive Education Section to the CEHRD in order to address the needs of the most marginalized learners.	Yes	High: Targeted scholarships, school meals and textbook provision is assessed as having contributed positively to increased equity in access to education.	STRENGTH OF THE CONFIRMING/REFUTING EVIDENCE			
Management: Modest. The web-based EMIS is functioning and collecting data from 90% of schools. Anecdotal concerns over quality were raised but not verified. Teacher management continues to be a major challenge and has serious knock-on effects for quality.	Yes	High: Web-based EMIS and Equity Index have been flagship accomplishments of the SSDP.	1	2	3	4

¹⁴⁰ The four underlying assumptions for this contribution claim were 1) sector plan implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to sector management; (2) there is sufficient national capacity (technical capabilities, political will, resources) to analyze, report on and use available data and maintain EMIS and LAS; (3) ESP implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to learning and (4) it leads to improvements in relation to equity.

Progress towards a stronger education system during the review period

150. There are a number of ways in which Nepal reports progress towards the targets that were initially set up in the SSDP 2016-2021. These include the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP) and the Annual Work Plan and Budget, which are normally prepared annually for the Budget Review Meeting (BRM), as well as the Flash report and the SSDP status report which are also normally prepared annually. However, these documents provide little data on system level changes as they report mostly at impact level, as the indicators and targets in the plan were set up at that level. In addition, the data showed at system level is not consistently presented over time, which makes the analysis of the latest trends difficult.

151. Due to the fact that there is just available data for the first year of implementation of the SSDP (2017-2018), some of the analysis below is enriched with data of the last years of the previous education sector plan (SSRP).

Access and equity

Finding 16: Nepal has introduced a number of successful programs and policies to improve equitable education access, including for early childhood education and development. Scholarship provision, textbook grants, meal provisions and an expansion in the number of schools are key systems-level changes introduced under the SSDP.

152. Nepal has made good system-level progress in education access through the review period. SSDP includes a range of targeted activities to improve access to education for OOSC. The largest such program is the **provision of scholarships** focused on low-income students as well as scholarships for girls and students from marginalized communities. In 2017-18, nearly 2 million scholarships for girls, over 1 million scholarships for Dalit students, and approximately 7,000 scholarships for disabled students were disbursed.¹⁴¹ In addition to these scholarships, the SSDP has allocated textbook grants for schools in deprived districts, meeting the needs of 5,638,270 students.¹⁴² However, the lack of reporting of indicators at system level hinders the analysis of the extent to which the programs have reinforced the education system in Nepal.

153. **The 2017-2018 Flash consolidated report shows that the number of schools in Nepal has gradually increased during the last years of the SSRP and the first year of the SSDP** (see Table 23 below). The secondary education schools experienced the highest growth rates, particularly at the lower secondary level, which saw an 8.16% growth in the number of schools I from 2013 to 2017. On the other hand, the lower basic level schools increased modestly (1.11 percent). The data is not reported disaggregated, so it is not possible to analyze the different trends by type of school or location.

Table 23 Number of schools by level of education, 2013-17

Education level		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Growth rate
BASIC	ECED/PPE	35,121	35,121	35,991	36,093	36,568	4.12

¹⁴¹ 2019 Status report p 62.

¹⁴² 2019 Status report.

	Lower basic (grade 1-5)	34,743	34,335	34,362	34,736	35,130	1.11
	Upper basic (grade 6-8)	14,867	14,952	15,091	15,170	15,590	4.86
	Total basic	49,610	49,287	49,453	49,906	50,720	2.24
SECONDARY	Lower Secondary level (grade 9-10)	8,726	8,825	8,968	9,084	9,438	8.16
	Higher Secondary (Grade 11-12)	3,596	3,596	3,656	3,673	3,780	5.12
	Total secondary	12,322	12,421	12,624	12,757	13,218	7.27
TOTAL (in units)			35,223	34,806	34,837	35,222	35,601

Source: Consolidated report, 2017-2018

154. **Table 24 shows that the ratios of lower-basic, basic to secondary and secondary to higher secondary levels of schools from 2013 to 2017 have remained unvaried at high levels.** The consolidated report 2017-18 recognizes that there has been little progress in this regard during the last years of the SSRP and therefore there is still substantial investment needed to upgrade all schools to the different levels. This need has been partially picked up by the SSDP, which one of the major interventions in the current plan is *to upgrade secondary schools to provide up to grade 12, based on mapping and needs*. It is too early to assess the progress of this intervention.

Table 24 Trend of ratios on basic to secondary education level, 2013-17

Year	Lower-basic to Basic	Basic to Secondary	Secondary to Higher secondary
2013	2.3	1.7	2.4
2014	2.3	1.7	2.5
2015	2.3	1.7	2.5
2016	2.3	1.7	2.5
2017	2.3	1.7	2.5

Source: Consolidated report 2017-2018

155. **There were large differences in the ratio students-school in the year 2017-18 in Nepal** (see Table 25). Province 2 has very high student-school ratios at all levels, whereas Gandaki province has significantly lower rates at all levels of education. This underscores issues of educational disparities between regions in Nepal. As provinces have been recently created, there is currently not enough data on their characteristics and profiles to fully understand the implications for this.

Table 25 Student-school ratio by province, 2017-18

	ECD	BASIC		SECONDARY	
	ECD	Grade 1-5	Grade 6-8	Grade 9-10	Grade 11-12
Province 1	27	88	108	100	163
Province 2	26	210	190	165	189
Province 3	36	98	102	80	114
Gandaki	40	73	95	82	136
Province 5	32	127	135	112	180
Karnali	20	107	130	126	135
Province 7	24	116	122	126	206
Total	26	113	119	103	154

Source: Flash report 2017-2018

156. **Nepal is progressing in improving children’s readiness to school during the first years of the SSDP.** One of the key performance indicators set in the SSDP is the percentage of grade 1 new entrants with ECED/PPE experience, setting up a target of 68.5 percent by 2018/19 compared to a baseline of 64.7 percent at the starting year of the SSDP (2016/17). The Flash report 2017-2018 report showed that in that year Nepal was positively progressing towards this target as 66.3 percent of new entrants in grade 1 had experience with ECED/PPE. The SSDP has prioritized **expanding early childhood development and education**, including through opening new ECED centers, and through prioritizing better qualified teachers in Early Childhood Education and Development/Pre-primary Education (ECED/PPE). This is part of the GoN commitment to improve school readiness and improved learning outcomes in the early grades. In 2017-18, there was a total of 36,568 ECED/PPE centers (up slightly from 36,093 in the previous year). Nepal achieved NER of 84.1% in ECED/PPE – up from the 2015 baseline of 81% and on track to meet SSDP end line targets.¹⁴³

157. Under the SSDP, access is defined in terms of *equitable* access, and thus some further details on SSDP programs related to equitable access are discussed below.

¹⁴³ ASIP/AWPB 2018-2019.

Finding 17: Nepal has developed a consolidated Equity Index and Equity Strategy in order to improve evidence-based policies for equitable education. The CEHRD has an Inclusive Education Section designed to address the needs of the most marginalized learners.

158. Nepal has made very good gains in equitable access, mainly through the policies to get OOSC into the education system described above. Scholarship **provision** for girls, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups have been playing a major role in improving equitable access to education.

159. The SSDP has also introduced affirmative teacher hiring policies to increase the proportion of female teachers and teachers from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of female teachers has been steadily increasing (and exceeding annual targets) throughout the SSDP period, which is believed to have a positive effect on girls' access, retention and outcomes.¹⁴⁴ In 2018-2019, the percentage of female teachers reached 19.2% - up from 18.3% the previous year and exceeding SSDP PRF targets. The proportions of Dalit teachers at secondary level is 5.4% (up from 4.6% in the previous year) and the proportions of Janajati teachers at secondary level is 19.5% (up from 18.8% in the previous year) respectively.¹⁴⁵ However, it is also worth noting that "while female teachers represent 41% of teaching staff at lower basic level and 21% at upper basic level, they only represent 24% of permanent teachers at lower basic level and 17% at upper basic level."¹⁴⁶ The difference in status and benefits results in the lowest remuneration and benefits for female teachers.¹⁴⁷ The status, training and remuneration of ECED teachers, the vast majority of whom are female, has been raised as a pressing concern through interviews as well as in the MTR.

160. Nepal has introduced a consolidated Equity Index in 2017, which draws on both household and school-based data on gender, geography, socio-economic status, ethnicity and caste, and disability. This allows stakeholders to understand the patterns of inequity across districts and to inform policymaking and planning on resource allocation and equity-focused sector strategies. The equity index also makes it possible to identify the weight of different drivers of inequity, which will help local and federal governments develop differentiated and targeted strategies across districts.¹⁴⁸

161. In 2018, the newly-established CEHRD re-instated the **Inclusive Education Section** as well as gender equity and social inclusion focal person who is responsible for overseeing policies to ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups.¹⁴⁹ It should be noted that the Inclusive Education Section was established before the evaluation period, but its re-instatement underscores that this is a system-level change still in process and thus worth noting in this evaluation. This section develops a **Vulnerable Community Development Framework (VCDF)** "to ensure that all projects of SSDP [are] implemented in a manner that addresses issues related to access, equity, quality and sustainability of social protection schemes for the vulnerable groups."

Quality and Relevance

¹⁴⁴ MTR.

¹⁴⁵ ASIP/ASWB 2018-2019.

¹⁴⁶ Data source: Flash Report 2075 (2018/2018), p 43.

¹⁴⁷ MTR.

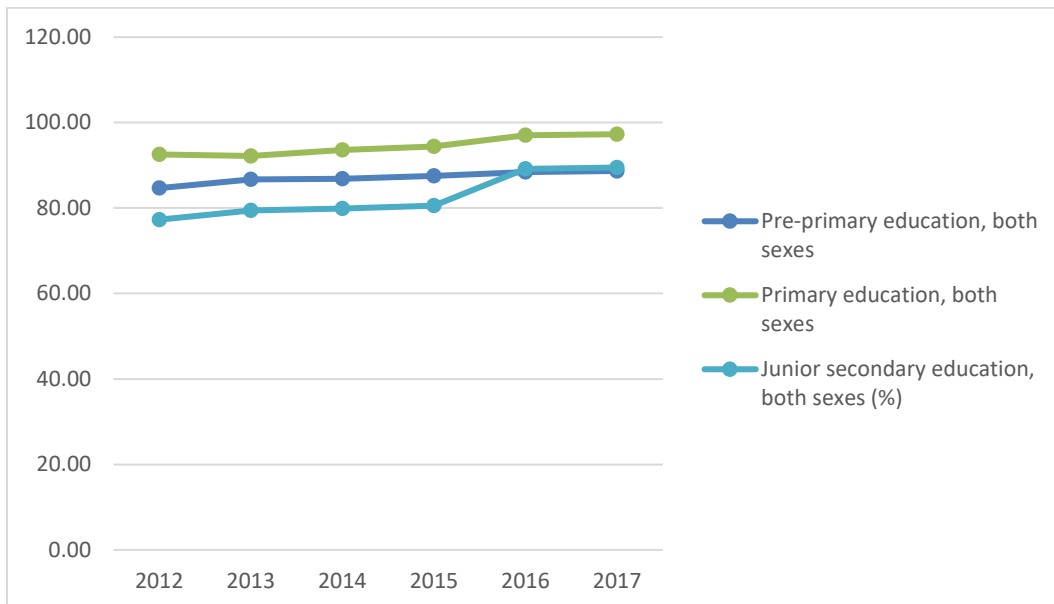
¹⁴⁸ MTR.

¹⁴⁹ 2019 Status Report.

Finding 18: Nepal has introduced several system-level changes to address low learning levels, including a National Early Grade Reading Program, National Teacher Competency Framework and a Model Schools Program. Some of the measures have been translated into higher proportion of teachers trained and better students-trained teachers' ratios.

162. The percentage of trained teachers (pre-service or in-service) in pre-primary and primary education in Nepal has increased gradually during the last years of the SSRP and the beginning of the SSDP, while the proportion of trained teachers in lower-secondary education growth experienced larger increases (see Figure 2). The higher increase in the proportion of trained teacher was in the lower secondary education level, increasing from around 77 percent of teachers trained in 2012 to 89,5 percent in 2017. The proportion of primary and pre-primary education teachers trained grew around 4% during the period 2012-2017.

Figure 2 Percentage of teachers who are trained, 2012-2017



Source: UIS¹⁵⁰

163. In line with the increases in the proportion of trained teachers, the ratio of student-trained teacher has decreased for all the education levels (see Table 26). The ratio of pre-primary and primary education went down to 22.96 and 21.49 respectively in 2017, setting the ratios at a good level. In the case of lower secondary, the number of students per trained teacher went down even more drastically (around 10 students), but in this case the ratio remained quite high at 38 students in 2017. In contrast to the positive trends these levels, the ratio in upper secondary education has remained stable over the period 2012-2017.

¹⁵⁰ Available at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/nepal-nea-report.pdf>

Table 26 Ratio student-trained teacher

Level	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Trend
Pre-primary	27.68	26.66	26.11	25.20	23.47	22.96	Down
Primary	29.75	27.81	25.57	24.46	23.11	21.49	Down
Lower Secondary	48.02	45.56	44.30	43.51	39.20	38.04	Down
Upper Secondary	n/a	28.60	28.60	27.46	25.69	27.46	Slightly down

Source: UIS¹⁵¹

164. Improvements to quality and relevance of education in Nepal fall under SSDP Key Result Area 1: Improved teaching, learning and student outcomes. As noted above, improving learning outcomes is the cornerstone of the SSDP strategy. Longstanding concerns with teacher professional development and management were observed at the end of the SSRP period and the SSDP sought to address these challenges as a key part of its commitment to improved learning outcomes.¹⁵² Outcome 4.1 of the SSDP PRF stipulated improvement in the supply of qualified, trained teachers, including the development of a **National Teacher Competency Framework**, indicators on the number of trained teachers at different levels and in specific subject areas, and a focus on recruiting female teachers and those from disadvantaged groups.

165. The CEHRD has been collecting data on **teachers' professional development** through EMIS since 2015. This data indicates that 77.6% of teachers at basic level, 76.6% of teachers at primary level, and 73.5% of teachers at lower secondary level have benefited from teachers' professional development (further details on this were not available to the evaluation team).¹⁵³ However there was no evidence on the quality of this training and whether it translates into improved teaching quality. The lack of improvement in learning outcomes assessed through NASA may indicate that the training is not yet having a demonstrable effect. Furthermore, several interviewees suggested that training is mainly a bureaucratic exercise and not one that attempts to genuinely transform teachers' content or pedagogical knowledge. This comment, although echoed by several key stakeholders, cannot be verified as this evaluation did not assess the quality of teacher training modules or materials. However, the fact that it appeared to be a widely held opinion is itself worth noting.

166. As noted previously, federalization has led to a disconnect between the federal government, which retains authority over teacher training, recruitment and allocation, and municipal governments who now are responsible for implementing the SSDP. Continued teacher shortages in some areas have led some local government to recruit teachers on an ad-hoc basis, which raised concerns on quality and child safety.¹⁵⁴ In order to address these ongoing challenges, the SSDP Transitional Roadmap introduced the creation of **Provincial Teacher Training Centers** to undertake capacity development and training

¹⁵¹ Available at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/nepal-nea-report.pdf>

¹⁵² SSDP.

¹⁵³ MTR.

¹⁵⁴ JSR, 2018.

based on the National Curriculum Framework.¹⁵⁵ As these Centers are not open yet, it is not possible to assess the impact they will have on teacher training nor on overall system-strengthening.

167. At the lower-basic level, the SSDP strategy for improved learning outcomes has centered on the implementation of a **National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP)**. The NEGRP aims to enhance the reading skills of pupils in grades 1 to 3 in 16 districts of the country, with four additional districts planned to be covered in the coming year. The program encompasses the distribution of reading materials including in mother tongue, classroom support and teacher training, engagement with parents and communities, and regular assessment of students through a community based EGRA.

168. The Midterm Review of the SSDP found that the Early Grade Reading Program has had some positive impact on student learning, teacher motivation and parental engagement. However, the evaluation also noted that learning gains fall short of expectations, and raised concerns that federalization is impacting implementation as ownership and understanding of the program is uneven among local governments and at school level, and institutional knowledge of the NEGRP has been diminished through the dissolution of DEOs and staffing changes.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, no nationally representative EGRA has been completed to demonstrate progress on reading proficiency.¹⁵⁷

169. At the upper-basic level, the SSDP focus is on improvement of teaching and learning in mathematics, science and Nepali through the provision of subject teachers and the development of **activity-based toolkits** in these three subject areas. The MTR notes that by 2018, activity-based toolkits in mathematics, science and English, including guidelines for teachers to use these kits in learner-centered ways, had been developed. Mandatory teacher training in the use of these materials is ongoing; however, the MTR notes that the dissolution of Resource Centers and Resource Persons (formally part of the DEOs) will limit the follow-up and mentorship required to improve teachers' PD and use of these tools.¹⁵⁸

170. **Model schools** constitute a core strategy for improving secondary education in Nepal. The SSDP introduced the Model School initiative with the aim of creating centers of excellence in teaching and learning. These secondary schools are provided with key inputs such as dedicated Head Teachers, a full staff of qualified subject teachers, ICT labs, science labs, libraries and WASH. The SSDP envisioned upgrading 1000 secondary schools to model schools by 2021;¹⁵⁹ the current figure is 222 (19 of which are directly supported by ADB and the remaining 203 by the GoN).¹⁶⁰ The MTR noted that model schools can provide an incentive for community schools to develop and implement robust School Improvement Plans in order to be eligible for model school funding, and that these schools can serve an important function as district learning hubs. This was illustrated in the 2018 JSM, which noted that CEHRD has been conducting workshop of model schools in clusters across the country in conjunction with local governments.¹⁶¹

171. **The availability of learning materials in grades 1-8 in Nepal has increased during the last years of the SSRP and the beginning of the SSDP** (see Table 27). In 2017, more than 90% of students enrolled in grades 1 to 8 had received a full set of books within the second week of the academic

¹⁵⁵ SSDP Roadmap.

¹⁵⁶ MTR

¹⁵⁷ JSR 2018 AM

¹⁵⁸ MTR

¹⁵⁹ SSDP

¹⁶⁰ MTR

¹⁶¹ JRM 2018

session, a huge improvement compared to the 74.4 percent of students that had received the textbooks by that time in 2013. Table 1

Table 27 Percentage of students receiving full set of textbooks within the second week of the academic session in 2013-17

Education level	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Trend
Grades 1-5	73.1	81.1	86.5	87.6	90.9	Up
Grades 6-8	77.6	80.6	87.8	90.3	92.1	Up
Grades 1-8	74.4	81.0	86.9	88.4	91.3	Up

Source: Consolidated report 2017-18

172. Regarding **incentives for schools and teachers**, the Flash report 2017-18 shows that over 23,000 primary schools and 6,000 secondary schools received operation and management grants in 2017/18, while 23,000 primary schools also received grants for extra-curricular activities and community mobilization. In addition, over 1,800 primary schools also received performance linked grants (based on the amount of time spent on learning). In 2017-2018, 169 schools received grants for supporting staff remuneration, 847 grants were given in support of religious schools, and eight grants were given to support mobile schools in remote areas. The Flash report does not present data on teacher remuneration levels, or school budget levels.

Management

Finding 19: Education management data in Nepal is robust, with a new web-based EMIS system in place and the establishment of the Equity Index. Management of teachers and capacity at the municipal levels are major challenges for Nepal's education system.

173. Improvements to sector management fall under *SSDP Result Area 3: Strengthened sector management and governance*. The most significant improvements in sector management and governance over the review period relate to data: the implementation of the **Web-based EMIS** and the related creation of the consolidated **Equity Index**. Teacher management remains a concern and a forthcoming **teacher rationalization and redeployment plan** attempts to address this. Federalization has introduced a new challenge of education management at the municipal level. Management capacity at this level is uneven, and currently, many municipalities have not filled the education officer role.

Education management data

174. The previous CLE evaluation report noted that **EMIS** quality has steadily improved over recent years, although quality has remained a concern – specifically related to local-level capacity to adequately gather education data. However, Nepal's EMIS collects an impressive amount of data, including on the number of children with disabilities and the number from minority ethnic groups at each education level. This level of education data coverage is unusual among lower-income countries and is a commendable

feature of Nepal’s education system. Anecdotally, stakeholders interviewed in last year’s mission reported that GPE support has been crucial to EMIS quality and coverage improvement.

