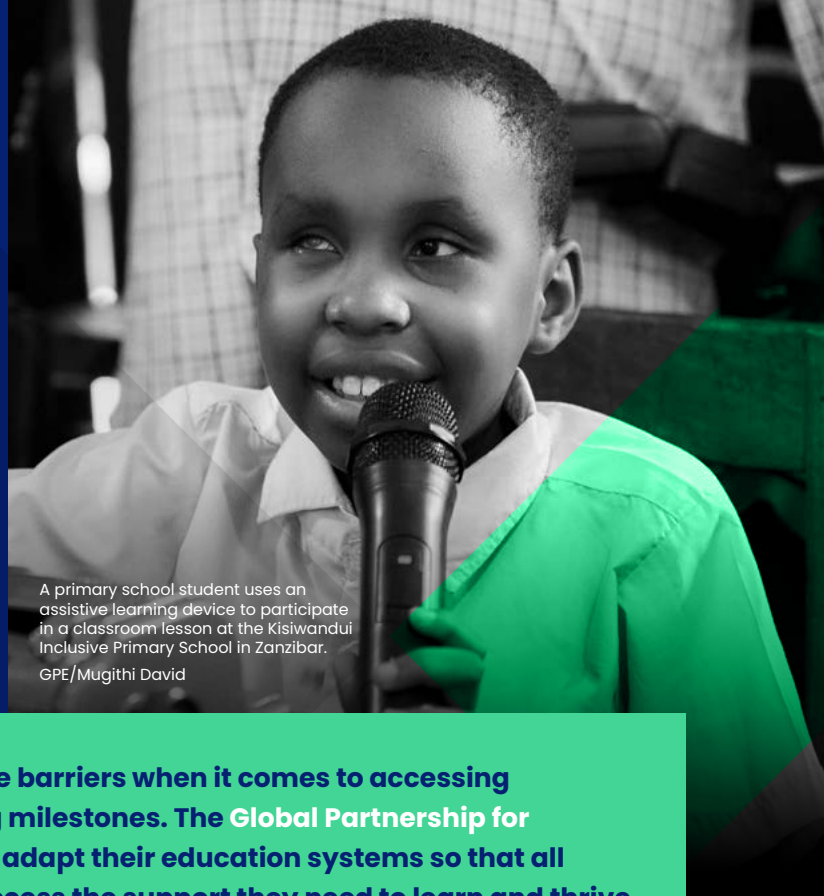


REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



A primary school student uses an assistive learning device to participate in a classroom lesson at the Kisiwandui Inclusive Primary School in Zanzibar.
GPE/Mugithi David

Children with disabilities face disproportionate barriers when it comes to accessing education and reaching foundational learning milestones. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) supports partner countries to adapt their education systems so that all children can go to schools that are safe and access the support they need to learn and thrive.

THE CHALLENGE

- Nearly **240 million children** worldwide—1 in 10 children—have a disability, yet many remain **invisible in education** systems due to a lack of data and screening for disabilities in schools.
- Compared to their peers without disabilities, children with disabilities are 49% **more likely** to have **never attended school**. They are also 42% less likely to have foundational reading and numeracy skills.
- In countries affected by **fragility and conflict**, children with disabilities are among the most disadvantaged—they represent over 20% of the children impacted by crises who are out of school.
- Children with disabilities are at a significantly **higher risk of violence** (3 to 4 times more likely) compared to children without disabilities, especially **girls with disabilities** who are more likely to face emotional and sexual violence.

GPE RESULTS



US\$138 MILLION

for children with disabilities across 109 grants in 64 partner countries since 2021.



TWO-THIRDS

of partnership compacts, where partner countries identify their priority education reform, focus on improving access to education for children with disabilities, including specialized teacher training so that children with disabilities can attend mainstream schools.



60%

of partner countries report education statistics that highlight data specific to children with disabilities to inform education planning.

GPE APPROACH

In many countries, there is often not enough knowledge or infrastructure to effectively include children with disabilities in education systems. Disability intersects with other characteristics that can negatively impact a child's chances of going to school, including their socioeconomic status, gender, being displaced and whether they live in a rural or urban setting. Education systems need to remove barriers so that children with disabilities can learn in mainstream schools instead of specialized schools, which can help to reduce stigma, while still providing targeted support to children with disabilities.

GPE helps strengthen national education systems so that children with disabilities do not have to learn separately from their peers without disabilities. This includes **teacher training** so that educators can provide specialized learning support, **better data** and **screening** for disability, **accessible learning** equipment and materials, and adapting school **facilities**.

Through **funding, advocacy** and creating **tools and guidance** for education sector analysis and planning, GPE works with partner countries to improve education systems so that all children can learn.

The **GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)** supports country-to-country learning and research on how to include students with disabilities, including using data to better allocate resources and understand student needs, identifying effective programs to get learning back on track, and developing the skills of school leaders, teachers and communities. GPE also supports civil society organizations through **Education Out Loud** that advocate for children with disabilities and their right to access education, impacting education policy, legislation and data collection efforts.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

In the Kyrgyz Republic, a GPE partner country since 2006, part of a \$12.6-million GPE grant was used to launch a pilot program to integrate children ages 4 to 6 with special educational needs into mainstream schools so they could learn alongside their peers without disabilities, strengthening national screening and referral procedures for different learning needs. This program is now being scaled up across the country. In 2023, the Kyrgyz Republic passed a law on providing adequate learning environments for children with disabilities informed by contributions from the Association for Education Development in Kyrgyzstan (AED) that is supported by Education Out Loud—GPE's fund for civil society. The country is also participating in the GPE KIX project implemented by UNICEF focused on using data to identify the barriers to education children with disabilities face, "MICS-Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity," and will access \$15 million in additional funds to support learning for children with disabilities through ACG SmartEd (the Arab Coordination Group smart education financing initiative) that mobilizes \$4 in cofinancing for every \$1 from GPE.

VANUATU

A GPE partner country since 2020, Vanuatu is committed to improving education access for children with disabilities after a census revealed many remain out of school largely due to community stigma around disability, poverty and a lack of screening, specialized teachers and support services.

The government is using part of a \$3-million GPE grant to fund several initiatives for 4,600 children with disabilities, including: building the first national Inclusive Education Resource Center to provide professional development and training for up to 1,643 early childhood and primary school teachers; developing books that challenge stereotypes around disability; and organizing school visits to support disability screening and data collection. The Ministry of Education and Training has also launched a campaign, supported by GPE and Save the Children, to encourage parents to enroll their children living with disabilities in school.