

Executive Summary

German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa

# Listening to the Partners – the Impact of a Demand- Driven Support

## Impact Study





# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa (BACKUP Education) is an innovative support mechanism to assist African countries in accessing funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and to use such funding effectively to implement national education strategies. Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation

and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ) in 2011, BACKUP Education is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and from 2014 to 2017 was co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Through BACKUP Education,

Germany provides additional support to the African partner countries of GPE, with the intention of increasing the effectiveness of the GPE and thereby contributing to the achievement of international education goals in Africa.

Specifically, BACKUP Education provides catalytic funding, based on needs identified by Ministries of Education and civil society partners in Africa to avoid bottlenecks during the application for and use of GPE grants. In order to fulfil short-term financing gaps in a rapid and flexible way that meet the needs of ministries of education and civil society partners, BACKUP Education works in a particular manner. The initiative aims to be request and demand driven, and provide quick and flexible support where no other funding sources are available.

Activities supported by BACKUP Education align with and leverage on the processes and governance structure of the GPE itself. BACKUP Education's support can be requested for all activities related to the national education sector planning, management, and evaluation cycle. At the regional level, BACKUP Education offers funding for activities aiming at strengthening South-South exchange and other regional efforts feeding into education sector processes at national level. Beyond this, BACKUP Education supports GPE developing country partners and civil society representatives from Africa in effectively engaging in their constituencies and through this in the Board of Directors of the GPE.

Three streams of funding are provided to applicants by BACKUP Education:

- Fast Access Mode (up to EUR 10,000): Funding for participation in trainings, workshops, and conferences;
- Consultancy Mode (up to EUR 50,000): Funding for expert and advisory services; and

- Project Mode (up to EUR 100,000): Funding for a set of interlinked activities.

Irrespective of whatever form of support is sought, the expectation is that a partner at a national or regional level is identifying the 'gaps', rather than 'upstream' partners.

From its inception in 2011, and until the end of the second commissioning period in March 2018, BACKUP Education supported national education ministries and civil society organisations of 34 African countries through 178 separate measures.<sup>1</sup> Additional to this country-level assistance, BACKUP Education also has funded 33 regional measures such as pre-board meetings of the three GPE Developing Country Partner constituencies for Africa<sup>2</sup>, and others that have been implemented by regional civil society coalitions and other regional actors. BACKUP Education currently runs in its third commissioning period (October 2017 to September 2020).

In 2017, a research study was commissioned by GIZ to better document the medium to longer-term impacts (intended/expected and unintended/unanticipated) that BACKUP Education has had to date<sup>3</sup>. This includes: (1) BACKUP Education's influences and contributions on upstream and downstream processes and approaches within GPE; and (2) ways in which BACKUP Education support for innovation, peer-to-peer learning and capacity development has been sustained beyond the short-term. Additional to this, the study also sought to understand how the ways in which BACKUP Education functions – as a **demand-driven, flexible, and innovative modality of support** – contributes to resolving emerging issues facing GPE at a national, regional, or global level. The study was carried out in a series of stages by a team of four independent researchers from the Universities of Auckland, Sydney, Cambridge, and Antwerp.

1 In this study, a measure (also called "mode"), is defined as a single application by African developing country partners or civil society representatives for which funding has been provided by BACKUP Education. All supported measures are categorized as either Fast Access, Consultancy, or Project Mode, depending on the content and financial volume. Each measure can consist of various activities.

2 These three constituencies comprise the 39 African countries who are part of GPE, and are broadly broken down by language groups (Africa 1 and 3 are the Anglophone speaking countries, while Africa 2 are the Francophone speaking nations of Africa. Lusophone countries are integrated into these groups).