175. The **SABER framework** identifies four core policy areas that are shared by educational data systems that can be used as a basis for assessment of the education data system. These areas include (1) An enabling environment, where intended policies relate to a sustainable infrastructure and human resources that can handle data collection, management, and access; (2) System soundness where the processes and structure of the system support the components of a comprehensive information management system; (3) Quality data which accurately collects, securely saves, and produces high-quality, timely information; and (4) Utilization for decision making, where the data is utilized to inform decisions in the sector.

Table 28 Situation in Nepal regarding SABER core policy areas for education data systems

CORE AREAS	SITUATION IN NEPAL
Enabling environment	Federalization is challenging Nepal’s infrastructure and human resource capacity to manage education data collection and management at local levels.
System soundness	At the same time, the federal transition presents an opportunity to improve accountability and transparency at the local level; to help capitalize on this opportunity, a web-based EMIS was established in 2018 to allow schools to directly upload their EMIS data to a central database, with 90% of schools reporting. ¹⁶²
Quality data	<p>The 2018 Quality Assurance Review noted that the EMIS is “characterized by a good disaggregation of data according to gender, population sub-groups, disability, geography, as well as data on School Management Committees/PTAs, Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions, textbook availability and school opening days.”¹⁶³ As noted above, Nepal is unusual in collecting and reporting data on access to education for students with a range of disabilities as well as from different minority ethnic groups.</p> <p>The Year 1 CLE report also flagged that federalization could reverse some of the gains in EMIS quality. To ensure that Flash Report data could still be collected during the federal transition (and with the dissolution of DEOs), a web-based EMIS was set up in 2018. This had positive results, with the 2018/19 Flash Report developed based on reporting of the data from more than 90% of all schools into this database.¹⁶⁴ However, as noted, concerns have been raised on web-based EMIS quality as ability to monitor and support data input and school level is uneven. Previously, DEOs were responsible for data collection and analysis. Under the federal system local governments take on this responsibility. There is currently no monitoring or coordination of this data at district or provincial levels, as local governments report straight to the federal government. This makes it difficult to get a sense of overall health of the system and, as LEDPG members pointed out, further programmatic and financial inputs are needed to strengthen EMIS.</p>

¹⁶² JSR AM 2018.

¹⁶³ QAR 1 GPE 2018.

¹⁶⁴ [Flash report 2018](#)

CORE AREAS	SITUATION IN NEPAL					
Utilization	EMIS data is collected twice per year, published in Flash Reports, and shared with all stakeholders prior to the annual JRM.					
	Although it is too early to determine what effect this is having on overall systems strengthening, informants from local government and SMCs said that EMIS data was used regularly for decision making, for example around scholarship allocation. But others noted that data quality continues to be an issue and that there is little by way of monitoring or support at school level for data entry.					
	Nepal uses data from EMIS to report to UIS every year on the 12 core indicators (as per GP RF Indicator 14, see Annex Table 12 GPE Results Framework Indicators for Nepal)					
	RF #	Indicator description	GPE RFI data			
			2016	2017	2018	2019
	Sector planning					
	RF16a	<i>Proportion of endorsed (a) ESPs or (b) TEPs meeting quality standards</i>			(7/7)	
	RF16b	<i>Proportion of ESPs/TEPs that have a teaching and learning strategy meeting quality standards</i>			(4/5)	
	RF16c	<i>Proportion of ESPs/TEPs with a strategy to respond to marginalized groups that meets quality standards (including gender, disability, and other context-relevant dimensions)</i>			(4/5)	
	RF16d	<i>Proportion of ESPs/TEPs with a strategy to improve efficiency that meets quality standards</i>			(4/5)	
RF17	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries or states with a data strategy that meets quality standards</i>					
Dialogue and monitoring						
RF18	<i>Proportion of JSRs meeting quality standards</i>	1	1	1	1	
RF19	<i>Proportion of LEGs with (a) civil society and (b) teacher representation</i>			1	1	

CORE AREAS	SITUATION IN NEPAL					
	Sector financing					
	RF10	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries that have (a) increased their public expenditure on education; or (b) maintained sector spending at 20% or above</i>	16.7	17.0		
	RF29	<i>Proportion of GPE grants aligned with national systems</i>	1 (10/10)	1 (10/10)	1 (10/10)	
	RF 30	<i>Proportion of GPE grants using (a) cofinanced project or (b) sector pooled funding mechanisms</i>	1	1	1	
	RF31	<i>Proportion of country missions addressing domestic financing issues</i>	0	0	3/3	
	Sector plan implementation					
	RF20	<i>Proportion of grants supporting EMIS/LAS</i>			1/1	
	RF21	<i>Proportion of textbooks purchased and distributed through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants</i>			N/A	
	RF22	<i>Proportion of teachers trained through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants</i>			N/A	
	RF23	<i>Proportion of classrooms built or rehabilitated through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants</i>	N/A		N/A	
	RF25	<i>Proportion of GPE program grants assessed as on-track with implementation</i>			Slightly behind	
	System-level changes					
	RF11	<i>Equitable allocation of teachers, as measured by the relationship (R^2) between the number of teachers and the number of pupils</i>			N/A	

CORE AREAS	SITUATION IN NEPAL				
	<i>per school in each partner developing country</i>				
	RF12 <i>Proportion of partner developing countries with pupil to trained teacher ratio below threshold (<40) at the primary level</i>	1	1	1	
	RF13 <i>Repetition and dropout impact on efficiency, as measured by the internal efficiency coefficient at the primary level in each partner developing country</i>				
	RF14 <i>Proportion of partner developing countries reporting at least 10 of 12 key international education indicators to UIS (including key outcomes, service delivery and financing indicators as identified by GPE)</i>	1 (12/12)	1 (12/12)	1 (12/12)	
	RF15 <i>Proportion of partner developing countries with a LAS within the basic education cycle that meets quality standards</i>			Established	
	RF24 <i>Proportion of GPE program grant applications approved from 2015 onward (a) identifying targets in Funding Model performance indicators on equity, efficiency and learning; (b) achieving targets in Funding Model performance indicators on equity, efficiency and learning</i>			1	
	Student-level impact				
	RF1 <i>Proportion of developing country partners showing improvement on learning outcomes (basic education)</i>			0	
	RF2 <i>Percentage of children under five years of age who are developmentally on track in terms</i>			N/A	

CORE AREAS	SITUATION IN NEPAL					
		<i>of health, learning and psychosocial well-being</i>				
	RF3	<i>Cumulative number of equivalent children supported for a year of basic education (primary and lower secondary) by GPE</i>				
	RF4a	<i>Proportion of children who complete primary education</i>	104.07	105.37	105.37	
	RF4b	<i>Proportion of children who complete lower secondary education</i>	82.75	84.26	86.20	
	RF5a	<i>Proportion of GPE partner developing countries within set thresholds for GPI of completion rates for primary education</i>	109.31	110.84	115.27	
	RF5b	<i>Proportion of GPE partner developing countries within set thresholds for GPI of completion rates for lower secondary education</i>	86.29	88.67	90.84	
	RF6	<i>Pre-primary gross enrollment ratio</i>	85.75	85.17	84.06	
	RF7a	<i>Out-of-school rate for children of primary school age</i>	5.33	3.23	3.23	
	RF7b	<i>Out-of-school rate for children of lower secondary school age</i>			11.78	
	RF8a	<i>GPI of out-of-school rate for primary education</i>	1.29	1.60	1.26	
	RF8b	<i>GPI of out-of-school rate for lower secondary education</i>			0.56	
	RF9	<i>Equity index</i>	0.76	0.76	0.78	
	<i>Source: GPE RF data</i>					

).

Source: Elaborated by the authors

176. The **Equity Index**, which draws on EMIS data, was launched in 2017. Members of the LEDPG as well as NCE Nepal noted that GPE’s support for the Equity Index was catalytic, as its creation was one of the Variable Part milestones of the previous ESPIG and was supported through the GPE co-funded Data Must Speak initiative. The Equity Index draws on both household and school-based data on gender, geography, socio-economic status, ethnicity and caste, and disability. This allows stakeholders to understand the patterns of inequity across districts and to inform policymaking and planning on resource allocation and equity-focused sector strategies. The equity index also makes it possible to identify the weight of different drivers of inequity, which will help local and federal governments develop differentiated and targeted strategies across districts.¹⁶⁵ With the transition to federalism, technical support to LGs will be necessary to ensure that the EI information is used for the planning and implementation of activities at local level (JRM 2018).

177. **Although the implementation of a web-based EMIS and the Equity Index are relatively new, there is evidence that the data they generate are leading to overall system-strengthening.** As noted above, key informants from schools, local government and federal government reported that data was used regularly to inform program and planning decisions. The 2017-2018 ASIP/AWPB drew on Equity Index data to for targeted, needs-based interventions at local level, including provision of scholarships and school meals.¹⁶⁶ A 2018 GPE blog post reflected on how the Equity Index was used to plan targeted interventions in five districts with the highest disparities.

178. **These positive signs aside, both the MTR and the November 2018 JSM highlighted the need for more clarity on reporting mechanisms, responsibilities and accountability** across all three tiers of government to ensure EMIS quality is strengthened and used for evidence-informed decision-making. The SSDP sector management and governance structure was designed pre-federalization and relied on DEOs, Resource Centers and Resource Persons to support both the upwards and downwards flows of information. Under federalization, these three entities have been dissolved without their core functions reallocated elsewhere.

179. In the absence of DEOs as intermediaries, school-level data is fed directly upwards to the federal government for analysis. There is no regional or provincial consolidation of this data, which leads to a top-down rather bottom-up planning processes.¹⁶⁷ As decentralization empowers local governments with autonomy in education planning and implementation, further work is needed to strengthen local-level capacity and accountability in order to improve sector management and governance.

Learning Assessment System

180. Nepal introduced a National Learning Assessment system in 2011. NASA tests are conducted by the Education Review Office and cover the curricular content of Nepali, Mathematics and Science under the SSRP, NASA assessed student performance in these subjects in grades 3, 5 and 8. Under the SSDP, two rounds of assessment (Grade 5, 8 and 10) will be administered. NASA 2018 is the first and baseline assessment administered during the SSDP period for grade 5. NASA results are considered robust and are used to inform education decision-making.

Teacher management

¹⁶⁵ MTR

¹⁶⁶ ASIP/AWPB 2017-2018.

¹⁶⁷ MTR

181. Teacher management is an ongoing concern in Nepal, and federalization has only exacerbated this. Key stakeholders from municipal government expressed frustration that teacher deployment remains federally controlled despite devolution, and informants from all stakeholder groups noted that teacher allocation and quality is uneven between regions. Adding to this is a complicated hierarchy of teacher status, each with different remuneration and access to professional development. For example, early childhood and preschool teachers are poorly paid and are not eligible for government training; contract and temporary teachers are similarly not able to access professional development programs. A **teacher rationalization and redeployment plan** has been prepared. However, due to the transition to federalism, updates and revisions are currently being undertaken in order to set new standards that should be included in the Federal Education Act.¹⁶⁸

Municipal-level education management

Finding 20: Federalization poses a few challenges for sector management, including weak/uneven human resource capacity at local levels, lack of coordination between municipalities and regions, and a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting. These risk creating gaps in implementation and accountability as well duplication of efforts between different tiers of government. The forthcoming Federal Education Act will need to set clear guidelines for education management across federal, provincial and local governments.

182. This brings us to the second area of system-level change in sector management: devolution of management authority from the federal to the municipal level. The MTR identified human resource capacity in local government as the single greatest threat to SSDP implementation. In many municipalities, staff are new to government and lack the expertise and skills to manage education systems. In some cases, there are few or no staff appointed to lead in this area: one interviewee noted that, as of August 2019, 30% of municipal governments did not have an education officer.

183. As levels of government are autonomous by law, coordinating between them is a challenge. A previous and long-standing staff member of the Department for Education noted that the lack of coordination between local governments and between LGs and the federal government was leading to duplication: for example, the SSDP has planned for 1,000 model schools (discussed above) with well-developed indicators, but Province Three is currently developing its own model schools and indicators that do not align with federal standards. In a similar manner, Gandaki province announced separate scholarship schemes, which overlap with the regular annual quota from the federal government. Some local governments are taking on teacher deployment, curriculum and event standards and assessments – without coordination with federal government and SSDP.

184. The forthcoming Federal Education Act will need to articulate clear standards for coordination and management of the education sector to ensure that federalization strengthens rather than fragments Nepal’s education sector. GPE as a partnership and development partners individually have a key role to play in supporting this process.

¹⁶⁸ MTR

Did ESP implementation contribute to system-level changes?

Finding 21: SSDP implementation contributed to most of the observable system-level changes during the review period.

185. Analysis of independent reviews indicate that the gains in equitable access discussed above can be attributed to elements of SSDP planning, monitoring and implementation. The most recent Joint Review Meeting (November 2018) highlighted the positive progress in access and equity and attributed this to specific SSDP activities, including interventions such as free textbooks, scholarships, and the provision of midday meals in targeted districts, all of which are seen to have contributed to enhancing equitable access to education.¹⁶⁹ The Midterm Review of the SSDP noted that:

*“Based on field visits, local stakeholders (schools, LGs, SMCs, etc.) seem highly involved in awareness campaigns and make home visits to identify and enroll OOSC in formal and non-formal schemes. NGOs have been very involved in this respect and have developed holistic community-based approaches to increase children’s participation in education programs...according to stakeholders interviewed during the data collection, the targeted support (e.g. midday meals, scholarships) supported by the GoN...has a positive effect in terms of retaining children and their participation”.*¹⁷⁰

186. This review did not find any observable system-level changes to the education sector that fell outside of SSDP implementation. Each of the new policies, frameworks and regulations discussed above were articulated in the SSDP and/or the SSDP Transitional Roadmap and accompanied by relevant indicators to gauge progress. Stakeholders did not identify additional system-level changes to those planned in the SSDP.

Implications for GPE ToC and country-level operational model

Box 7 Stronger Education Systems Planning - Testing assumptions and assessing strength of evidence

The four underlying assumptions for this contribution claim were (1) Sector plan implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to sector management; (2) there is sufficient national capacity (technical capabilities, political will, resources) to analyze, report on and use available data and maintain EMIS and LAS; (3) ESP implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to learning and (4) it leads to improvements in relation to equity.

Assumptions 1 and 2 partially holds: The implementation of SSDP activities related to sector management have led to positive changes in EMIS quality, although some concerns have been raised about uneven quality and capabilities for data input and use at local level. The new web-based EMIS has improved school-level reporting and data has been fed into the most recent Flash reporting. Management of teachers continues to be a challenge, and federalization is exacerbating political tensions over teacher allocation.

Assumption 3 does not hold. While the introduction of the National Early Grade Reading program has had some positive impact, it falls short of expectation and there has not been a nationally representative EGRA to

¹⁶⁹ JRM AM November 2018

¹⁷⁰ MTR p53

demonstrate progress on reading proficiency. NASA 2018 indicates that there has been no improvement in grade 8 learning outcomes in Math and Nepali since the previous NASA 2015 and 2013.

Assumptions 4 holds: Review of documentation evidence as well as stakeholder interviews suggest that the implementation of the SSDP has led to strong gains in equitable access to education. Physical inputs such as free school meals, WASH facilities and targeted scholarships, as well as improvements in data management through the Equity Index, are assessed to have had a strong contribution to access and equity.

The evidence for assessing system change in the education system in Nepal is strong. Progress on the SSDP PRF is regularly assessed and, together with annual implementation plans and Status reports, this paints a positive picture on how SSDP implementation is leading to positive education system change.

187. The contribution of SSDP implementation to system-level change in Nepal, particularly on equitable access, supports GPE ToC. Nepal stands as a good example of strategic and inclusive sector planning, and this has resulted in implementation of system-level policies and practices in support of education equity and access. MOEST, local governments and schools appear aligned in their commitment to equity, data is reported widely through EMIS and is used to make informed decisions about scholarship provision, school meals and textbook allocation.

188. It should be noted, however, that gains in access and equity were underway during the previous (SSRP) era; the SSDP was designed not only to build on this success but to make improvements in quality learning outcomes. This has proved far more challenging, and system-level change to effective teaching – for example through more strategic allocation and better professional development – have been difficult to implement. Political tensions are quite high between the federal government, local government and the Teachers Federation over issues of allocation, status and training.

189. GPE as a partnership and DPs individually need to rethink how to support Nepal to strengthen its education system for effective teaching and quality learning. Nepal will soon be developing its post-SSDP sector plan under a fully federalized structure, and this new plan will need to move the needle on quality learning while not reversing gains in equity and access. More effective teacher management and professional development will need to be the overarching priority of the new ESP in Nepal; GPE as a partnership and DPs individually will need to work with MOEST to develop focused and carefully aligned KPIs to this end.

5 Progress towards stronger learning outcomes and equity¹⁷¹

5.1 Introduction

190. This section provides a brief overview of medium-term trends in relation to basic education learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion that occurred in Nepal up to and during the review period (**Key Evaluation Question III** from the evaluation matrix: “Have improvements at education system level contributed to progress towards impact?”) Key sub-questions are:

- During the 2012-2018 period under review, what changes have occurred in relation to (a) learning outcomes in basic education, (b) equity, gender equality and inclusion in education? (CEQ 6).
- Is there evidence to link changes in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality, and inclusion to system-level changes identified under CEQ 4? (CEQ 6).
- What other factors can explain changes in learning outcomes, equity, etc.? (CEQ 6).
- What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to Nepal? (Key Evaluation Question IV).

191. CLEs conducted during FY 2018 showed that trying to establish verifiable links between specific system-level improvements during the review period on the one side and impact-level trends on the other side is not feasible given (i) the relatively short timeframe explored during CLEs and (ii) the time lag that typically exists between specific innovations and their reflection in impact-level trends. As such, section 5 illustrates trends in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion, but cannot necessarily link these directly to changes observed during the review period.

¹⁷¹ This section triangulates findings against RF indicators–1 - 9.

5.2 Progress towards stronger learning outcomes and equity

Table 29 Overview: CLE findings on contribution of system-level changes to impact-level changes

IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING THE 2012-2018 REVIEW PERIOD?	LIKELIHOOD THAT TRENDS WERE INFLUENCED BY SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES DURING REVIEW PERIOD	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE ¹⁷²	
<p>Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion – Modest. Gains in gender equality, but fluctuating levels of OOSC, and these remain concentrated in the most disadvantaged social groups/districts despite targeted interventions.</p>	<p>High: EMIS and Equity Index data have been used to improve targeting of scholarships, school meals and textbooks.</p>	1	2
<p>Learning - Weak. Learning levels, as assessed by national learning assessments (NASA) have remained stagnant through the review period</p>	<p>System-level changes introduced to improve learning have not yet translated into improved learning outcomes.</p>		

Trends in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion in the education sector in Nepal from 2012-2019

Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion in Basic Education

Finding 22: Nepal has continued strong gains in education access through the period, with increases from pre-primary to secondary level, particularly for girls. However, the number of OOSC continues to grow; minority groups and children with disabilities are most likely to be left out of school.

Equitable access to education: overview of progress

192. Increasing education access has been the dominant story for Nepal's education sector through the review period. Since 2012, Nepal has enrolled a high number of out-of-school children including children from vulnerable groups and a high number of girls.¹⁷³ Figure 3 shows this steady upward trend in access at lower basic (grades 1-5), basic (grades 5-8) and secondary levels. The 2019 Status Report cites that net enrollment rates (NER) for all primary school (Grades 1-8) grew from 89.4% to 92.3% from 2015/16 to 2017/18; enrollment in early childhood education programs grew from 81.0% to 84.1% in the same period.¹⁷⁴ Yet Figure 3 also shows that the upward trend in education access at the primary level has slowed in recent years. In 2018, net enrollment at the lower basic level even declined by 0.7% to 96.5%. At the secondary level access has continued to increase annually, but NER at this level is only

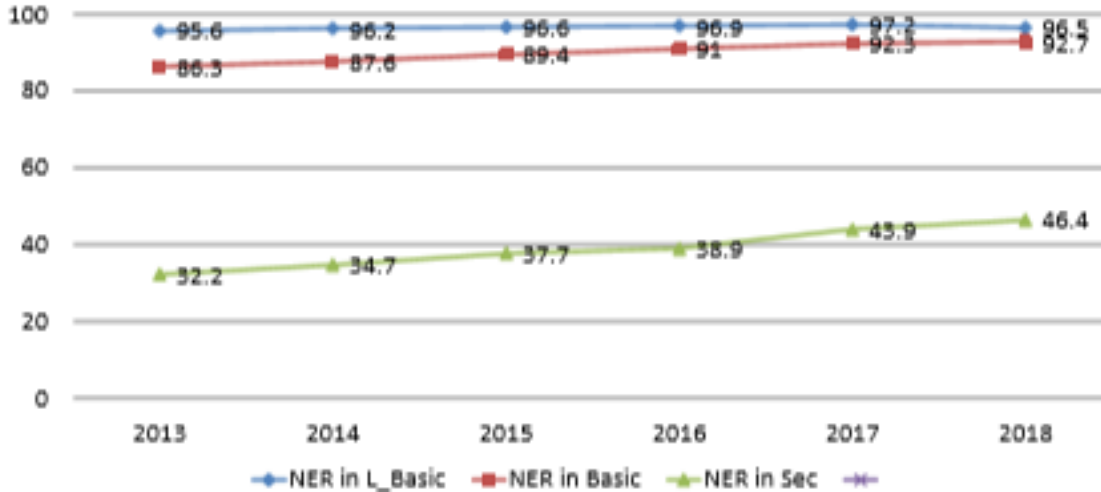
¹⁷² The underlying assumptions for this contribution claim are (1) changes in the education system positively affect learning outcomes and equity, and (2) country-produced data on equity, efficiency and learning allow measuring/tracking these changes.

¹⁷³ SSDP MTR 2019.

¹⁷⁴ 2019 Status report; also, JRM AM Nov 2018.

46.4%. In addition, Nepal has achieved gender equality in NER as the ASIP 2017-2018 shows that the NER Gender Parity Index (GPI) had a value of 1 in 2018.

Figure 3 Net Enrollment Rates in Basic and Secondary Education



Source: ASIP 2019

193. Gross enrollment rates for basic education have remained very high, over 140%, throughout the review period. Figure 4 shows the significant gap between net and gross enrollment at the primary level which suggests a large number of overage children/delayed enrollment and grade repetition. The gap is also present, although less significant, at the secondary level as shown in Figure 5. The GPI for the primary and secondary education GER in Nepal has remained above 1.0 during the period 2013-2017, at 1.06 and 1.11 respectively in 2017.

Figure 4 Gross and Net Enrollment in Primary Education

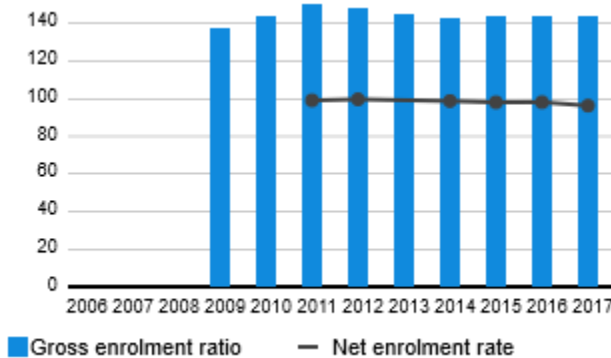
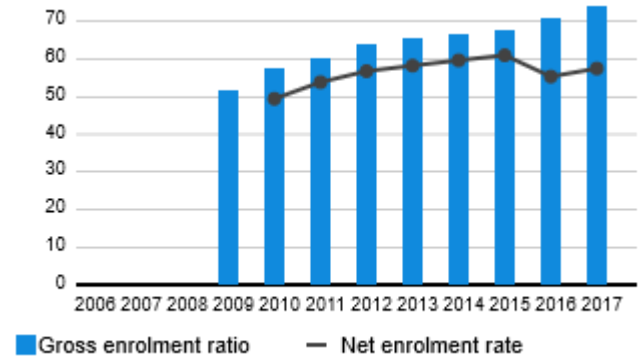


Figure 5 Gross and Net Enrollment in Secondary Education



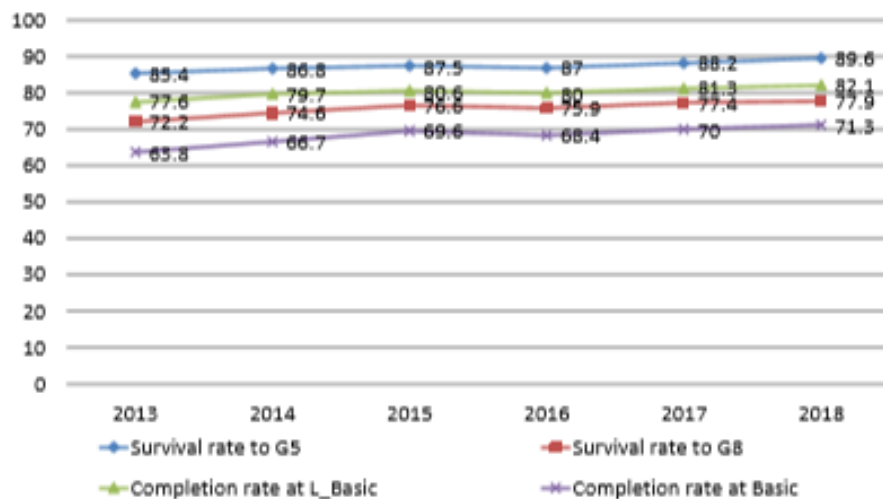
Source: UIS Data¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Available at : <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/nepal-nea-report.pdf>

194. Despite these signs of internal inefficiency in Nepal’s education system, there has been marked progress in reducing repetition rates over the review period at both primary and lower secondary levels. In 2010, the repetition rate in Grade 1 was 22.6%, with overall repetition rate of 12.1% at the primary level and 6.3% at lower secondary.¹⁷⁶ By 2017, these rates had improved significantly to 14.1% repetition in Grade 1, 7.2% across the primary cycle and 4.0% at lower secondary.¹⁷⁷

195. Survival and dropout rates have also improved considerably over the review period at both primary and lower secondary levels. In 2010 the survival rate to Grade 5 was 80.6% and the dropout rate across Grades 1-5 was 6.0%.¹⁷⁸ In 2017, these rates had improved to 88.3% and 3.8% respectively.¹⁷⁹ Similar progress was made at the lower secondary level, where dropout rates improved from 6.4% in 2010 to 4.4% in 2017, and survival rates to Grade 8 improved from 66% in 2010 to 77.4% in 2017.¹⁸⁰ Figure 6 illustrates the steady progress made in survival and retention rates in primary education. Regarding the differences between girls and boys, the girls had higher survival rates in both Grades 5 and 8 over, trend that has remained during the period 2013-2017, although the difference have been reduced in 2.6 percentage points in the case of survival in Grade 8.¹⁸¹

Figure 6 Survival rates and Completion rates, Grade 5 and Grade 8



Source: ASIP, 2019

Equitable access: Out-of-school children and disadvantaged social groups

196. **Despite these positive signs in equitable access, there are still a significant number of children out of school in Nepal.** Although the OOSC rate for children of primary school age declined from 2014 to

¹⁷⁶ Nepal Flash Report 2010.

¹⁷⁷ Nepal Flash Report 2017.

¹⁷⁸ Nepal Flash Report 2010.

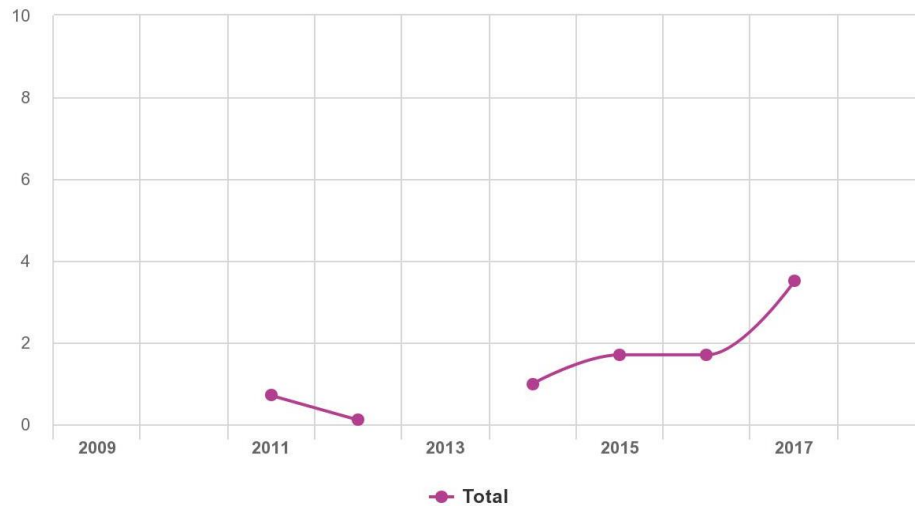
¹⁷⁹ Nepal Flash Report 2017.

¹⁸⁰ Nepal Flash Report 2010; 2017.

¹⁸¹ Nepal Flash Report 2017.

2016, it appears to have increased sharply in 2017. UIS data indicates that the total number of OOSC (age 7-12) was 101,223 in 2017 – up significantly from the approximately 49,000 OOSC in 2015 and 2016.¹⁸² Data for adolescents show some improvement, with the number out of school in 2017 decreasing to 99,572 from 143,259 in 2016. Over twice the number of adolescent boys is out of school (70,487) than girls (29,085).¹⁸³

Figure 7 OOSC rate for children of primary school age



Source: GPE Website

197. The majority of OOSC are from disadvantaged groups¹⁸⁴ and more than half are clustered around 10 districts in the Terai belt.¹⁸⁵ This persistent trend of most disadvantaged children being in these districts seems to indicate that targeted efforts under the SSDP to reduce out-of-school rates (see, for example, OOSC reduction targets in previous ESPIG – Table 20) is having only limited impact in these most disadvantaged districts.

198. Annual Flash Reports measure the enrollment of disadvantaged groups in the education system. The 2010 Flash Report identified that 1,306,088 Dalit students had been enrolled at the basic level (grades 1-8)¹⁸⁶; this figure had decreased slightly to 1,089,370 in the 2017 Flash Report.¹⁸⁷ For Janajati students, the figures were 2,602,688 enrolled in 2010 and 2,222,715 in 2017.¹⁸⁸ This suggests a very small decline in enrollment of the most disadvantaged social groups in Nepal. This is particularly worrying given the overall increase in enrollment through the period, as illustrated in Figure 3. However, analysis would be strengthened by accompanying data on overall population growth in these communities

¹⁸² UIS website

¹⁸³ UIS

¹⁸⁴ NASA 2018.

¹⁸⁵ SSDP Project Appraisal Document, cited in WB AF program doc

¹⁸⁶ 2010 Flash Report

¹⁸⁷ 2017 flash report

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*

199. Table 30 shows the percentage of five-year-old children not enrolled in school by ethnic group. Children from vulnerable communities are not accessing early learning opportunities at a rate much higher than average, especially boys. This ‘reverse’ gender gap requires further investigation to understand the reasons why boys from ethnic communities are additionally disadvantaged in access to pre-primary education.

Table 30 Percentage of out-of-school children aged 5 by ethnic/vulnerable group (From MTR)

	Baseline (2015/16)	Year 1 (2016/17)	Year 2 (2017/18)
Total – all communities	10.6	9.0	8.7
Girls			8.3
Boys			7.0
Children from Janjati communities (at the age of 5)			20.3
Girls			16
Boys			28.5
Children from Dalit communities (at the age of 5)			30.2
Girls			25
Boys			38.5
Children from most disadvantaged communities (at the age of 5)			26.3
Girls			20.1
Boys			39.6

Source: TWG on Equity and Inclusive Education – April 2019

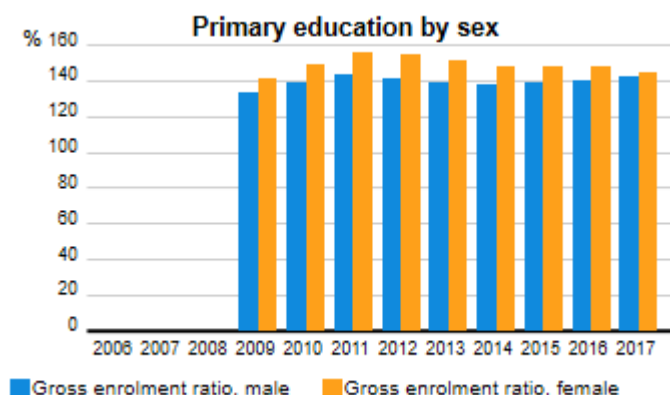
200. Education equity is about more than access, it is also about equity in outcomes. Some data on learning outcomes is available through the NASA reports, which disaggregates test scores based on ethnicity. Findings from NASA 2018 indicate that there is a gap in learning outcomes between ethnic groups, with high caste children outperforming those of lower castes. However, a much larger achievement gap emerges between provinces and districts, with the most disadvantaged districts achieving significantly lower than average. The NASA report notes that “such gap increases disparity in learning achievement among the groups of students.”¹⁸⁹ Future policy and planning in Nepal must consider how federalization may exacerbate disparities between regions.

Gender equity

201. Nepal has made important progress in gender equity in the past decade, both in terms of education access and outcomes. Gender parity is largely achieved at basic and secondary levels, as indicated by Figure 8, Figure 9 and Table 31. The latter illustrates that at all grade levels in the basic education cycle, girls represent over half of the student population. While the issue requires continued vigilance, with further attention needed to some issues such as the provision of adequate sanitary facilities for girls, this is generally a strong aspect of the Nepal school system.

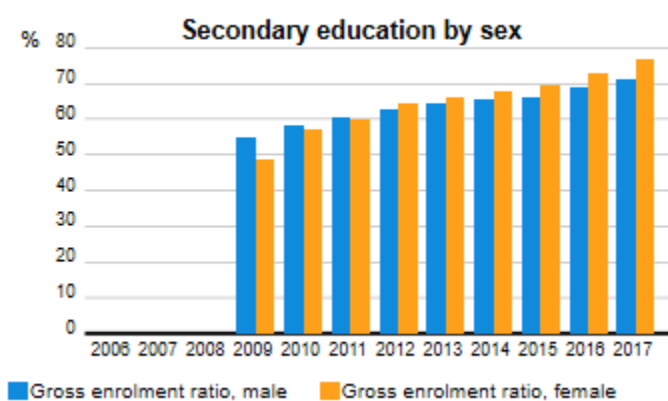
¹⁸⁹ NASA 2018, p123.

Figure 8 Gross Enrollment Ratio at primary level in Nepal, disaggregated by gender



Source: UIS Statistics

Figure 9 Gross Enrollment Ratio at secondary level in Nepal, disaggregated by gender



Source: UIS Statistics

Table 31 Grade-wise enrollment in basic education in 2018, disaggregated by gender

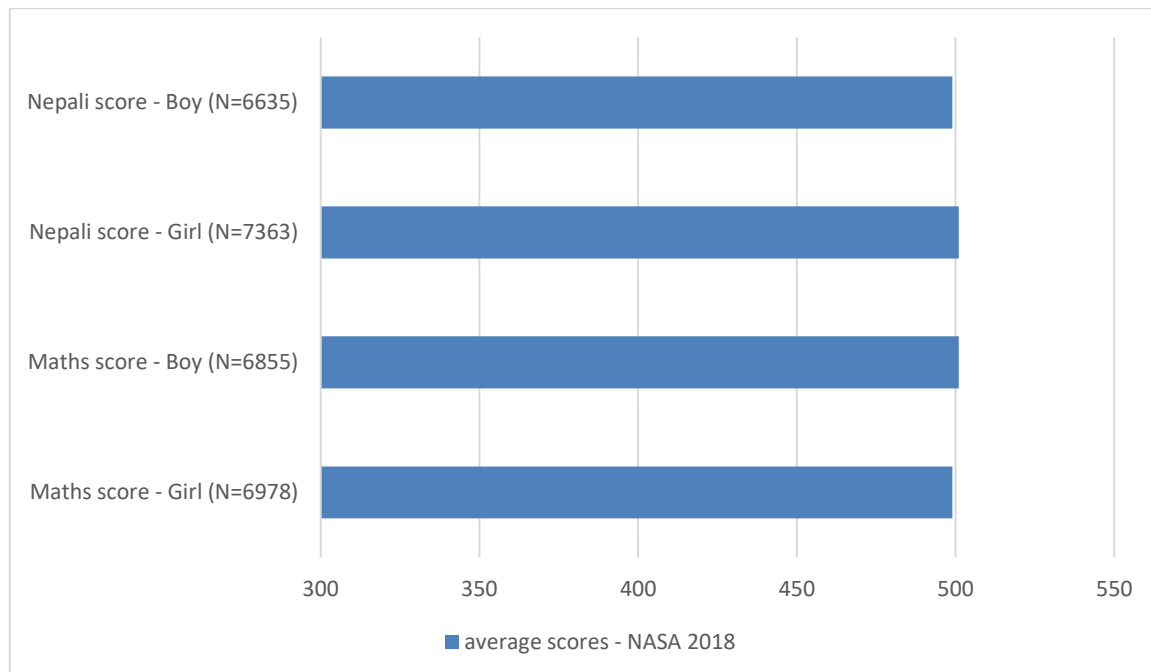
Grade	Girls	Boys	Total	Share of girls
Grade 1	470,852	468,281	938,863	50.1%
Grade 2	404,273	397,649	801,922	50.4%
Grade 3	391,198	382,945	774,143	50.5%
Grade 4	374,649	360,604	735,253	51%
Grade 5	368,612	351,223	719,835	51.2%
Total grades 1-5	2,009,314	1,960,702	3,970,016	50.6%

Grade 6	311,989	310,505	622,494	50.1%
Grade 7	312,943	303,178	616,121	50.8%
Grade 8	318,478	309,623	628,101	50.7%
TOTAL Grades 6-8	943,410	923,306	1,866,716	50.5%

Source: Flash consolidated report 2017-2018

202. Perhaps more crucially, it appears that there is very little difference in learning outcomes between boys and girls: The most recent NASA report, assessing student learning outcomes in Grade 5 in Nepali and Mathematics, found that girls' and boys' performance were almost equal in all provinces with an effect size so narrow that all provinces could be said to be approaching gender parity in learning outcomes in grade 5.¹⁹⁰

Figure 10 National Assessment of Student Achievement, 2018



Source: NASA 2018

Inclusion and disability

203. Flash Reports gather an impressive level of data on the number of children in school with recognized disabilities, and have done so since 2010. Analysis of 2010 and 2017 Flash Reports show a slight decrease in the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in the education system. In 2010,

¹⁹⁰ NASA 2019

77,348 students in basic education (grade 1-8) were reported to have one or more disabilities, representing 1.2% of the student population.¹⁹¹ In 2017 this figure was nominally smaller – 63,959 students with disabilities representing slightly over 1% of the student population.¹⁹² These percentages are far below global and regional estimates of 10-15% of students with disabilities. The MTR notes that, “although these data need to be considered with care, due to the change [occurred] in the EMIS data collection, these figures might indicate a difficulty to screen and report children presenting one or several disabilities.” The recently-formed Inclusive Education section of the CEHRD is developing a sub-system of the EMIS to ensure better data on children with disabilities in the future.¹⁹³

Learning Outcomes

Finding 23: Learning outcomes in Nepal have stagnated since 2012. Challenges over teacher management, deployment and motivation are widely cited as the leading cause of poor learning quality. Federalization is seen as additional potential challenge to this crisis.

204. Concerns over learning quality and outcomes have been raised in numerous reviews¹⁹⁴ and by all informants. Every three years, the National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) conducts tests of Grade 5 and Grade 8 students in a range of core subject areas. NASA 2018 results show that 70% of grade 5 pupils fall below the basic level in Mathematics; 55% fall below the basic level in Nepali. The gap in between below-basic and advance-level students is 91% in Math and 70% in Nepali, showing remarkably high inequality in learning outcomes in the classroom.¹⁹⁵ Most worryingly, these results are very similar to those of the previous two NASA reports (NASA 2012 and 2015). This suggests that “interventions of [the] educational system were not effective in improving the quality of learning [at] the school level.”¹⁹⁶

205. Although there is no conclusive data on learning outcomes among most marginalized communities in Nepal, evidence gathered as part of the SSDP Midterm Review suggests that learning outcomes are lowest for these students. The MTR further argues that, although Nepal’s education system enrolled a high number of children from vulnerable groups since 2012 “it seems that the schools have not yet managed to adjust to the specific needs of these new types of students”.¹⁹⁷ NASA 2018 data shows significant learning outcome disparities between districts, with those areas that have a high proportion of disadvantaged students performing comparatively worse than others.¹⁹⁸ The new web-based EMIS aims to gather more disaggregated learning data, so in the future it may be easier to assess equity in learning outcomes as well as access.

¹⁹¹ Flash Report, 2010.

¹⁹² Flash Report, 2017.