3 The research study looked at all measures supported by BACKUP Education from 2011 to 2017.

The study identifies that the German BACKUP Education initiative has served to fill critical ‘gaps’ in education sector planning, policy and implementation processes in Africa and GPE more broadly, and to strengthen partnerships with education stakeholders at multiple geographic and policy levels. BACKUP Education has had impact in regards to:

- areas of immediate need to access or implement GPE funding
- supporting GPE’s African Developing Country Partners to engage with the higher levels of the Partnership structure itself
- strengthening roles of civil society to effectively function in the partnership (at national, regional, international levels)
- promoting knowledge exchange at multiple levels, within nations, sub-regions and between actors globally
- supporting and strengthening the functioning of GPE partnership as a whole, to maximise its potential for achieving quality, inclusive, equitable education for all

Examples in the full report demonstrate the impact of BACKUP Education in assisting African Developing Country Partners and civil society partners to access funding for activities that GPE grants or donor partners are not able to support fully, and have included a range throughout the cycle and stages of education sector planning, implementation, and review. These have so far included capacity development, distribution of education materials, information exchange, peer reviews, research, sensitisation campaigns, and training, all in a range of areas of education. **A range of stakeholders spoken to as part of the study identified that there is no other mechanism of its kind within GPE, in terms of BACKUP Education’s ability to respond at short notice and based completely on partner-driven demands.** By functioning in this way, BACKUP Education was found to contribute to many of the key objectives of GPE as specified in its current strategic plan (2016–2020) and Charter.

Below are some of the headline results from the study. Further details substantiating the claims behind these headline results are located within the full report.

## BACKUP Education strengthens education sector planning and policy implementation

One of the key country-level objectives for GPE is to support and strengthen education sector planning and policy implementation. There are many ways in which BACKUP Education has supported partners to work in this way. Specifically, it has explicitly supported the capacity development of individuals, departments, and organisations across Africa over time.

The study found that strong evidence exists that these efforts do indeed have a leveraging effect, with knowledge and skills related to education sector planning, budgeting and analysis being utilised and shared in a range of settings and with a wide group of stakeholders long beyond BACKUP Education’s immediate support. In several instances, BACKUP Education’s support across varying sections of the Ministry of Education, other national Ministries and/or civil society has brought groups into contact and

cooperation with each other and served to improve the institutional apparatus necessary for coordinated, effective and efficient education sector planning and policy implementation processes. In Madagascar, for example, BACKUP Education’s successive support to a number of areas of the Ministry of Education have strengthened a coordinated and focussed approach to education sector planning (see Box 2 in the full report).

Importantly, this capacity development assistance has ensured that partners it has supported can meet GPE’s rigorous quality standards for accessing financing support. In this way, BACKUP Education’s complementary support to strengthening national capacity and evidence-based decision-making is critical to improving the ability of the partnership to improve students’ access to quality, inclusive education. For

example, in Uganda, training on educational planning has shaped the country's current strategy and approach for refugee education (see Box 3 in the full report).

BACKUP Education has also responded to partner requests for specific technical inputs on particular aspects of either the sector plan development or review process. A number of requests from partners have also been directed towards ensuring that national

Ministries and civil society are able to monitor national education policies and programmes from an equity, quality, and efficiency standpoint. Again, the study found strong evidence of Ministries of Education and civil society being more aware and more able to work effectively within their respective roles/functions because of BACKUP Education's support to partner-identified needs/gaps in this area.

## BACKUP Education supports inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring at the country level

At the country-level, another key objective of GPE is to support mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring which includes national, regional, and local government, key education stakeholders, civil society, and development partners. Specifically, BACKUP Education has given explicit attention over the years to ensuring that local stakeholders from civil society have both the individual and organisational capacity to be effectively involved in Local Education Groups (LEGs), as part of a drive towards mutual accountability, partnership, and transparency at the country level. A number of measures have focussed on strengthening the involvement of civil society national education coalitions in local GPE processes to ensure that the interests and needs of citizens related to education are articulated and considered by their governments. The case of the *Coalition Nationale de Madagascar pour l'Education Pour Tous* (National Malagasy Coalition for Education for All, CONAMEPT), described in Box 6 in the full report, is a strong example of this.