¹⁹³ MTR.

¹⁹⁴ See for example SSDP PAD, SSDP MTR, JSR, 2018 Aide Memoire.

¹⁹⁵ NASA, 2018.

¹⁹⁶ NASA, 2018.

¹⁹⁷ MTR.

¹⁹⁸ NASA, 2018.

206. Table 32 shows the trends in indicators for equity, gender equality, inclusion and learning outcomes in basic education in Nepal.

Table 32 Trends in indicators for equity, gender equality, inclusion and learning outcomes in basic education

INDICATORS THAT IMPROVED DURING THE 2012-2018 PERIOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-primary enrollment: Nepal has expanded ECED access considerably over the past decade, and progress in enrollment has remained steady or slightly increased since 2012. • Gender equality is a success story for Nepal’s education sector, and education parity has been reached in terms of access and learning outcomes at basic and secondary levels. • Primary enrollment increased steadily since 2012, although with a slight decrease in 2018 • Secondary enrollment increased steadily since 2012 • Transition rate from primary to lower secondary increased steadily since 2012 • Dropout rates have improved in primary and lower secondary since 2010. • Survival rates have improved in primary and lower secondary since 2010. • Repetition rates have improved in primary and lower secondary since 2010.
INDICATORS THAT STAGNATED DURING THE 2012-2018 PERIOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outcomes: NASA 2013, 2015 and 2018 reports show no improvement in learning outcomes; outcomes are worse for children from marginalized groups and there are significant disparities between regions • Access for children with special needs: Flash reporting indicates that only a small percentage of children with special education needs are accessing education, and this figure has remained steady – or slightly decreased – during the evaluation period. • Access for the poorest: Flash reporting indicates that the number of Dalit and Janajati children accessing education has remained unchanged since 2010, despite overall growth in enrollment across the wider population. • Regional differences in access and learning outcomes: Inequality in terms of access and outcomes between the regions remains a defining feature of the education system in Nepal
INDICATORS THAT DETERIORATED DURING THE 2012-2018 PERIOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of OOSC and number of OOSC have increased since 2016, after a period of improvement. This is despite progress in targeted interventions to get OOSC back in the classroom. There is not enough supporting data to indicate what this growth on numbers and rate indicates in terms of education equity.

Is there evidence to link changes in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion to system-level changes identified? What other factors can explain observed changes (or lack thereof)?

Equity and Gender Equality

Finding 24: System-level changes introduced through the SSRP and SSDP, including targeted scholarships, have led to improvements in equity and gender equality. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the Equity Index is being used to make equity-focused decision making; in time this may help improve education access and quality for the most marginalized learners in Nepal.

207. A review of evidence, supplemented by stakeholder interviews, suggests that progress in enrollment, equity and gender equality can be linked to system-level changes identified in the previous section. The SSDP, and the SSRP which preceded it, introduced system-level changes to increase education access for marginalized communities, largely through provision of scholarships, school meals and other physical inputs (as discussed in the previous chapter). According to a World Bank Program Paper from March 2019, “the survival rate of both boys and girls in basic education can be attributed to a series of enabling strategies adopted by the national-level programs such as the SSRP, SSDP scholarships and incentives, girls’ toilets, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities.”¹⁹⁹

208. The Equity Index, which draws on EMIS data to support Nepal’s Consolidated Equity Strategy, was introduced in 2017. The Index now serves as a core planning and monitoring tool, as explained in the Midterm review of the SSDP:

*To understand children’s learning outcomes, it is important to consider both: i) the socio-demographic factors that are potential drivers of inequity across children, schools or municipalities, and ii) human, material and financial resources allocated to schools and children. The EI (Equity Index) makes it possible to identify correlations between resource allocation, access, participation and learning outcomes, and to inform decision-making processes for targeted support...The equity index also makes it possible to identify the weight of different drivers of inequity, in order to develop differentiated strategies.*²⁰⁰

209. Anecdotally, stakeholders report that data from the Equity Index is being used to make equity-focused decision making (e.g. on scholarship provision). At the same time, it is difficult to directly attribute this change to the Equity Index or any other system-level changes.

210. As mentioned in the previous chapter, early childhood learning centers have expanded in number significantly throughout the review period. Increasing access to preschool learning is a key SSDP strategy, designed to address Results Area 1 on quality learning outcomes. Yet, here too, gaps emerge between districts and among ethnic and disadvantaged groups: as noted above, five-year-old children from vulnerable communities are out of school at a much higher rate, and boys from those communities all the more than girls.

Learning Outcomes

¹⁹⁹WB AF program document, p20.

²⁰⁰ SSDP MTR, 2019.

Finding 25: System-level changes introduced through the SSRP and SSDP have not translated yet into improved learning quality. Learning outcomes as measured by National Assessment of Student Achievement have stagnated since 2012.

211. When asked to account for low learning levels in Nepal’s education system, most interview informants cited concerns with the teaching workforce, including teacher recruitment, allocation, training, support and motivation. The MTR similarly highlighted major and fundamental challenges to effective teaching in Nepal that are ongoing despite SSDP targets for improved training and allocation:

- An uneven and unequal allocation of teachers across provinces, districts and schools. For example, in Province Two, there is one teacher for 47 children in grades 1-5; in Ghandaki Province this ratio is 1:10.
- An uneven distribution of positions at different levels of education, with a severe shortage of subject teachers for upper basic and secondary levels (grades 6 upward).
- Low qualification of teachers and insufficient pre-service teacher preparation.
- An extreme diversity of status and funding sources of existing teaching positions resulting in unequal and uneven remuneration and benefits, but also access to training and promotion possibilities and on teachers’ motivation and commitment.
- Lack of regulations and standards on teachers’ selection and appointment at local/school level results in a high risk of politicization, nepotism and the appointment of unqualified teachers.

212. As mentioned earlier in this report, there is currently a significant disconnect between municipal level governments, who are responsible for implementation of the SSDP, and the federal government level where teacher recruitment and allocation is managed. There are concerns that teachers are not being appropriately trained to promote learning among marginalized students, and this federal-municipal disconnect may further exacerbate this issue. The Midterm Review noted that:

Interviews with head teachers and teachers during field visits also highlighted that even when appropriately trained, teachers cannot properly undertake child-centered pedagogy or provide appropriate support to students encountering difficulties when classes are overcrowded. Teacher rationalization and professional development should be planned accordingly: allocating additional teachers (either national positions or grants for local recruitments) should be considered before delivering child centered pedagogy related training packages.

213. Both the Midterm Review and the 2018 JRM noted that improvements are needed in teacher training for students with special education needs, such as those with disabilities. School visits undertaken as part of the 2018 JRM indicated that teachers have difficulties identifying whether any of the children in the school had multiple disabilities aside from hearing impairments.²⁰¹ The MTR similarly raised concerns that teachers have not received appropriate pedagogical training to meet the learning needs of vulnerable students.

214. The SSDP introduced several system-level changes to improve quality and relevance of learning in Nepal. These include a Teacher Competency Framework, Model Schools program and

²⁰¹ JRM 2018

National Early Grade Reading program (see chapter 4 for more details on these programs). However, these have not translated yet into improved learning outcomes. Although the MTR found that the Early Grade Reading Program has had some positive impact on student learning, teacher motivation and parental engagement, these claims could not be substantiated and no nationally representative EGRA has been completed to demonstrate progress on reading proficiency. Ongoing problems with teacher management, discussed above and in chapter 4, play a significant role in poor learning outcomes.

215. Finally, it must be said that the transition to federalism risks reversing some of the gains made in access and equity and exacerbating the low learning outcomes that have persisted throughout the review period. As noted throughout this report, there is a lack of clarity about how monitoring and reporting responsibilities will be solidified under the new structure, and a lack of capacity at local level to manage and implement SSDP activities. Although there is also tremendous potential for short-route accountability to be strengthened through devolution, the results this will have in terms of education equity are yet to be seen.

216. Table 33 **Error! Reference source not found.** below links observed impact changes with plausible system level changes.

Table 33 Plausible links between system level changes and student outcomes

Observed Impact Level Changes	Plausible links to system-level changes
Improved access, retention and survival rates for pre-primary, primary and secondary education	Improvements in access, retention and survival rates can be linked to system-level changes including targeted scholarships, improved textbook allocation, expanding the number of schools, reducing student-teacher ratio and the use of the EMIS data to make better decisions. ²⁰²
Improved gender equality in both access and learning outcomes.	Improvements can be linked to system-level changes in terms of targeted scholarships for girls and other gender-sensitive interventions as described in chapter 4. Improved EMIS data and the creation of the Equity Index may also have led to the observed impact level changes in gender equality.
Improved equity	There has been little improvement in education equity for the most marginalized in Nepal. However, anecdotal evidence points to improved EMIS data and the creation of the Equity Index as system-level changes that has the potential to lead to improved education equity in the future.
Learning outcomes have stagnated since 2012.	There has been no improvement in learning outcomes despite the SSDP focus on quality learning.

²⁰² For example, a 2018 GPE blog post reflected on how the Equity Index was used to plan targeted interventions in five districts with the highest disparities: “Through these interventions, the government was able to enroll 24,090 children (22% of the total out-of-school children in these 5 districts, of which 61% are girls). An independent verification was done to ensure the children enrolled were the ones previously identified through the mapping exercise in these districts.”

Implications for GPE ToC and country-level operational model

Box 8 Planning - Testing assumptions and assessing strength of evidence

The underlying assumptions for this contribution claim are (1) changes in the education system positively affect learning outcomes and equity, and (2) country-produced data on equity, efficiency and learning allow measuring/tracking these changes.

Contribution claim 1 holds modestly: Changes in the education system have positively affected equitable access but learning outcomes have been stagnant throughout the period. There are concerns that equity in access is not accompanied by equity in quality learning outcomes.

Contribution claim 2 holds modestly: Despite some concerns on EMIS quality, Nepal regularly gathers data on education access and equity and this data is reported to UIS. NASA reports have been published every three years.

The evidence for assessing changes in learning outcomes and equity is mixed: EMIS data and Flash Reporting do gather impressive evidence on access, and this is disaggregated by gender, ethnic group and disability – although not all of this data is reported to UIS. NASA tests are a reliable source of data on learning outcomes, but this data is not yet as fully disaggregated as EMIS data (for example, no learning outcome data on CwD). Furthermore, more data is needed on effective teaching, for example on teacher absenteeism rates, time-on-task, and professional development.

217. GPE support to develop the Equity Index and improve EMIS data has been catalytic. GPE can play a key role in continuing to support Nepal to improve education data, particularly on students with disabilities and on equitable outcomes. The new web-based EMIS aims to gather more disaggregated education data and this will improve the ability to track progress on equity and learning.

218. The most pressing need facing Nepal's education system is improving the quality of education and ensuring that equity in access is matched by equity in learning outcomes. GPE and other DPs have played a key role in helping Nepal expand educational access but improving quality will be a far more difficult task. As discussed throughout this report, the next ESP must tackle problems in teacher effectiveness and deployment head-on, to ensure that Nepali students benefit from relevant pedagogy and classroom learning environments. The GPE needs to further work with MOEST and country stakeholders to develop KPIs that will advance and incentivize quality learning.

6 Changes over time and key influencing factors

6.1 Introduction

219. This prospective evaluation is a culmination of a baseline report, a first annual report and this final, second annual report. This final report is summative in nature, reporting on the efficacy of GPE support to Nepal during the full evaluation period. However, comparisons between findings at the baseline report stage of the evaluation and the final findings (second annual report) provide insight into the key influencing factors across the ToC.

220. This section reflects on the assessment of the contribution claims and assumptions that emerged at the conclusion of Year 1 of the evaluation and Year 2 and highlights any lessons learnt. This section of the report presents any insights that emerge from comparing the plausibility of GPE contribution claims over time.

Table 34 Assessment of the plausibility of each Contribution Claim at Year 1 and Endline

Contribution Claim	Assessment at Year 1	Endline
Claim A: “GPE (financial and non-financial) support and influence contribute to the development of government-owned, credible and evidence-based sector plans focused on equity, efficiency and learning.”	<i>Plausible</i>	<i>Plausible</i>
Claim B: “GPE (financial and non-financial) support for inclusive sector planning and joint monitoring contribute to mutual accountability for education sector progress.”	<i>Plausible</i>	<i>Plausible</i>
Claim C: “GPE advocacy and funding requirements contribute to more and better financing for education in the country.”	<i>Plausible</i>	<i>Partially Plausible</i>
Claim D: “GPE (financial and non-financial) support and influence contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of sector plans.”	<i>Plausible</i>	<i>Partially Plausible</i>
Claim E: “The implementation of realistic evidence-based sector plans contributes to positive changes at the level of the overall education system.”	<i>Plausible</i>	<i>Partially Plausible</i>
Claim F: “Education system-level improvements result in improved learning outcomes and in improved equity, gender equality and inclusion in education.”	<i>Plausible</i>	<i>Partially Plausible</i>

221. The above chart illustrates that a number of assumptions that appeared plausible in Year 1 appear only partially plausible at endline. This is a significant change that warrants some further discussion. The reasons for the given assessments, were discussed at length in the previous chapters, therefore, here we make sense of the changes that have occurred across the review period.

222. Federalization is the defining feature of the education system at present, which was not the case in Year 1 and likely this accounts for much of the change in contribution claim assessment. Responsibility for education planning, implementation and monitoring has now shifted to the municipal level, and local governments provide roughly half of the education funding at municipal level. This presents a great opportunity for improved inclusive sector dialogue, monitoring and mutual accountability. However, human resource and capacity gaps, inequality between regions, and tensions over teacher allocation and

monitoring are all major obstacles to a smooth transition. Federalization has perhaps brought these issues into the light in a way that was not the case in Year 1; for example, the tensions over teacher allocation – and which level of government hold control over this vital education input – was not raised as a concern at baseline.

223. **Contribution Claims A and B** were found to still be plausible as they were in Year 1. Although Nepal was already benefiting from strong sector planning, dialogue and monitoring through the SWAp prior to the country becoming a GPE partner, this evaluation has found that GPE contributes to and further strengthens this landscape. GPE financial and non-financial support to the SSDP, particularly through its focus on indicator development, equity and inclusivity, makes an important contribution to Nepal’s sector planning and dialogue.

224. The noted change in **Contribution Claim C**, that GPE advocacy and funding requirements contribute to more and better financing for education, reflects ongoing financial changes in Nepal’s education sector – namely the decrease in support from GPE and the increasing responsibility of LGs in funding the sector. This review found Claim C to be only partially possible based largely on evidence gathered through interviews. Informants noted that GPE funding is very small but comes with a high transaction cost, particularly as it is administered through a Grant Agent. Members of MOEST and CEHRD argued that accessing GPE funds were doubly burdensome as they need to satisfy both GPE and World Bank requirements. This was not an issue raised in the Year 1 report. It is possible that Year 1 interviewees simply did not express these sentiments, or that the decrease in funding from GPE was not yet fully apparent, or that World Bank grant requirements were not previously adding an extra layer of burden.

225. The current ESPIG and accompanying Multiplier Fund were not in place during the Year 1 evaluation, so the previous report could not have assessed whether this Fund signaled GPE ability to leverage additional funding. The current evaluation benefited from interviews about the Multiplier Fund with LEDPG members, who expressed that the mechanism did not serve to encourage additional funding for other donors as this funding was already planned and cannot truly be considered additional.

226. **Contribution claim D**, that GPE support and influence contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of sector plans, seems only partially plausible at the end of the evaluation period. Again, this reflects the changed context of federalization. Both this report and the Year 1 report have noted that GPE plays an important role in ensuring sector dialogue and monitoring processes are inclusive, coordinated and aligned. GPE has also provided important support to strengthening education data through the Equity Index, and informants suggest that this data is being used to implement evidence-based policies.

227. At the same time, and as discussed throughout the report, GPE financial and non-financial support to Nepal is given at the federal level, but this is no longer where education sector implementation happens. Although GPE’s current ESPIG attempts to encourage local government alignment to the SSDP, the ESPIG target covers only a small fraction of the 753 LGs in Nepal. This is certainly a step in the right direction, as it is worth acknowledging again that federalization will be a long-term process. However, for the purposes of this evaluation, we find it unlikely that current ESPIG requirements will have a significant impact on local-level education implementation.

228. **Contribution Claim E**, that the implementation of realistic evidence-based sector plans contributes to positive changes at the level of the overall education system, was plausible in Year 1 but only partially so at end line. Although positive system-level change is observed in terms of education

access and particularly gender equity, huge challenges remain for quality and education management. Again, this change from Year 1 is largely due to federalization, which has compromised SSDP implementation and raised new challenges in terms of sector management at the municipal level.

229. The changed assessment on **Contribution Claim F**, that education system-level improvements result in improved learning outcomes equity, gender equality and inclusion, is the only one that is perhaps not a reflection of federalization. NASA 2018 data, which was not available at Year 1, shows learning outcomes have stagnated since 2012 and that disparities in outcomes exist between districts. Additionally, evidence gathered this past year through the MTR indicates that equity in access has not been accompanied by equity in learning, and that teachers and schools have not adjusted pedagogical practices to meet the needs of diverse students.

230. Finally, it is worth highlighting that the Year 1 report did note the important role of GPE non-financial support to Nepal, but the value of this support seemed to garner more attention in Year 2. MOEST noted that Nepal's involvement in the wider GPE structure is a crucial aspect of its partnership with GPE, including sitting on the Grants and Performance Committee, the Strategy and Impact Committee and as a Board-alternate. They were also very positive about GPE hosting 2019 meetings in Nepal, and Nepal's attendance at the GPE Dakar Replenishment Conference. This did not come out so strongly in the Year 1 report, perhaps because Nepal's involvement in the GPE has deepened over the period.

Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

231. As discussed throughout this report, the GPE country level operational model needs to adjust in light of federalization. The partnership model as typified by the LEG and LEDPG engages only at the federal level, but implementation no longer resides at this level. Capacity to plan for and implement an education system focused on quality, equitable outcomes remains a challenge across Nepal, but federalization introduced new challenges in terms of human resources, capabilities, and disparities within and across municipalities. Recent data shows that learning levels are not improving with increased access and may in fact be more unequitable; GPE country-level model needs to be adjusted to meet the quality challenge head on.

232. GPE funding model may also need to adjust to federalization in order to better support the education sector. Concerns over high transaction costs for shrinking financial support were raised by MOEST, as was ongoing challenges of meeting both Grant Agent and GPE requirements in order to instigate ESPIG grant disbursement. Furthermore, this review has raised some concerns over whether results-based financing is the most appropriate mechanism to promote sustained improvements to learning quality in Nepal.

233. As discussed in Section 3.4, GPE's non-financial support to Nepal is highly valued. MOEST noted that Nepal's involvement in the wider GPE structure is a crucial aspect of its partnership with GPE, including sitting on the Grants and Performance Committee, the Strategy and Impact Committee and as a Board-alternate. MOEST was also very positive about GPE hosting 2019 board meetings in Nepal, and Nepal's attendance at the GPE Dakar Replenishment Conference. Informants characterized these as opportunities for knowledge transfer and networking and expressed interest in further engagement of this sort. Members of the LEDPG similarly stated that GPE brokered Nepal's involvement in wider global education convenings and networks and this was a noteworthy asset of GPE's involvement in Nepal. Given GPE shrinking financial contribution to Nepal's education sector, its role in technical support will become all the more important in the coming years.

7 Conclusions and strategic questions/issues

234. This final section of the report draws **overall conclusions** from the evaluation findings and formulates several **strategic questions** that have been raised by the findings of the Nepal evaluation. These questions are of potential relevance for GPE overall and may warrant further exploration in other upcoming country-level evaluations.

7.1 Conclusions²⁰³

235. GPE has supported education sector planning, monitoring and implementation in Nepal since 2010. GPE financial and non-financial support to Nepal is coordinated and aligned to that of other donors and to the priorities of the GoN through a long-standing SWAp. Nepal's SWAp is considered by many to be a 'gold standard' in sector dialogue; however, the strong rapport and familiarity among LEDPG members has left some civil society organizations struggling to engage meaningfully. The Teachers Federation in particular (but also some members of NCE Nepal) described feeling left-out of some conversations due to a lack of capacity, skills and familiarity with the language and discourse of the SWAp. **GPE can and should play an active role in capacity building with all stakeholders – including the coalitions NCE Nepal and AIN – so that the diverse voices of civil society are adequately heard in sector planning, dialogue, monitoring and implementation.**

236. As discussed throughout this report, the GPE country level operation model needs to adjust in light of federalization. GPE theory of change rests on an assumption of centralized sector monitoring and dialogue, with participation of diverse stakeholders happening centrally and coordinated through the federal government. In Nepal this now comprises of 753 different education systems, each with varying degrees of political will and skill to manage education sector planning, implementation and monitoring. **If GPE is to continue to have an influence on sector planning and implementation in Nepal, it will need to develop a mechanism for engagement with local governments.**

237. GPE's current ESPIG attempts to work around this by incentivizing LGs to integrate SSDP activities and targets into the annual work plans and budgets – a decision made by the LEG to improve local alignment with the SSDP. But municipal governments are constitutionally autonomous and cannot be forced to align with the SSDP; at best, this can only be a stopgap measure during transition. Financial incentives for local governments to align with federal government priorities may be constitutionally challenged in the coming years.

238. The GPE may also need to reconsider its funding model and mechanisms at country level in light of federalization. Sector implementation now resides at the municipal level, and local governments also fund roughly 40% of education expenditure at this level. At the same time, the federal government plays a key role in supporting systemic development of sector planning objectives and monitoring progress on these objectives across districts, provinces and the country as a whole. **The GPE needs to explore how it can best support both federal and local governments under the new federalized structure.**

²⁰³ This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 7 and 8.

239. The GPE funding model relies on a GA to administer its grants, a situation which imposes an extra burden of time and reporting, leading to delayed disbursement. The World Bank currently acts as both GA and Coordinating Agency for GPE in Nepal, which is an unusual situation and may indicate that too much authority rests in a single agency. Furthermore, GPE transaction costs are much higher than other donors despite the fact that grant sizes are comparatively small. Some MOEST staff, while recognizing the value brought by a result-focus, also indicated that the results-based funding modality could be somewhat punitive and may tarnish the broader commitment to a country-driven partnership model. **GPE needs to consider how it can refine its funding model to be more streamlined to the goals of MOEST and to decrease the administrative burden placed on the ministry.**

240. The most pressing need facing Nepal’s education system is improving the quality of education and ensuring that equity in access is matched by equity in learning outcomes. GPE has played a key role in helping Nepal expand educational access but improving quality will be a far more difficult task. The next ESP must tackle problems in teacher effectiveness and deployment head-on, to ensure that Nepali students benefit from relevant pedagogy and classroom learning environments. More support is needed for MOEST and country stakeholders to develop KPIs that will advance and incentivize quality learning.

Table 35 Overview of GPE contribution to country-level objectives of the GPE ToC

COUNTRY-LEVEL OBJECTIVES	RATING OF DEGREE/LIKELIHOOD OF GPE CONTRIBUTION
Sector Planning	Strong
Mutual Accountability	Sector Dialogue - Strong
	Sector Monitoring - Strong
Sector Financing	Modest
Sector Plan Implementation	Modest

7.2 Good practices arising from Nepal

241. The SWAp in Nepal is highly effective, with a long history of mutual trust, alignment to GoN objectives, and commitment to system-strengthening. The LEDPG has played a central role in ensuring that the SSDP is government-owned, evidence-based, adaptive and coordinated through technical support and quality assurance. Through the LEDPG and LEG, GPE provides financial support as well as frameworks and tools which MOEST uses to strengthen the education system in Nepal. Several good practices have emerged from this partnership:

- GPE focus on equity and inclusion is a major value-add to sector planning and implementation in Nepal, and GPE support for the Equity Index is seen as catalytic. As noted in Section 3.3, a recent Global Education Monitoring Report policy paper argued that one of the strongest inputs that donors can provide developing country partners is to build the capacity of national statistical systems in order to instill an overall result orientation and to provide data for evidence informed

decision-making.²⁰⁴ The Equity Index stands as a positive example of this kind of support, and one that could be replicated among other developing country partners.

- GPE support through CSEF grants have been transformative for NCE Nepal and has allowed a degree of civil society oversight and monitoring of the education system in Nepal that would not otherwise be possible. Although there is room for improvement in terms of facilitating civil society (and particularly teacher) engagement in JSR processes, the monitoring and reporting work of NCE Nepal is of good quality and the network credits this with the support received through CSEF. There are surely lessons to be gleaned from this support and from how NCE Nepal has leveraged CSEF funds to strengthen mutual accountability.
- Nepal’s active involvement in GPE regional and global networks is highly valued. Country stakeholders described this involvement (including sitting the Grants and Performance Committee, the Strategy and Impact Committee and as a Board-alternate) as being “like professional development for MOEST”. This model of engagement could be usefully encouraged among other developing country partners.

7.3 Strategic questions arising from this CLE for GPE

242. Key strategic questions arise from this second-year country level evaluation of Nepal, and these can be grouped under two categories: those that impact GPE functioning in Nepal, and those that raise questions for the GPE wider model and way of working.

Strategic questions: GPE functioning in Nepal

- How can GPE partnership model engage more effectively with municipal governments under Nepal’s new federal structure? Local governments have formed two federations – one for rural municipalities and one for urban. What is the scope for GPE to engage these bodies as part of their commitment to support education sector planning, dialogue, monitoring, financing and implementation?
- Nepal has made commendable progress on increasing education access and achieving gender parity in basic and secondary education. How can GPE continue to provide incentives and support countries like Nepal that need to shift from a focus on access to one of quality learning outcomes?
- Federalization presents challenges for reporting, monitoring and accountability due to lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities across the three tiers of government. Yet there is great potential for devolution to strengthen social accountability and citizen engagement. Can GPE build on the noted strengths in capacity building, support to civil society, and commitment to inclusive dialogue to help ensure the democratic promises of federalization are realized?
- Building on the above question: Can GPE’s Education Out Loud fund to support advocacy and social accountability be leveraged in support of local civil society as part of broader efforts to strengthen accountability in federalization?

²⁰⁴ Global Education Monitoring Report, 2018

- GPE financial support to Nepal is small and shrinking, but its technical support, capacity-building and convening power are highly valued. How can the next GPE strategy capture and elevate this important role?
- Building from the above question: what role could Nepal play as a regional partner in GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) fund? Nepal's active role in GPE regional and global networks would suggest that Nepal could play a key leadership role in these new regional financing mechanisms.
- Transaction costs for GPE support are overly burdensome for a small amount of funds. How can the GPE ensure its support is better streamlined to MOEST priorities and less demanding of MOEST staff time?

Strategic questions: GPE wider partnership model and ToC

- Nepal's federal structure has profound implications for the way GPE can support education sector planning, monitoring and implementation. Other countries may also be undergoing shifts in political structure, and decentralization is an increasingly common political refrain. To what extent can the GPE ToC be flexible enough to adapt to different and shifting landscapes among its developing country partners? What aspects of GPE strategy and ToC are non-negotiable, and which can build in room for variance?
- The Grant Agent for GPE's current ESPIG is the World Bank, and the GoN needs to satisfy World Bank requirements and conditions before the GPE ESPIG can begin to be disbursed – a situation flagged by MOEST as less than ideal. This raises questions about the Grant Agent model: How can GPE maintain a strong but autonomous in-country presence? What other network models could be explored or piloted to ensure that DCPs will not have to satisfy two sets of processes/requirements – those of GPE and those of the GA?
- GPE's new funding model is a shift towards results-based financing. However, some stakeholders in Nepal report that results-based financing feels donor-driven and punitive. This reflects global commentary on RBF as counter to principles of aid-effectiveness.²⁰⁵ How can GPE build a results framework for its partnership that shifts from an emphasis on equitable access to one of equitable outcomes, while remaining committed to the principles of its country-driven approach?
- Government and non-governmental stakeholders confirm that Nepal has benefited enormously from involvement in the GPE network and Board committee structure. It is worth investigating the ways in which this involvement was beneficial for Nepal and if there is any learning that could be shared with other developing country partners?

²⁰⁵ Global Education Monitoring Report, 2018; DFID 2018; Pearson, Johnson & Ellison, 2010; Oxman & Fretheim, 2009.

8 Annexes

Annex A Revised Evaluation Matrix

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
Key question I: Has GPE support to [country] contributed to achieving country-level objectives related to sector plan implementation, sector dialogue and monitoring, and more/better financing for education?²⁰⁶ If so, then how?			
CEQ 1: Has GPE contributed to education sector plan implementation in [country] during the period under review?²⁰⁷ How?			
<p>CEQ 1.1a (prospective CLE) What have been strengths and weaknesses of sector planning during the period under review?²⁰⁸</p> <p>What are likely reasons for strong/weak sector planning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible ESP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines²⁰⁹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESP is guided by an overall vision – ESP is strategic, i.e. it identifies strategies for achieving its vision, including required human, technical and financial capacities, and sets priorities) – ESP is holistic, i.e. it covers all sub-sectors as well as non-formal education and adult literacy – ESP is evidence-based, i.e. it starts from an education sector analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent ESPIG • Education Sector Analyses and other documents analyzing key gaps/issues in the sector • GPE ESP/TEP quality assurance documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive analysis • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

²⁰⁶ OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

²⁰⁷ The core period under review varies for summative and prospective evaluations. Prospective evaluations will primarily focus on the period early 2018 to early 2020 and will relate observations of change back to the baseline established at this point. The summative evaluations will focus on the period covered by the most recent ESPIG implemented in the respective country. However, where applicable, (and subject to data availability) the summative evaluations will also look at the beginning of the next policy cycle, more specifically sector planning processes and related GPE support carried out during/towards the end of the period covered by the most recent ESPIG.

²⁰⁸ This question will be applied in prospective evaluations in countries that have not yet developed a (recent) sector plan, such as Mali, as well as in countries that have an existing plan, but that are in the process of embarking into a new planning process. In countries where a sector plan exists and where related GPE support has already been assessed in Year 1 reports, future reports will use a similarly descriptive approach as outlined under question 1.1b, i.e. briefly summarizing key characteristics of the existing sector plan.

²⁰⁹ Global Partnership for education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2015. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESP is achievable – ESP is sensitive to context – ESP pays attention to disparities (e.g. between girls/boys or between groups defined geographically, ethnically/culturally or by income) • <u>For TEPs</u>: Extent to which the country’s sector plan met the criteria for a credible TEP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines²¹⁰ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TEP is shared (state-driven, developed through participatory process) – TEP is evidence-based – TEP is sensitive to context and pays attention to disparities – TEP is strategic, i.e. it identifies strategies that not only help address immediate needs but lay the foundation for realizing system’s long-term vision – TEP is targeted (focused on critical education needs in the short and medium term, on system capacity development, on limited number of priorities) – TEP is operational (feasible, including implementation and monitoring frameworks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE RF data (Indicator 16 a-b-c-d)²¹³ • Other relevant reports or reviews that comment on the quality of the sector plan • Interviews 	

²¹⁰ Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2016. Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-transitional-education-plan-preparation>

²¹³ If the respective ESP has not been rated by GPE (i.e. if no specific information is available on indicators 16 a-d), the evaluation team will provide a broad assessment of the extent to which the ESP meets or does not meet the quality criteria. This review will be based on *existing* reviews and assessments of the sector plan, particularly the appraisal report. To the extent possible, findings of these assessments will be ‘translated’ in terms of the GPE/IIEP quality standards.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the ESP/TEP meets GPE quality criteria as outlined in the GPE 2020 results framework (indicators 16a, b, c and d)²¹¹ • Extent to which the ESP/TEP addresses the main issues/gaps in the education sector (as identified through Education Sector Analyses and/or other studies) • Extent to which the process of sector plan preparation has been country-led, participatory, and transparent²¹² • Stakeholder views on strengths and weaknesses of the most recent sector planning process in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leadership for and inclusiveness of sector plan development – Relevance, coherence and achievability of the sector plan 		
<p>CEQ 1.1b (summative CLE) What characterized the education sector plan in place during the core period under review?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESP/TEP objectives/envisioned results and related targets • <u>For ESPs:</u> Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible ESP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines²¹⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESP is guided by an overall vision – ESP is strategic, i.e. it identifies strategies for achieving its vision, including required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent ESPIG • GPE ESP/TEP quality assurance documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive analysis

²¹¹ If no GPE ratings on these indicators are available, evaluation team's assessment of extent to which the ESP meets the various criteria outlined under indicator 16a-d.

²¹² Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2015. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002337/233768e.pdf>

²¹⁴ Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2015. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<p>human, technical and financial capacities, and sets priorities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESP is holistic, i.e. it covers all sub-sectors as well as non-formal education and adult literacy – ESP is evidence-based, i.e. it starts from an education sector analysis – ESP is achievable – ESP is sensitive to context – ESP pays attention to disparities (e.g. between girls/boys or between groups defined geographically, ethnically/culturally or by income) • For TEPs: Extent to which the country’s sector plan met the criteria for a credible TEP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines²¹⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TEP is shared (state-driven, developed through participatory process) – TEP is evidence-based – TEP is sensitive to context and pays attention to disparities – TEP is strategic, i.e. it identifies strategies that not only help address immediate needs but lay the foundation for realizing system’s long-term vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE RF data (indicator 16 a-b-c-d)²¹⁷ • Other relevant reports or reviews that comment on the quality of the sector plan 	

²¹⁵ Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2016. Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-transitional-education-plan-preparation>

²¹⁷ If the respective ESP has not been rated by GPE (i.e. if no specific information is available on indicators 16 a-d), the evaluation team will provide a broad assessment of the extent to which the ESP meets or does not meet the quality criteria. This review will be based on *existing* reviews and assessments of the sector plan, in particular the appraisal report. To the extent possible, findings of these assessments will be ‘translated’ in terms of the GPE/IIEP quality standards.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – TEP is targeted (focused on critical education needs in the short and medium term, on system capacity development, on limited number of priorities) – TEP is operational (feasible, including implementation and monitoring frameworks) • Extent to which the ESP/TEP meets GPE quality criteria as outlined in the GPE 2020 results framework (indicators 16a, b, c and d)²¹⁶ 		
<p>CEQ 1.2a (prospective CLE) Has GPE contributed to the observed characteristics of sector planning? How? If no, why not?</p> <p>a) Through the GPE ESPDG grant- (funding, funding requirements)</p> <p>b) Through other support for sector planning (advocacy, standards, quality assurance procedures, guidelines, capacity building, facilitation, CSEF and ASA grants, and cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice)²¹⁸</p>	<p>a) Contributions through GPE ESPDG grant and related funding requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPDG amount as a share of total resources invested into sector plan preparation. • Types of activities/deliverables financed through ESPDG and their role in informing/enabling sector plan development <p>b) Contributions through other (non ESPDG-related) support to sector planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of GPE quality assurance processes improving the quality of the final, compared to draft versions of the sector plan • Stakeholder views on relevance and appropriateness/value added of GPE support, in-country assistance from GA/CA, Secretariat/GA/CA advocacy, capacity building, facilitation; GPE standards, guidelines, CSEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and final versions of the sector plan • Related GPE ESP/TSP quality assurance documents • Secretariat reports, e.g. country lead back to office/mission reports • Other documents on advocacy/facilitation provided by Secretariat, CA or GA • Country-specific ESPDG grant applications • Interviews • Education sector analyses and other studies conducted with ESPDG funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

²¹⁶ If no GPE ratings on these indicators are available, evaluation team's assessment of extent to which the ESP meets the various criteria outlined under indicator 16a-d.

²¹⁸ Advocacy can include inputs from Secretariat, grant agent, coordinating agency, LEG, and GPE at global level (e.g. Board meetings, agreed upon standards). Knowledge exchange includes cross-national/global activities organized by the Secretariat, as well as the sharing and use of insights derived from GRA and KIX grant-supported interventions.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	and ASA grants, and knowledge exchange in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving the quality (including relevance) of education sector plans – Strengthening in-country capacity for sector planning 		
CEQ 1.2b-d (summative CLE – currently in Part B of the matrix below and labelled CEQ 9-11)			
<p>CEQ 1.3 What have been strengths and weaknesses of sector plan implementation during the period under review?</p> <p>What are likely reasons for strong/weak sector plan implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made towards implementing sector plan objectives/meeting implementation targets of current/most recent sector plan within envisaged timeframe (with focus on changes relevant in view of GPE 2020 envisaged impact and outcome areas). • Extent to which sector plan implementation is funded (expected and actual funding gap) • Evidence of government ownership of and leadership for plan implementation (country specific).²¹⁹ • Government implementation capacity and management, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existence of clear operational/implementation plans or equivalents to guide sector plan implementation and monitoring – Clear roles and responsibilities related to plan implementation and monitoring – Relevant staff have required knowledge/skills/experience) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent (mostly) complete ESPIG • DCP government ESP/TEP implementation documents including midterm or final reviews • Relevant program or sector evaluations, including reviews preceding the period of GPE support under review • JSR reports • Reports or studies on ESP/TEP implementation commissioned by other development partners and/or the DCP government • CSO reports • Interviews • DCP’s plan implementation progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive analysis • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

²¹⁹ For example, in some countries one indicator of country ownership may be the existence of measures to gradually transfer funding for specific ESP elements from GPE/development partner support to domestic funding. However, this indicator may not be applicable in all countries. Stakeholder interviews will be an important source for identifying appropriate, context-specific indicators for government ownership in each case.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which development partners who have endorsed the plan have actively supported/contributed to its implementation in an aligned manner. • Extent to which sector dialogue and monitoring have facilitated dynamic adaptation of sector plan implementation to respond to contextual changes (where applicable) • Extent to which the quality of the implementation plan in the ESP/TEP and of the plan itself is influencing the actual implementation (e.g. achievability, prioritization of objectives). • Stakeholder views on reasons why plan has or has not been implemented as envisaged 		
<p>CEQ 1.4 Has GPE contributed to the observed characteristics of sector plan implementation? If so, then how? If not, why not?</p> <p>a) Through GPE EPDG, ESPIG grants-related funding requirements and the variable tranche under the New Funding Model (NFM)²²⁰</p> <p>b) Through non-financial support (advocacy, standards, quality assurance procedures, guidelines, capacity building, and facilitation, and cross-national</p>	<p>Contributions through GPE EPDG and ESPIG grants, related funding requirements and variable tranche under the NFM (where applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of overall sector plan (both in terms of costs and key objectives) funded through GPE ESPIG • Absolute amount of GPE disbursement and GPE disbursement as a share of total aid to education • Evidence of GPE grants addressing gaps/needs or priorities identified by the DCP government and/or LEG • Degree of alignment of ESPIG objectives with ESP objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESP implementation data including joint sector reviews • GPE grant agent reports and other grant performance data • Secretariat reports, e.g. country lead back to office/mission reports • GPE ESP/TSP quality assurance documents • Other documents on GPE advocacy/facilitation • Country-specific grant applications • Interviews • Education sector analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews • Where applicable: Comparison of progress made towards ESPIG grant objectives linked to specific performance targets with those without targets (variable tranche under the New Funding Model)

²²⁰ Where applicable.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
sharing of evidence/good practice) ²²¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant implementation is on time and on budget • Degree of achievement of/progress toward achieving ESPIG targets (showed mapped to ESPIG objectives, and sector plan objectives) • Evidence of variable tranche having influenced policy dialogue before and during sector plan implementation (where applicable) • Progress made towards sector targets outlined in GPE grant agreements as triggers for variable tranche under the NFM, compared to progress made in areas without specific targets (where applicable) • EPDG/ESPIG resources allocated to (implementation) capacity development • Stakeholder views on GPE EPDG and ESPIG grants with focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Value added by these grants to overall sector plan implementation; – the extent to which the new (2015) funding model is clear and appropriate especially in relation to the variable tranche; – how well GPE grant application processes are working for in-country stakeholders (e.g. are grant requirements clear? Are they appropriate considering available grant amounts?); <p>Contributions through non-financial support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of GPE support (advocacy, facilitation, knowledge sharing) aimed at strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country’s poverty reduction strategy paper 	

²²¹ Facilitation provided primarily through the Secretariat, the grant agent and coordinating agency. Advocacy – including inputs from Secretariat, grant agent, coordinating agency, LEG, and GPE at global level (e.g. Board meetings, agreed upon standards). Knowledge exchange - including cross-national/global activities related to the diffusion of evidence and best practice to improve sector planning and implementation.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<p>sustainable local/national capacities for plan implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of GPE non-financial support in light of DCP government’s own capacity development plan(s) (where applicable) • Stakeholder views on relevance and effectiveness of GPE non-financial support with focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – GPE non-financial support contributing to strengthening sustainable local/national capacities relevant for plan implementation – GPE non-financial facilitating harmonized development partners’ support to plan implementation • Possible causes for no/ limited GPE contribution to plan implementation. 		
<p>CEQ 1.5 How has education sector financing evolved during the period under review?</p> <p>a) Amounts of domestic financing</p> <p>b) Amounts and sources of international financing</p> <p>c) Quality of domestic and international financing (e.g. short, medium and long-term predictability, alignment with government systems)?</p> <p>1. If no positive changes, then why not?</p>	<p>a) Amounts of domestic education sector financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in country’s public expenditures on education during period under review (absolute amounts and spending relative to total government expenditure) • Extent to which country has achieved, maintained, moved toward, or exceeded 20% of public expenditures on education during period under review • Changes in education recurrent spending as a percentage of total government recurrent spending <p>b) Amounts and sources of international financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the number and types of international donors supporting the education sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creditor Reporting System (CRS) by OECD-DAC • UIS data by UNESCO • National data (e.g. Education Management Information Systems, National Education Accounts, Joint Sector Reviews, public expenditure reviews) • GPE results framework indicator 29 on alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend analysis for period under review • Descriptive analysis

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in amounts of education sector funding from traditional and non-traditional donors (e.g. private foundations and non-DAC members) • Changes in percentage of capital expenditures and other education investments funded through donor contributions c) Quality of sector financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the quality (predictability, alignment, harmonization/modality) of international education sector financing to country • Changes in the quality of domestic education financing (e.g. predictability, frequency and timeliness of disbursements, program versus input-based funding) • Extent to which country dedicates at least 45% of its education budget to primary education (for countries where PCR is below 95%) • Changes in allocation of specific/additional funding to marginalized groups • Changes in extent to which other donors' funding/conditional budget support is tied to the education sector 		
<p>CEQ 1.6 Has GPE contributed to leveraging additional education sector financing and improving the quality of financing? If yes, then how? If not, then why not?</p> <p>a) Through ESPIG funding and related funding requirements?</p> <p>b) Through the GPE multiplier funding mechanisms (where applicable)?</p>	<p>a) Through ESPIG funding and related requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government commitment to finance the endorsed sector plan (expressed in ESPIG applications) • Extent to which GPE Program Implementation Grant-supported programs have been co-financed by other actors or are part of pooled funding mechanisms • Stakeholder views on extent to which GPE funding requirements (likely) having 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG grant applications and related documents (country commitment on financing requirement) • Donor pledges and contributions to ESP implementation) • Creditor Reporting System (CRS) by OECD-DAC • UIS data by UNESCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative analysis (GPE versus other donor contributions) • Triangulation of quantitative analysis with interview data

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
<p>2. Through other means, including advocacy²²² at national and/or global levels?</p>	<p>influenced changes in domestic education financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in relative size of GPE financial contribution in relation to other donor' contributions • Trends in external financing and domestic financing channeled through and outside of GPE, and for basic and total education, to account for any substitution by donors or the country government • Alignment of GPE education sector program implementation grants with national systems²²³ • Possible reasons for non-alignment or non-harmonization of ESPIGs (if applicable) <p>b) Through the GPE multiplier funding mechanism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount received by DCP government through the GPE multiplier fund (if applicable) • Stakeholder views on clarity and efficiency of multiplier application process <p>c) Through other means (especially advocacy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood of GPE advocacy having contributed to country meeting/approaching goal of 20% of the total national budget dedicated to education • Changes in existing dynamics between education and finance ministries that stakeholders (at least partly) attribute to GPE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National data (e.g. Education Management Information Systems, National Education Accounts, Joint Sector Reviews, public expenditure reviews) • Interviews with national actors (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Local Education Groups/ Development partner groups) 	

²²² Through the Secretariat at country and global levels, and/or GPE board members (global level, influencing country-specific approaches of individual donors)

²²³ GPE's system alignment criteria including the 10 elements of alignment and the elements of harmonization captured by RF indicators 29, 30 respectively.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	advocacy ²²⁴ (e.g. JSRs attended by senior MoF staff) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amounts and quality of additional resources likely mobilized with contribution from GPE advocacy efforts at country or global levels • Amounts and sources of non-traditional financing (e.g. private or innovative finance) that can be linked to GPE leveraging 		
CEQ 2 Has GPE contributed to strengthening mutual accountability for the education sector during the period under review? If so, then how?			
CEQ 2.1 Has sector dialogue changed during the period under review? If so, then how and why? If not, why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition of the country’s LEG (in particular civil society and teacher association representation), and changes in this composition during period under review; other dialogue mechanisms in place (if any) and dynamics between those mechanisms • Frequency of LEG meetings, and changes in frequency during period under review • LEG members consulted for ESPIG application • Stakeholder views on changes in sector dialogue in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Degree to which different actors lead, contribute to, or facilitate dialogue – Inclusiveness – Consistency, clarity of roles and responsibilities – Meaningfulness (i.e. perceptions on whether, when and how stakeholder input is considered for decision making) – Quality (evidence-based, transparent) – Likely causes for no/limited (changes in) sector dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEG meeting notes • Joint sector reviews or equivalents from before and during most recent ESPIG period • GPE sector review assessments • ESP/TSP, and documents illustrating process of their development • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat • ESPIG grant applications (section V – information on stakeholder consultations) • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post comparison • Triangulate results of document review and interviews • Stakeholder analysis and mapping

²²⁴ This advocacy can have taken place in the context of GPE support to education sector planning, sector dialogue, and/or plan implementation

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
<p>CEQ 2.2 Has sector monitoring changed? If so, then how and why? If not, why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which plan implementation is being monitored (e.g. results framework with targets, performance review meetings, annual progress reports... and actual use of these monitoring tools) • Frequency of joint sector reviews conducted, and changes in frequency during period under review; nature of JSR meetings held; and any other monitoring events at country level (e.g., DP meetings...) • Extent to which joint sector reviews conducted during period of most recent ESPIG met GPE quality standards (if data is available: compared to JSRs conducted prior to this period) • Evidence deriving from JSRs is reflected in DCP government decisions (e.g. adjustments to sector plan implementation) and sector planning • Stakeholder views on changes in JSRs in terms of them being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inclusive and participatory, involving the right number and types of stakeholders – Aligned to existing sector plan and/or policy framework – Evidence based – Used for learning/informing decision-making – Embedded in the policy cycle (timing of JSR appropriate to inform decision making; processes in place to follow up on JRS recommendations)²²⁵ and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEG and JSR meeting notes • Joint sector review reports/aide memoires or equivalents from before and during most recent ESPIG period • GPE sector review assessments • Grant agent reports • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post comparison • Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

²²⁵ Criteria adapted from: Global Partnership for Education. Effective Joint Sector Reviews as (Mutual) Accountability Platforms. GPE Working Paper #1. Washington. June 2017. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/helping-partners-make-best-use-joint-sector-reviews>

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<p>recommendations are acted upon and implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder views on extent to which current practices of sector dialogue and monitoring amount to ‘mutual accountability’ for the education sector. Likely causes for no/ limited (changes in) sector monitoring. 		
<p>CEQ 2.3 Has GPE contributed to observed changes in sector dialogue and monitoring? If so, then how? If not, why not?</p> <p>a) Through GPE grants and funding requirements²²⁶</p> <p>b) Through other support (capacity development, advocacy, standards, quality assurance, guidelines, facilitation, cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice)²²⁷</p>	<p>a) Grants and funding requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of total costs for sector dialogue mechanisms (and/or related specific events) funded through GPE grants Proportion of total costs for sector monitoring mechanisms (e.g. JSR) funded through GPE grants Stakeholder views on extent to which GPE funding process (e.g. selection of grant agent, development of program document, grant application) and grant requirements positively or negatively influenced the existence and functioning of mechanisms for sector dialogue and/or monitoring <p>b) Non-grant related support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is aimed at strengthening local/national capacities for conducting inclusive and evidence-based sector dialogue and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEG meeting notes Joint sector reviews or equivalents from before and during most recent ESPIG period GPE sector review assessments Grant agent reports Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat Interviews CSEF, KIX documents etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

²²⁶ All relevant GPE grants to country/actors in country, including CSEF and KIX, where applicable.

²²⁷ Capacity development and facilitation primarily through Secretariat, coordinating agency (especially in relation to sector dialogue) and grant agent (especially in relation to sector monitoring). Advocacy through Secretariat (country lead), CA, as well as (possibly) GPE at the global level (e.g. Board meetings, agreed upon standards). Knowledge exchange includes cross-national/global activities organized by the Secretariat, as well as the sharing and use of insights derived from GRA and KIX grant-supported interventions. Knowledge sharing also possible through other GPE partners at country level (e.g. other donors/LEG members) if provided primarily in their role as GPE partners.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is targeted at gaps/weaknesses of sector dialogue/monitoring identified by DCP government and/or LEG • Support for strengthening sector dialogue/monitoring is adapted to meet the technical and cultural requirements of the specific context in [country] a) and b) • Stakeholder view on relevance and appropriateness of GPE grants and related funding process and requirements, and of other support in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Addressing existing needs/priorities – Respecting characteristics of the national context – Adding value to country-driven processes (e.g. around JSRs) • Possible causes for no/ limited GPE contributions to dialogue/monitoring. 		
CEQ 3: Has GPE support had unintended/unplanned effects? What factors other than GPE support have contributed to observed changes in sector planning, sector plan implementation, sector financing and monitoring?			
CEQ 3.1 What factors other than GPE support are likely to have contributed to the observed changes (or lack thereof) in sector planning, financing, plan implementation, and in sector dialogue and monitoring?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in nature and extent of financial/non-financial support to the education sector provided by development partners/donors (traditional/non-traditional donors including foundations) • Contributions (or lack thereof) to sector plan implementation, sector dialogue or monitoring made by actors other than GPE • Changes/events in national or regional context(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Political context (e.g. changes in government/leadership) – Economic context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents illustrating changes in priorities pursued by (traditional/non-traditional) donors related implications for [country] • Relevant studies/reports commissioned by other education sector actors (e.g. donors, multilateral agencies) regarding nature/changes in their contributions and related results • Government and other (e.g. media) reports on changes in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Social/environmental contexts (e.g. natural disasters, conflict, health crises) – Other (context-specific) 	relevant national contexts and implications for the education sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	
CEQ 3.2 During the period under review, have there been unintended, positive or negative, consequences of GPE financial and non-financial support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of unintended, positive and negative, effects on sector planning, financing, sector plan implementation, sector dialogue and monitoring deriving from GPE grants and funding requirements • Types of unintended, positive and negative, effects deriving from other GPE support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data sources outlined for CEQs 1 and 2 above • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulate the results of document review and interviews
Key question II: Has sector plan implementation contributed to making the overall education system in [country] more effective and efficient?			
CEQ 4 During the period under review, how has the education system changed in relation to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improving access to education and equity? b) Enhancing education quality and relevance (quality of teaching/instruction)? c) Sector Management?²²⁸ If there were no changes in the education system, then why not and with what implications? ²²⁹	a) Improving education access and equity - focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, where available, e.g. related to: ²³⁰ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in number of schools relative to children • Changes in the average distance to schools • Changes in costs of education to families • Changes in the availability of programs to improve children’s’ readiness for school) • New/expanded measures put in place to ensure meeting the educational needs of children with special needs and of learners from disadvantaged groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Management Information System (EMIS) • UIS data • World Bank data • Household survey data • ASER/UWEZO other citizen-led surveys • Grant agent progress reports • Implementing partner progress reports • Midterm Evaluation reports • GPE annual Results Report • Appraisal Reports • Public expenditure reports • CSO reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post comparison of statistical data for periods under review • Triangulate the results of document review with statistical data, interviews and literature on ‘good practice’ in specific areas of systems strengthening

²²⁸ The sub-questions reflect indicators under Strategic Goal #3 as outlined in the GPE results framework as well as country-specific indicators for system-level change and elements (such as institutional strengthening) of particular interest to the Secretariat.

²²⁹ Implications for education access and equity, quality and relevance, and sector management, as well as likely implications for progress towards learning outcomes and gender equality/equity.

²³⁰ The noted indicators are examples of relevant measures to indicate removal of barriers to education access. Applicability may vary across countries. Where no country specific indicators and/or data are available, the CLE will draw upon UIS (and other) data on the described indicators.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/expanded measures put in place to ensure gender equality in education b) Enhancing education quality and relevance (Quality of teaching/instruction) – focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, e.g. related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in pupil/trained teacher ratio during period under review • Changes in equitable allocation of teachers (measured by relationship between number of teachers and number of pupils per school) • Changes in relevance and clarity of (basic education) curricula • Changes in the quality and availability of teaching and learning materials • Changes in teacher pre-service and in-service training • Changes in incentives for schools/teachers c) Sector Management – focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, e.g. related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the institutional capacity of key ministries and/or other relevant government agencies (e.g. staffing, structure, organizational culture, funding) • Changes in whether country has and how it uses EMIS data to inform policy dialogue, decision making and sector monitoring • If no functioning EMIS is in place, existence of a realistic remedial strategy in place • Changes in whether country has and how it uses quality learning assessment system within the basic education cycle during period under review <p>(a-c):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SABER database • Education financing studies • Literature on good practices in education system domains addressed in country’s sector plan • Interviews • ESPIG grant applications • Relevant documents/reports illustrating changes in key ministries’ institutional capacity (e.g. on restructuring, internal resource allocation) 	

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely causes for no/ limited changes at system level (based on literature review and stakeholder views) 		
<p>CEQ 5 How has sector plan implementation contributed to observed changes at education system level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific measures put in place as part of sector plan implementation address previously identified bottlenecks at system level Alternative explanations for observed changes at system level (e.g. changes due to external factors, continuation of trend that was already present before current/most recent policy cycle, targeted efforts outside of the education sector plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources as shown for CEQ 4 Literature on good practices in education system domains addressed in country's sector plan Education sector analyses Country's poverty reduction strategy paper 	
<p>Key question III: Have improvements at education system level contributed to progress towards impact?</p>			
<p>CEQ 6 During the period under review, what changes have occurred in relation to:</p> <p>a) Learning outcomes (basic education)?</p> <p>b) Equity, gender equality and inclusion in education?</p> <p>Is there evidence to link changes in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality, and inclusion to system-level changes identified under CEQ 4?</p> <p>What other factors can explain changes in learning outcomes, equity, etc.?</p>	<p>Changes/trends in DCP's core indicators related to learning/equity as outlined in current sector plan and disaggregated (if data is available). For example:</p> <p>a) Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes/trends in learning outcomes (basic education) during period under review (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban locations) <p>b) Equity, gender equality, and inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in gross and net enrollment rates (basic education) during review period (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban) Changes in proportion of children (girls/boys) who complete (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education Changes in transition rates from primary to lower secondary education (by gender, by socio-economic group) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector performance data available from GPE, UIS, DCP government and other reliable sources Teacher Development Information System (TDIS) Education Management Information System (EMIS) National examination data International and regional learning assessment data EGRA/EGMA data ASER/UWEZO other citizen-led surveys Grant agent and Implementing partner progress reports Midterm Evaluation reports GPE annual Results Report Studies/evaluation reports on education (sub)sector(s) in country commissioned by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-post comparison of available education sector data (examination of trends) during and up to 5 years before core period under review Triangulation of statistical data with qualitative document analysis

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in out-of-school rate for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education (by gender, socio-economic group, rural/urban location) • Changes in dropout and/or repetition rates (depending on data availability) for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education • Changes in the distribution of out-of-school children (girls/boys; children with/without disability; ethnic, geographic and/or economic backgrounds) • Plausible links between changes in country’s change trajectory related to learning outcomes, equity, gender equality, and inclusion during period under review on the one hand, and specific system-level changes put in place during the same period • Additional explanations for observed changes in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality, and inclusion other than system-level changes noted under CEQ 4 and 5 • Likely reasons for impact-level changes during period under review 	<p>DCP government or other development partners (where available)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature on key factors affecting learning outcomes, equity, equality, and inclusion in comparable settings 	
Key question IV: What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to [country]?			
<p>CEQ 7 What, if any, aspects of GPE support to [country] should be improved? What, if any, good practices have emerged related to how GPE supports countries?²³¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights deriving from answering evaluation questions above e.g. in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clarity and relevance of the roles and responsibilities of key GPE actors at the country level (Secretariat, GA, CA, DCP government, other actors) – Strengths and weaknesses of how and whether GPE key country-level actors fulfill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above as well as (for summative evaluations) sources applied for CEQs 9, 10 and 11 (part B below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data collected and analysis conducted for other evaluation questions

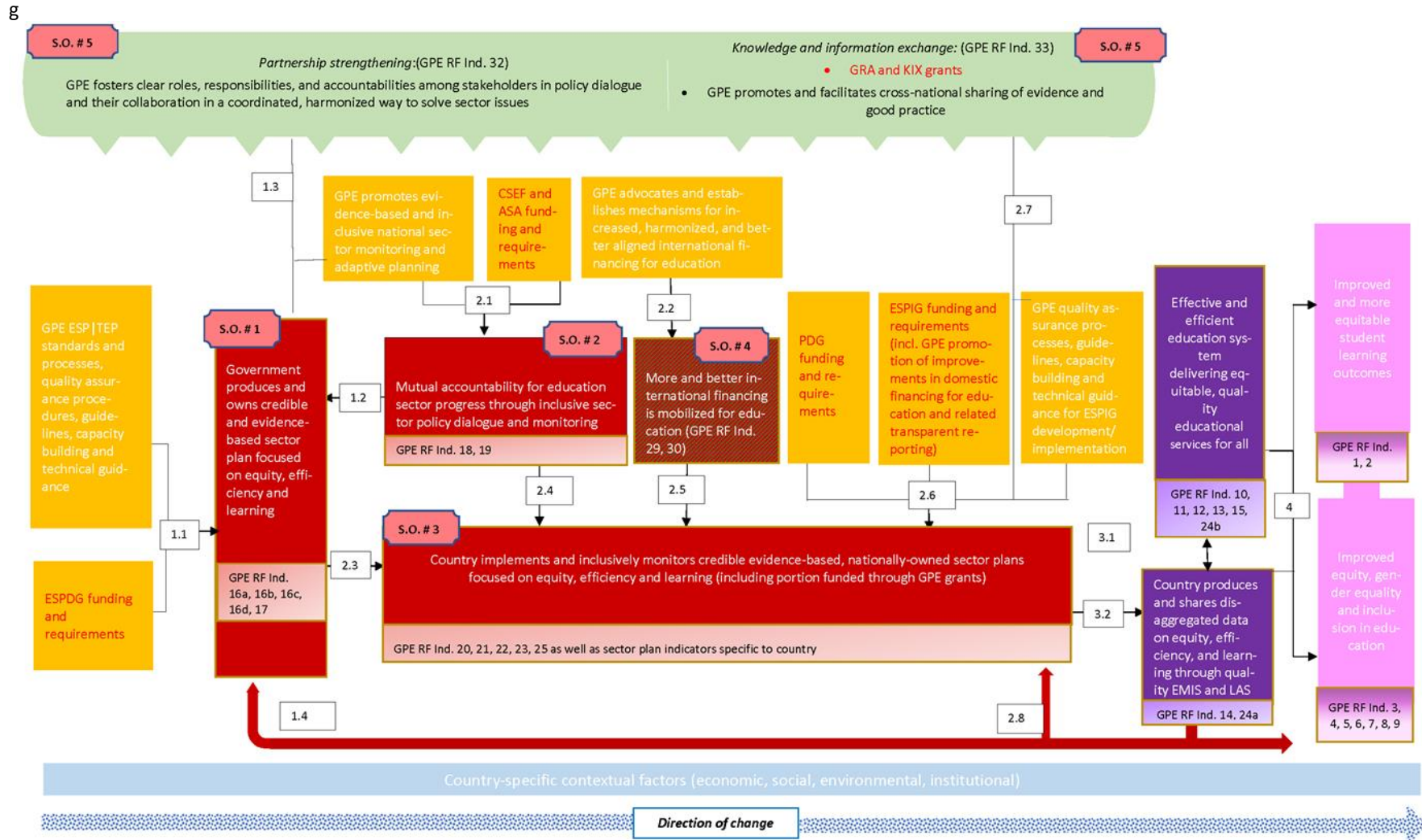
²³¹ For both questions CEQ 7 and 8 the notion of ‘good practice’ refers to acknowledging processes, mechanisms, ways of working etc. that the CLE found to work well and/or that were innovative in that specific context. The intention is not to try and identify globally relevant benchmarks or universally ‘good practice’.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB- QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<p>their roles (both separately and jointly i.e. through a partnership approach)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The relative influence/benefits deriving from GPE financial and non-financial support respectively (with focus on the NFM, where applicable) – Extent to which logical links in the GPE theory of change are, or are not, supported by evidence – Extent to which originally formulated underlying assumptions of the ToC appear to apply/not apply and why – Extent to which different elements in the theory of change appear to mutually enforce/support each other (e.g. relationship sector dialogue and sector planning) – Stakeholder satisfaction with GPE support 		
<p>CEQ 8 What, if any, good practices have emerged related to how countries address specific education sector challenges/how countries operate during different elements of the policy cycle?²³²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights deriving from answering evaluation questions above e.g. in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Effectiveness of approaches taken in the respective country to ensure effective sector planning, sector dialogue and monitoring, sector financing, sector plan implementation. – Successful, promising, and/or contextually innovative approaches taken as part of sector plan implementation to address specific sector challenges²³³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above as well as (for summative evaluations) sources applied for CEQs 9, 10 and 11 (part B below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data collected and analysis conducted for other evaluation questions

²³² This could mean, for example, highlighting strengths of existing mechanisms for sector planning that either reflect related GPE/IEEP guidelines and quality criteria or that introduce alternative/slightly different approaches that appear to work well in the respective context.

²³³ For example, highlighting promising approaches taken by the respective government and development partners to try and reach out of school children. Please note that ‘innovative’ means ‘innovative/new in the respective context’, not necessarily globally new.

Annex B GPE ToC



LEGEND

XXX	Non-financial GPE inputs/support (technical assistance, facilitation, advocacy)
XXX	GPE financial inputs/support (grants) and related funding requirements
	Country-level objectives that GPE support/influence directly contributes to
	Global-level objectives that GPE support/influence directly contributes, which have consequences at country level (policy cycle continuum)
	Global-level objectives with ramifications at country level, that are influenced but not solely driven by GPE's global and country-level interventions and/or influence
	Intermediate outcomes: Education system-level changes
	Impact: Changes in learning outcomes, equity, equality, and inclusion
	Contextual factors
S.O. # 3	Corresponding Strategic Objective in the GPE 2020 Strategic Plan
1	Numbers represent the key areas where logical linkages (explanatory mechanisms) connect different elements of the theory of change to one another (' <i>because of x, y happens</i> '). Numbers are aligned with the anticipated sequencing of achievements (1. sector plan development, 2. sector plan implementation, sector monitoring and dialogue, 3. education system-level changes, 4. envisaged impact).

Annex C Explanatory mechanisms and (implicit) contribution claims

#	EXPLANATORY MECHANISM	(IMPLICIT) CONTRIBUTION CLAIM
1 – GPE contributions to sector planning		
1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4	<p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) GPE provides Education Sector Plan Development Grants and guidance, quality assurance, capacity development and technical guidance • (2) GPE promotes (at global and country levels) evidence-based and adaptive planning • (3) GPE promotes and facilitates cross-national sharing of evidence and good practice • (4) GPE fosters clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities among stakeholders in policy dialogue and their collaboration in a coordinated, harmonized way to solve sector issues • (5) Data on systems, equity, and learning generated through quality EMIS and LAS are fed back and used to inform sector planning <p>DCP government produces and owns credible and evidence-based sector plans focused on equity, efficiency, and learning</p>	<p>Contribution claim A: GPE (financial and non-financial) support and influence contribute to the <i>development</i> of government owned, credible and evidence-based sector plans focused on equity, efficiency and learning.</p>
2 - GPE contributions to sector plan implementation, sector monitoring, and dialogue		
2.1	<p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) GPE provides CSEF and ASA grants • (2) GPE supports and promotes evidence-based and inclusive national sector monitoring and adaptive planning at global and country levels • (3) GPE promotes and facilitates cross-national sharing of evidence and good practice • (4) GPE fosters clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities among stakeholders in policy dialogue and their collaboration in a coordinated, harmonized way to solve sector issues <p>There is mutual accountability for sector progress through inclusive sector policy dialogue and monitoring</p>	<p>Contribution claim B: GPE (financial and non-financial) support for inclusive sector planning and joint monitoring contribute to <i>mutual accountability</i> for education sector progress.</p>
2.2	<p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) GPE advocates for and establishes mechanisms for increased, harmonized, and better aligned international financing for education, and • (2) GPE funding requirements include the promotion of improvements in domestic financing for education promotes <p>There is more and better financing for education mobilized in the country.</p>	<p>Contribution claim C: GPE advocacy and funding requirements contribute to more and better financing for education in the country.</p>
2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6	<p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) GPE provides funding through PDGs and ESPIGS 	<p>Contribution claim D: GPE (financial and non-financial) support and influence</p>

#	EXPLANATORY MECHANISM	(IMPLICIT) CONTRIBUTION CLAIM
2.7 and 2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2) GPE provides quality assurance, processes, guidelines, capacity building and technical guidance for ESPIG development and implementation • (3) there is mutual accountability for education sector progress • (4) the country has developed a credible and evidence-based sector plan • (5) more and better domestic and international financing for education is available • (6) GPE promotes and facilitates cross-national sharing of evidence and good practice • (7) Data on systems, equity, and learning generated through quality EMIS and LAS are fed back and used to inform sector plan implementation <p>The country implements and monitors credible, evidence-based sector plans based on equity, efficiency and learning</p>	contribute to the effective and efficient <i>implementation</i> of sector plans.
3. From country-level objectives to system-level change (intermediary outcome)		
3.1	<p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) countries implement and monitor realistic, evidence-based education sector plans based on equity, efficiency and learning <p>The education system becomes more effective and efficient towards delivering equitable quality educational services for all</p>	<p>Contribution claim E: The development, implementation and monitoring of realistic evidence based sector plans contributes to positive changes at the level of the overall <i>education system</i>.</p>
3.2	<p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) sector plan implementation includes provisions for strengthened EMIS and LAS • (2) because GPE promotes and facilitates sharing of evidence and mutual accountability for education sector progress <p>Country produces and shares disaggregated data on equity, efficiency, and learning</p>	
4. From system-level change (intermediate outcomes) to impact		
4	<p>BECAUSE of improvements at the level of the overall education system, there are improved learning outcomes and improved equity, equality, and inclusion in education.</p>	<p>Contribution claim F: Education system-level improvements result in <i>improved learning outcomes</i> and in <i>improved equity, gender equality, and inclusion</i> in education.</p>

Annex D Interview protocols

These guidelines are not intended as questionnaires. It will not be possible to cover all issues in all categories with all individuals or groups. The evaluation team members will use their judgment and focus on areas which are likely to add most to the team's existing knowledge, while allowing interviewees and groups to highlight the issues that are most important to them.

The evaluators will formulate questions in a (non-technical) way that respondents can easily relate to, while generating evidence that is relevant to the evaluation questions that the evaluators have in mind.

Approach to interviews

- Interviews will be a major source of information for this evaluation. These will be a means to extract evidence, as well as to triangulate evidence drawn from other interviews and the document review, and will form part of the consultative process.
- A stakeholder analysis, as presented in baseline report, will inform the selection of interviewees. Over the evaluation period the evaluation team aims to target a comprehensive range of stakeholders that fully represent all significant institutional, policy and beneficiary interests. The team will periodically review the list of those interviewed to ensure that any potential gaps are addressed and to prevent under-representation of key stakeholders.
- All interviews will comply with the team's commitment to the respective evaluation ethics (the work of the evaluation team will be guided by: OECD DAC Evaluation Quality Standards for Development Evaluation;²³⁴ UNEG Norms, Standards, Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System;²³⁵ the World Bank's principles and standards for evaluating global and regional partnership programs;²³⁶ ALNAP's Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide;²³⁷ the Sphere Handbook and Standards for Monitoring and Evaluation;²³⁸ and Guidance on Ethical Research Involving Children.²³⁹)
- Interviews will be conducted in confidence and usually on a one-to-one or one-to-two basis (to enable note-taking). Reports will not quote informants by name and will not include direct quotes where it could risk revealing the participant's identity or attribution without prior consent.
- A protocol and standard format for recording interview notes is presented below. This will be used for all interviews and will ensure systematic recording of details, while allowing for flexibility in the specific questions asked. Interview notes will be written up, consolidated into an interview compendium and shared among team members via the internal team-only e-library. To respect interviewee confidentiality, the interview notes will be accessible only to team members. The compendium of interview notes will facilitate analysis across all interviews and will enable searches on key thematic terms, initiatives and so on. This will maximize the analytical potential of interviews and the possibilities for triangulation.

²³⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

²³⁵ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21> and <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22> , <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102> and <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

²³⁶ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGLOREGPARPROG/Resources/sourcebook.pdf>

²³⁷ <http://www.alnap.org/resource/23592.aspx>

²³⁸ <http://www.sphereproject.org/silo/files/sphere-for-monitoring-and-evaluation.pdf>

²³⁹ <http://childethics.com/>

Focus group discussions

- The evaluation team may also make use of focus group discussions. Similar to the interview guides, the sub-headings and discussion guide points used are linked to the areas of enquiry and evaluation questions set out in the evaluation matrix, and are intended as a guide only, for the evaluation team to follow flexibly in order to maximize its learning from each discussion group.
- All focus group discussions will reflect with the evaluation team's commitment to appropriate evaluation ethics (as referenced above).

Annex E Risks to the Evaluation and Ethics

Risks to the evaluation

The table below outlines the key anticipated risks and limitations as outlined in the risk management and contingency plan section of the inception report. It also puts forward the anticipated mechanisms to mitigate risks.

Annex Table 1: Key anticipated risks and limitations, and proposed mitigation mechanisms

ANTICIPATED RISK AND CONSEQUENCES	MITIGATION MECHANISMS
<p>Delays in the timing of the 24 country visits</p> <p>Consequences: some country evaluation reports are submitted later than required to inform GPE strategy and impact committee and/or Board meetings, or to feed into the synthesis report.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: High</i></p>	<p>If full evaluation/progress reports are not yet complete, the evaluation team will provide the Secretariat with at least an overview of emerging key findings at the agreed-upon timelines that are linked to SIC and Board meetings or the submission of synthesis reports. The full reports will be submitted as soon as possible thereafter and will be reflected in subsequent synthesis reports in case important information was missed.</p>
<p>Conflict or fragility undermine the ability of our teams to conduct in-country data collection for summative or prospective evaluations</p> <p>Consequences: international consultants cannot conduct in-person data collection on the ground. Delays in conducting of site visits and of subsequent deliverables.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium to high</i></p>	<p>Change timing of site visits, and postpone related deliverables.</p> <p>Change order in which 22 summative evaluations are conducted and/or make use of the contingency provision of two extra countries included in the sample for summative evaluations.</p> <p>Collect data from individual in-country stakeholders via email, telephone, Skype; use electronic survey to reach several stakeholders at once.</p> <p>Increase level of effort of national consultant(s) to ensure in-country data collection.</p>
<p>Interventions are not implemented within the lifecycle of the evaluation</p> <p>This constitutes a particular risk for the <i>prospective</i> evaluations. While a lack of implementation can create learning opportunities in impact evaluations, such situations do not present value for money.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium</i></p>	<p>If interventions are not implemented within the lifecycle of the evaluation, data on bottlenecks, barriers, contextual factors and the political economy will be able to shed light on why implementation did not take place and the extent to which such factors were within GPE's control.</p>
<p>Large data and evidence gaps</p> <p>Consequences: inability to conduct reliable trend analysis. Lack of a solid basis on which to assess country progress made in strengthening the overall education system and education outcomes, as well as GPE contributions along the ToC.</p>	<p>Inclusion of data availability as a consideration in the sampling strategy. Work with the Secretariat and in-country stakeholders to fill data gaps. For prospective evaluations, if gaps identified as baseline cannot be filled, adjust the prospective evaluation focus to make the most of alternative data that may be available.</p>

ANTICIPATED RISK AND CONSEQUENCES	MITIGATION MECHANISMS
<p><i>Likelihood: Medium, but varying by country</i></p>	<p>Use of qualitative data – e.g. based on stakeholder consultations – to reconstruct likely baseline for key issues relevant for assembling the contribution story.</p> <p>Clearly identify data gaps and implications for data analysis in all deliverables.</p>
<p>Structure of available data is limiting</p> <p>To assess education sector progress, the evaluation team will use the best data available at country level. However, the format of available data may vary by country. For example, countries may use different criteria to define ‘inclusion’ in their data. This can pose challenges to synthesizing findings on GPE contributions in the respective area.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium</i></p>	<p>As qualitative synthesis does not face the same limitations, we will mitigate this risk by describing differences in measurement criteria across countries.</p>
<p>Inaccessibility of in-country partners, resulting in incomplete datasets; limited triangulation; partners not fully seeing their views reflected in, and therefore rejecting, evaluation findings and forward-looking suggestions; increases in costs and time required for data collection; and delays in completing data collection and submitting deliverables.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium</i></p>	<p>Reaching out to in-country stakeholders as early as possible before scheduled missions to explore their availability.</p> <p>Data collection via email, telephone, Skype, or through local consultants before or after site visits.</p> <p>Close collaboration with the Secretariat country lead and in-country focal point (e.g. coordinating agency) to identify and gain access to all key in-country stakeholders.</p> <p>Consult other individuals from the same stakeholder group if key envisaged informants are not available.</p>
<p>Being part of an evaluation changes the behavior of actors, independent of GPE support</p> <p>GPE partners within <i>prospective</i> evaluation countries may, involuntarily, perceive the prospective evaluation countries as showcase examples and increase efforts due to the evaluation.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium to low</i></p>	<p>The evaluation team will review the performance data for the full set of GPE countries and see if the prospective evaluation countries have moved in their performance ranking over the lifecycle of the evaluation.</p>
<p>Evaluations (perceived to be) not sufficiently independent from the Secretariat Consequences: negative effects on credibility of evaluation findings and forward-looking suggestions in the eyes of key stakeholders. Limited use of evaluations to inform decision-making and/or behaviors of key stakeholders. Reputational damage for the Secretariat and consortium members.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium to low</i></p>	<p>Findings, conclusions and forward-looking suggestions will be based on clearly identified evidence.</p> <p>Review of all draft deliverables by an Independent Technical Review Panel (ITRP).</p> <p>The evaluation team will incorporate feedback received on draft deliverables as follows: (a) factual errors will be corrected; (b) for other substantive comments, the evaluation team will decide based on the available evidence whether (and how) to incorporate them or not. If comments/suggestions are not accepted, the evaluation team will explain why.</p>

ANTICIPATED RISK AND CONSEQUENCES	MITIGATION MECHANISMS
<p>Prospective country evaluation teams becoming excessively sympathetic to GPE or others through repeat visits</p> <p>This can result in overly positive reports that miss areas requiring constructive criticism.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium to low</i></p>	<p>The internal, independent and external quality assurance mechanisms described in Section 4.3, as well as feedback received from the ITRP, will make it possible to identify any cases where prospective evaluation reports provide insufficient evidence for overly positive assessments.</p>
<p>Countries no longer willing to participate in, or wish to withdraw partway through, an (prospective) evaluation</p> <p>Consequences: an unbalanced sample of summative or <i>prospective</i> evaluations. Difficulty completing all eight prospective evaluations in a consistent manner.</p> <p><i>Likelihood: Medium to low</i></p>	<p>A transparent selection/sampling process.</p> <p>Early work with GPE country leads and in-country implementing partners to build support for all country-level evaluations.</p> <p>Early and ongoing direct engagement with senior decision-makers in DCPs to ensure that key stakeholders understand the nature and anticipated duration –especially of the prospective evaluations.</p>

Ethics

The members of our consortium abide by and uphold internationally recognized ethical practices and codes of conduct for evaluations, especially when they take place in humanitarian and conflict situations, and with affected and vulnerable populations.

For this evaluation the team has been guided by: OECD DAC Evaluation Quality Standards for Development Evaluation; UNEG Norms, Standards, Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System; the World Bank’s principles and standards for evaluating global and regional partnership programs; ALNAP’s Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide; the Sphere Handbook and Standards for Monitoring and Evaluation; and Guidance on Ethical Research Involving Children.

Annex F Confirming and refuting evidence methodology

1. This evaluation pays attention to how contribution analysis can identify and determine the extent of influencing factors and alternative explanations and weighs confirming and refuting evidence. Following Lemire, Nielsen and Dyadal,²⁴⁰ we use the Relevant Explanation Finder (REF) as an operational framework to provide structure for enabling transparent and explicit decision-making regarding weighing confirming and refuting factors in the evaluative inquiry.
2. For each item of evidence, the evaluation team recorded the contribution claim the evidence relates to, described the item of evidence, recorded the data source and assessed whether the evidence confirms or refutes the contribution claim. The degree of influence on the contribution claim was assessed for each item of evidence, being judged on the basis of certainty, robustness, validity, prevalence and theoretical grounding.
3. Confirming and refuting evidence emerging from interview data was assessed by analyzing the impartiality of the informant (to what extent does this person have a vested interest in the subject of the fragment?), knowledge (How much knowledge/experience does the subject have of the subject of the fragment?) and coherency (How coherent is their point? Do they provide evidence?).
4. The assessment of plausibility for each contribution claim was then made based on:
 - The preconditions of contribution are in place (did the change happen? If not, there could not have been a contribution)
 - Where GPE provided inputs or support for this change
 - Other support provided outside of the partnership
 - Supporting and refuting evidence
 - The extent to which the assumptions hold; and
 - Logical reasoning

²⁴⁰ Lemire, Nielsen and Dybdal, 2012. *Making contribution analysis work: A practical framework for handling influencing factors and alternative explanations*. Evaluation volume 18: 294.

Annex Table 2 Strength of evidence assessment example – documents

Number	Certainty	Robustness	Validity	Prevalence	Theoretical grounding
	<i>Degree to which the evidence is confirming or refuting the explanation (i.e. identifier)</i>	<i>Degree to which the evidence is identified as a significant explanation or influencing factor across a broad range of evidence</i>	<i>Degree to which the evidence measures the explanation and is reliable</i>	<i>Degree to which the evidence contributes to the outcome of interest across a wide range of contexts</i>	<i>The evidence is informed by theory (identifies existing theories of which it is an example) and is cast in specific terms (i.e. it is not vague)</i>
Doc1	weak	n/a	moderate	strong	strong
Doc2					

Annex Table 3 Strength of evidence assessment - interviews

Fragment #	Interviewee	Contribution Claim	Position	View	Impartiality	Knowledge	Coherency
	<i>Use interviewee code</i>	<i>To which contribution claim does the view stated pertain</i>	<i>Does the viewpoint confirm or refute the contribution claim</i>	<i>Give details of the view of the interviewee given in the fragment</i>	<i>To what extent does this person have a vested interest in the subject of the fragment</i>	<i>How much knowledge/experience does the subject have of the subject of the fragment</i>	<i>How coherent is their point? Do they provide evidence?</i>
1	MoE4a	A		Interviewee asserts that CSOs were involved at all stages of planning	n/a	weak	weak
2							

Annex Table 4 Example of weighing of evidence to support contribution claim plausibility and identification of influencing factors

Contribution claim A: GPE (financial and non-financial) support and influence contribute to the development of government-owned, credible and evidence-based sector plans focused on equity, efficiency and learning.							
Preconditions	GPE support/inputs	Non-GPE support/inputs	Supporting Evidence	Refuting Evidence	Assumption met	Assessment	Reasoning
<i>What has been achieved in sector planning in the review period</i>	<i>What (specifically) has GPE done to support each of these achievements?</i>	<i>What (specifically) have others done to support each of these achievements?</i>	<i>List docs and interviews that support or refute GPE support resulted in a contribution</i>		<i>Were the generic assumptions met</i>	<i>On the basis of the precondition being met, GPE inputs and the evidence, is the GPE contribution plausible</i>	<i>What is the overall narrative for why the contribution is plausible or not plausible?</i>
Follow up from year one issue 1	Did GPE input to address this issue?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?	Doc 4, 7, 9, 11 etc	Doc4	Country level stakeholders have the <i>capabilities</i> to jointly improve sector analysis and planning	Plausible	A credible quality plan is in place + it was developed through inclusive processes + GPE provided financial support for plan development + GPE provided technical support which improved the quality of the plan + most members of the LEG agree GPE contributed + the ESPIG completion reports detail GPE contributions + plans prior to becoming a GPE member were not credible and did not focus on equity, efficiency and learning.
Follow up from year one issue 2	Did GPE input to address this issue?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?	Doc3	Int3	stakeholders have the <i>opportunities</i> (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so		
Follow up from year one issue 3	Did GPE input to address this issue?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?	Int1		stakeholders have the <i>motivation</i> (incentives) to do so		
ESP is guided by an overall vision, is strategic and holistic	Did GPE input to this?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?	Int3		GPE has sufficient <i>leverage</i> within the country to influence sector planning		
ESP is achievable, sensitive to content and pays attention to disparities	Did GPE input to this?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?			EMIS and LASs produce relevant and reliable data to inform sector planning		
ESP meets GPE quality criteria	Did GPE input to this?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?					
Process has been country-led,	Did GPE input to this?	Who else supported or inputted into this and how?					

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participatory and transparent							
	Other areas of support						

Annex G Stakeholder mapping

Annex Table 5

Category	Stakeholder	Interest in and influence on programs receiving GPE support in country	Importance for evaluation
GPE Secretariat	GPE Country Lead	High/High	High
	Other Secretariat Staff	High/Medium	Medium
Ministries of Education (MEN/MEFP/MESRS) IDP	Ministers	High/High	High
	Technical Advisors	High/High	High
	Heading of CPS	Medium/Medium	High
	Members of PRODEC Design Committee	High/High	High
	Director of Education Decentralisation and Deconcentration cell (CADDE)	Medium/Medium	Medium
	Human Resources Director of Education Sector	Low/Medium	Medium
	Directors of Education Academies	Medium/Low	Medium
International Development Partners	UNICEF Education Manager/GPE focal point	High/High	High
	World Bank Education Portfolio Manager	High/High	High
	EU Programs Officer	High/Medium	Medium
	AFD Projects Officer	High/Medium	Medium
	Canadian Embassy	High/Medium	Medium
	USAID Education Sector Director	High/Medium	Medium

Category	Stakeholder	Interest in and influence on programs receiving GPE support in country	Importance for evaluation
	UNESCO Program Specialist	High/Medium	Medium
Civil Society	FONGIM representative	Medium/Low	Medium

Annex H List of consulted individuals

Annex Table 6

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/W
Tek B Khatri	MOF	Under Secretary	M
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)	Baikuntha Prasad Aryal	Joint Secretary, Planning and Foreign Aid Coordination Division; FPE-DCP Focal Point and GPC Member	M
MOEST/CEHRD	Deepak Sharma	Deputy Director General	M
MOEST	Dr Dhruvaraj Regmi	Head, Development Assistance Coordination Section	
MOEST/CEHRD	Ghanashyam Aryal	Director	M
MOEST	Jaya Prasad Acharya	Under Secretary, Foreign Coordination Section	M
MOEST	Yadav Acharya	Section Officer/Foreign Aid Coordination Section	
UNICEF/MOEST	Freya Perry		
NARMIN (National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal)	Umesh Prasad Bhatta	Executive Member	M
NARMIN	Man Bahadur Dangi	Executive Member	M
NARMIN	Bimal Pokhrel	Executive Secretary	M
Ministry of Finance	Tek Bahadur Khatri	Under Secretary	M
NCE Nepal	Sattya Kunwar	Board Member	F
NCE-Nepal	Kumar Bhattarai	Chair	M
NCE-Nepal	Prakash Silwal	Board Member	M
NCE-Nepal	Ram Gaire	Program Manager;	M
NCE-Nepal	Lab Raj Oli	Executive Director	M
NCE-Nepal	Shraddha		F

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/W
Support to Knowledge and Lifelong Learning Skills (SKILLS) Poverty and Inclusion Unit	Dr Mukundamani Khanal	National Program Manager	M
NTA (Nepal Teachers Association)	Laxman Sharma	President	M
NTA	Hansa Bahadur Shahi	General Secretary	M
NTA	Kamala Thapa	Member	F
National PABSAN	Paras Mani Dahal	Executive Member	M
Karkhana	Sauar Pudasaini	Entrepreneur	M
Rato Bangla School	Shanta Dixit	Executive	F
UNICEF	Jimi Oostrum	Education Specialist; SWAp Coordinator	M
UNICEF	Purnima Gurung		F
AIN/CARE	Bijay Kumar Shahi		M
AIN/CARE	Urmila Simkhada		F
AIN/GoodNeighbors	Deepak Dulal	AIN EWG	M
NEC/Save the Children	Janak Raj Panta		M
AIN/Save the Children	Dr Laxmi Paudyal		F
AIN	Kedar Tamang		M
AIN/LWS	Rina Pradhan		F
Siyari Rural Municipality, Rupandehi	Shri Prasad Shrestha	Ward-4 Chair (and SMC Chair)	M
Siyari Rural Municipality, Rupandehi	Jhabindra Bhattarai	Chief Administrative Officer	M
Siyari Rural Municipality, Rupandehi	Sudhir Poudel	Education Officer	M

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/W
Province Planning Commission, Province 5	Dr Ishwar Gautam	Vice Chairperson	M
Province Planning Commission, Province 5	Dr Bishnu Gautam	Member	M
Province Planning Commission, Province 5	Pushpa Bhusal Luitel	Member	F
Tilottama Municipality, Rupandehi	Durga Prasad Pandey	Acting Mayor	M
Tilottama Municipality, Rupandehi	Krishna Sapkota	Chief Administrative Officer	M
Tilottama Municipality, Rupandehi	Gangaram Acharya	Education Officer	M
Shanti Model School, Tilottama Municipality	Sharad Bhattarai	SMC-Chair	M
Shanti Model School, Tilottama Municipality	Kul Prasad Lamichhane	Head Teacher	M
World Bank	Dr Mohan Aryal	Senior Operations Officer	M
Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE)	Kamala Bisht	Senior Advisor	F
RNE	Ingrid Buli	Consular	F
JICA	Yukiko Okugawa	Education Advisor	F
JICA	Krishna Lamsal	Program Manager	M
Embassy of Finland	Kati Bhoose	HOC	F
Embassy of Finland	Indra Gurung	Special Advisor	M
AIN/VSO	Dr Ananda Poudel	Head of Programs	M
AIN	Deepak Dahal		M
UNICEF	Purusottam Acharya	Education Specialist	M
ERO/MOEST	Shyam P Acharya	Technical Officer	M
UNESCO	Balaram Timalisina	Head, Education	M
WFP	Christina Murphy	Head, SMP	F

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/W
WFP	Gopini Pandey	Literacy Specialist	F
British Council	Vaishali Pradhan	Head of English & Education	F
DFID	Ian Attfield		M
USAID	Uddhav Bhandari		M
ADB	Jayakrishna Upadhyay		M
WB	Rashmi KC		F
WB	Maya Sherpa		F
WB	Deepika Shrestha		F

Annex I Nepal sector financing data

Annex Table 7 Nepal sector financing data

ISSUE	DATA
DOMESTIC FINANCING	
Total domestic educ. expenditure	Increase: US\$ 1281.04 million in 2018-19 This is an increase from previous year: US\$ 1194.02 million NRP in 2017-18
Education share of total government Expenditures	Decrease: 10.6% in 2019; Nepal's education expenditure share has been decreasing annually from a high point of 20.4 percent in 2016, to 19.0 percent in 2017, to 13.9 percent in 2018, and to
% of domestic education financing allocated to <u>SSDP</u>	Decrease: SSDP budget is 69.09% of education sector budget in 2018-19, down from 73.49% in 2017-18
% of SSDP budget spent on basic education	54.7% of SSDP spent on basic education (grades 1-8) throughout SSDP period
Funding by expenditure type (salary, non-salary recurrent, investment)	Teacher salary for basic and secondary level teachers = US\$ 570.57 million=65.3% of SSDP budget. Program Costs (including infrastructure, learning materials and scholarships) = 27.3% of budget. Management and administration =7.4% of budget. ²⁴¹
INTERNATIONAL FINANCING	
Total ODA (all sectors) during review period from 2010 to present	Unknown
Total amount of ODA to education	US\$ 507 million through SSDP period
Education ODA as share of overall ODA from 2010 to present	Unknown
Total amount of ODA to <u>Basic Education</u> from 2010 to present (data probably available only until 2016 or 2017)	Unknown
Basic Education ODA as share of total education ODA from 2010 to present (data probably available only until 2016 or 2017)	Unknown
ESPIG amount as share of education ODA during review period	1.8% of total JFP funding; 4.7% including multiplier fund

²⁴¹ SSDP

ISSUE	DATA
DOMESTIC FINANCING	
ESPIG amount as share of financing required to fill the ESP funding gap at time of approval	10% of US\$ 279 million financing gap
ESPIG amount as % of total <u>estimated</u> /expected ESP financing	0.13% of estimated SSDP financing
ESPIG amount at % of <u>actual</u> ESP financing (if data is available)	n/a

Annex J Selected system-level country data

Annex Table 8 Changes suited to remove barriers to equitable access to education²⁴²

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in # of schools relative to # of children	Unknown
Changes in average distance to school	Unknown
Changes in costs of education to families	Unknown
Changes in availability of programs to improve children's readiness for school	66.3% of grade one entries had attending ECED/pre-school program in 2018-19
New/expanded measures put in place to meet the educational needs of children with special needs and learners from disadvantaged groups	The number of disadvantaged children receiving scholarships and targeted interventions has increased significantly, from 117,953 in 2016/17 to 214,712 in 2017/18 (JRM, Nov. 2018)
New/expanded measures put in place to further gender equality in education	Gender parity achieved in basic education due to targeted scholarships, WASH facilities and other interventions.
Other (may vary by country)	n/a

Annex Table 9 Changes suited to remove barriers to quality education

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in Pupil/teacher ratios (basic education)	STR 21.6 at lower basic level, 40.4 upper basic, 34.4 at secondary – but huge disparities between provinces. ²⁴³ No significant changes over review period
Changes in pupil/trained teacher ratio	STR for trained teachers is 25 at lower basic, 50.7 at upper basic and 39 at secondary level. ²⁴⁴ No significant changes over review period
Changes in equitable allocation of teachers (measured by relationship between number of teachers and number of pupils per school)	Data only shows allocation province by province, and here there are huge disparities.

²⁴² MTR

²⁴³ MTR

²⁴⁴ MTR

Changes in relevance and clarity of (basic education) curricula	Unknown
Changes in availability and quality of teaching and learning materials	Improvement in timely textbook allocation: 90.9% students in primary allocated text book in first 2 weeks of school year 2017-18, up from 87.6% in 2016-17
Changes to pre-service teacher training	97% of primary and 90% of lower secondary teachers trained in 2017; ²⁴⁵ This figure has been improving through review period.
Changes to in-service teacher training	As above; no indication of whether training in pre or in-service
Changes in incentives for schools/teachers	Unknown
Other (may vary by country)	n/a

Annex Table 10 Progress in strengthening sector management

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in the institutional capacity of key ministries and/or other relevant government agencies (e.g. staffing, structure, organizational culture, funding)	Unknown
Is a quality learning assessment system (LAS) within basic education cycle in place?	Yes; NASA tests administered to Grades 3,5 and 8 students in range of core subjects. Reports on assessment data published every three years.
Changes in how country <u>uses</u> LAS.	No
Does country have functioning EMIS?	Yes
Changes in how country <u>uses</u> EMIS data to inform policy dialogue, decision making and sector monitoring	Web-based EMIS system introduced in 2018 with 90% of schools reporting. New EMIS able to gather more data at school level and more data on student inclusion, outcomes, and status.
Other (country specific)	n/a

²⁴⁵ GPE website

Annex K Selected impact-level country data

Annex Table 11 Progress in strengthening sector management

ISSUE	OBSERVED TRENDS (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)
Learning outcomes	
Changes/trends in learning outcomes (basic education) during period under review (<u>by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban locations</u>)	NASA 2012, 2015 and 2018 reports indicate no improvement to learning levels for students in grades 5 and 8.
Equity, gender equality and inclusion	
Changes in (i) gross and (ii) net enrollment rates (basic education <u>including pre-primary</u>) during review period (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban)	<p>NIR Lower basic (grades 1-5) small increase through review period: 95.6% in 2013, 96.5% in 2018</p> <p>NIR Upper basic (grade 6-8) increase through review period: 86.5% in 2013; 92.7% in 2018</p> <p>NIR Secondary increase through period: 32.2% in 2013 46.4% in 2018.</p> <p>NIR data not disaggregated by gender</p> <p>GER Primary (Grades 1-8) steady through review period at approx. 140%; slightly higher for girls than boys (See fig 5)</p> <p>GER Secondary increased through review period 55% boys, 49% girls in 2013 to 70% for boys, 78% girls in 2017.</p>
Gender parity index of enrollment	1.0 ²⁴⁶
Changes in (i) primary completion rate and (ii) lower secondary completion rate (by gender)	<p>Completion rate to grade 5 has increased through period from 77.6% in 2013 to 82.1% in 2018</p> <p>Completion rate to grade 8 increased through period from 65.3% in 2013 to 71.3% in 2018</p> <p>Data not disaggregated by gender</p>
Changes in out-of-school rates for (i) primary and (ii) lower secondary	Out-of-school rate improved till 2016 but then worsened. OOSC in 2017 at primary level =3.5% ²⁴⁷
Gender parity index of out-of-school rates	Unknown

²⁴⁶ ASIP 2019

²⁴⁷ GPE

ISSUE	OBSERVED TRENDS (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)
Changes in the distribution of out-of-school children (girls/boys; children with/without disability; ethnic, geographic, urban/rural and/or economic backgrounds depending on data availability)	Data on OOSC at primary level not disaggregated by gender or social status. 70% of OOSC children at secondary level are boys. This figure has remained steady although overall number of OOSC at secondary level has decreased. ²⁴⁸
Changes in transition rates from primary to lower secondary education (by gender, by socio-economic group)	Unknown; Transition rates for 2016: 82.38% overall (84.07% for boys, 80.77% for girls) No data available for previous years. ²⁴⁹
Changes in dropout and/or repetition rates (depending on data availability) for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education	Unknown; Primary repetition rate in 2017 - 7.64% overall (7.71% boys, 7.56% girls), No data available for previous years ²⁵⁰ Survival rates to grade 8 in 2016: 73.55% overall (73.69% boys, 73.41% girls). No data available for previous/subsequent years ²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ UIS

²⁴⁹ UIS

²⁵⁰ UIS

²⁵¹ UIS

Annex L GPE Results Framework Indicators for Nepal

Annex Table 12 GPE Results Framework Indicators for Nepal

RF #	Indicator description	GPE RFI data			
		2016	2017	2018	2019 ²⁵²
Sector planning					
RF16a	<i>Proportion of endorsed (a) ESPs or (b) TEPs meeting quality standards²⁵³</i>			(7/7)	
RF16b	<i>Proportion of ESPs/TEPs that have a teaching and learning strategy meeting quality standards</i>			(4/5)	
RF16c	<i>Proportion of ESPs/TEPs with a strategy to respond to marginalized groups that meets quality standards (including gender, disability, and other context-relevant dimensions)</i>			(4/5)	
RF16d	<i>Proportion of ESPs/TEPs with a strategy to improve efficiency that meets quality standards</i>			(4/5)	
RF17	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries or states with a data strategy that meets quality standards²⁵⁴</i>				
Dialogue and monitoring					
RF18	<i>Proportion of JSRs meeting quality standards²⁵⁵</i>	1	1	1	1
RF19	<i>Proportion of LEGs with (a) civil society and (b) teacher representation</i>			1	1

²⁵² 2019 Results framework reports data against 2018 milestones (with exception of indicator 10)

²⁵³ Standard 1 - Guided by an overall vision; Standard 2 – Strategic; Standard 3 – Holistic; Standard 4 - Evidence-based; Standard 5 – Achievable; Standard 6 – Sensitive to context; Standard 7 – Attentive to disparities.

²⁵⁴ Country must either be producing timely data on 12 key indicators or have a robust strategy to address this detailed in its ESPIG application

²⁵⁵ *Criteria for assessment:* 1. Inclusion/Participation; 2. Aligned with ESP; 3. Evidence-based; 4. Informing Action; 5. Embeddedness in Policy Cycle. The JSR must meet three of these standards to be considered adequate. The GPE RFI assessment should be backed up or revised using the data from desk review and missions. In the case that no assessment exists, an assessment can be made from available data.

RF #	Indicator description	GPE RFI data			
		2016	2017	2018	2019 ²⁵²
Sector financing					
RF10	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries that have (a) increased their public expenditure on education; or (b) maintained sector spending at 20% or above²⁵⁶</i>	16.7	17.0		
RF29	<i>Proportion of GPE grants aligned with national systems²⁵⁷</i>	1 (10/10)	1 (10/10)	1 (10/10)	
RF 30	<i>Proportion of GPE grants using (a) cofinanced project or (b) sector pooled funding mechanisms</i>	1	1	1	
RF31	<i>Proportion of country missions addressing domestic financing issues</i>	0	0	3/3	
Sector plan implementation					
RF20	<i>Proportion of grants supporting EMIS/LAS</i>			1/1	
RF21	<i>Proportion of textbooks purchased and distributed through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants</i>			N/A	
RF22	<i>Proportion of teachers trained through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants</i>			N/A	
RF23	<i>Proportion of classrooms built or rehabilitated through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants</i>	N/A		N/A	
RF25	<i>Proportion of GPE program grants assessed as on-track with implementation²⁵⁸</i>			Slightly behind	
System-level changes					

²⁵⁶ Data from different sources if available. Excluding debt servicing from national budget. All national bodies that play a part in education (ministries, parastatals, etc.). Focus on execution rate. If not available use budgeted amount and most recently available execution rate. Disaggregated by capital and recurrent expenditure where possible.

²⁵⁷ This is assessed using a 10-point questionnaire (given in RFI technical guidelines). This should be triangulated with an assessment of alignment based on interviews and desk review.

²⁵⁸ This is based on a semi-structured qualitative assessment from grant agents and GPE CLs.

RF #	Indicator description	GPE RFI data			
		2016	2017	2018	2019 ²⁵²
RF11	<i>Equitable allocation of teachers, as measured by the relationship (R^2) between the number of teachers and the number of pupils per school in each partner developing country</i>			N/A	
RF12	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries with pupil to trained teacher ratio below threshold (<40) at the primary level²⁵⁹</i>	1	1	1	
RF13	<i>Repetition and dropout impact on efficiency, as measured by the internal efficiency coefficient at the primary level in each partner developing country²⁶⁰</i>				
RF14	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries reporting at least 10 of 12 key international education indicators to UIS (including key outcomes, service delivery and financing indicators as identified by GPE)</i>	1 (12/12)	1 (12/12)	1 (12/12)	
RF15	<i>Proportion of partner developing countries with a LAS within the basic education cycle that meets quality standards</i>			Established	
RF24	<i>Proportion of GPE program grant applications approved from 2015 onward (a) identifying targets in Funding Model performance indicators on equity, efficiency and learning; (b) achieving targets in Funding Model performance indicators on equity, efficiency and learning</i>			1	
Student-level impact					
RF1	<i>Proportion of developing country partners showing improvement on learning outcomes (basic education)</i>			0	
RF2	<i>Percentage of children under five years of age who are developmentally on track in</i>			N/A	

²⁵⁹ 'Trained' defined as having completed the countries standard teacher training.

²⁶⁰ This defines wastage as any excessive amount of time taken for students to complete basic education (e.g. if it takes the average student seven years to complete six years of schooling then there is one year wasted spending caused by inefficiency in teaching).

RF #	Indicator description	GPE RFI data			
		2016	2017	2018	2019 ²⁵²
	<i>terms of health, learning and psychosocial well-being²⁶¹</i>				
RF3	<i>Cumulative number of equivalent children supported for a year of basic education (primary and lower secondary) by GPE</i>				
RF4a	<i>Proportion of children who complete primary education</i>	104.07	105.37	105.37	
RF4b	<i>Proportion of children who complete lower secondary education</i>	82.75	84.26	86.20	
RF5a	<i>Proportion of GPE partner developing countries within set thresholds for GPI of completion rates for primary education</i>	109.31	110.84	115.27	
RF5b	<i>Proportion of GPE partner developing countries within set thresholds for GPI of completion rates for lower secondary education</i>	86.29	88.67	90.84	
RF6	<i>Pre-primary gross enrollment ratio</i>	85.75	85.17	84.06	
RF7a	<i>Out-of-school rate for children of primary school age</i>	5.33	3.23	3.23	
RF7b	<i>Out-of-school rate for children of lower secondary school age</i>			11.78	
RF8a	<i>GPI of out-of-school rate for primary education</i>	1.29	1.60	1.26	
RF8b	<i>GPI of out-of-school rate for lower secondary education</i>			0.56	
RF9	<i>Equity index²⁶²</i>	0.76	0.76	0.78	

Source: GPE RF data

²⁶¹ Data from UNICEF MICS.

²⁶² Measurement of learning outcome disparities in gender, wealth and location (rural vs. urban).