The study found that through these measures, BACKUP Education has helped to ensure that key civil society actors, particularly national education coalitions, attain the required organisational capacity and

visibility to be effectively involved in education sector decision-making and planning. By meeting these institutions' capacity development demands, BACKUP Education, in collaboration with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), has supported a range of national education coalitions to be more aware of GPE processes, and their roles within it, and to ensure that they are better advocates for the positions of their organisations and the stakeholders they represent in key sector planning and review processes, including the LEG. In a number of instances, including Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti, and Madagascar, these coalitions are better able to support the nationally agreed goals specified in the sector plans and policies, and also ensure priorities of equity, inclusion and transparency are well considered at all stages of education decision-making process. BACKUP Education has also supported a range of measures which have been purposefully designed to bring national governments and civil society into closer collaboration and cooperation with each other – and by doing so supported improved recognition of the important function, role, and strengths each side brings to achieving quality, equitable education for all.

## BACKUP Education has strengthened GPE over the years

GPE is currently the largest multi-stakeholder partnership for education globally. In its current strategic plan, GPE makes a firm commitment to principles of harmonisation, coordination, mutual accountability, transparency, and country ownership that sit at the core of international agreements about partnerships, such as the Paris Declaration. BACKUP Education aims to contribute to these goals in a number of ways. A range of measures has focussed on strengthening vertical and horizontal accountabilities between partners at the national, regional, and global level. Other measures have supported the brokering of knowledge, information, and communication of needs both vertically – between the GPE Board/Secretariat and Developing Country Partners (DCPs) – and horizontally – between DCPs in Africa and within the LEGs in each country.

The study found in supporting these measures, BACKUP Education was acknowledged as acting as an important partnership broker, by supporting

measures, which bring together national actors from across the region to engage in South-South knowledge exchange, information sharing, and capacity development activities. Its support to a range of measures over the years has helped African country partners and civil society organisations to identify, raise, and resolve collective issues of concern at the regional and global level.

Through BACKUP Education's quality check process, which takes place as part of any application, it also serves an important function in being transparent, open, and communicative with partners in country and at the global and regional level; about the measures it is considering funding. In doing so, BACKUP Education's role was strongly reaffirmed by partners as being one of cultivating relationships, working with partners to identify gaps in GPE processes and funding streams, and serving to effectively fill these and/or advocate for change through its networks and resources.

## BACKUP Education supports effective and efficient use of GPE financing

For GPE, aid effectiveness is tied to financing supports having clear links to achievement targets in education sector plans, and to strengthening improved information management and learning assessment systems. Efficiency is also measured by the degree to which GPE financing helps to insure inputs (such as teachers trained, schools built, learning materials secured) are delivered as planned, and with a focus on equity, transparency, and accountability.

The study found that BACKUP Education has supported a range of measures that have served to ensure that the partnership can function as effectively and efficiently as possible, particularly at the national

level. Specifically, measures it has supported have strengthened the capacity of civil society and national Ministries to monitor and utilise data from local level stakeholders to inform sound policy and budgetary decisions, and to make better use of scarce human and financial resources in the education sector. At the same time, BACKUP Education has also supported campaigns and efforts to increase domestic financing commitments to education. Several measures it has supported have also worked to ensure that education budgets are set more realistically, in line with actual and projected student numbers.

## BACKUP Education has and continues to be poised to respond to emerging issues arising out of the Sustainable Development Goals

Recent years have seen the international education goals shift towards a wider, more expansive remit that takes greater consideration for issues of quality, equity, and inclusion. This has subsequently had influence on GPE's current strategic planning and vision. BACKUP Education has already begun responding to this shift, with strong support over the years directed to countries affected by conflict and crisis as well as measures with a more explicit focus on gender responsive planning and policy-making. BACKUP Education's support to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), a regional body, is a strong example of this (see Box 7 in the full report).

BACKUP Education has also supported a number of knowledge exchange activities between and amongst civil society national education coalitions and Ministries of Education over the years; and at a regional level has supported the African Developing Country Partners and civil society constituencies of GPE to have a more unified and cohesive voice at board meetings and other global events. Additionally, BACKUP Education is also beginning to support more measures focussed on Early Childhood Care and Education, as well as those with an explicit focus to strengthening quality teaching and learning.

## The importance of a fund like BACKUP Education within GPE

The study also found that the **demand-driven, flexible and gap filling nature** of BACKUP Education serves a critical function to partners at the national, regional, and global level who are part of GPE. Specifically, BACKUP Education has been found to consistently support aspects of the GPE application or implementation process where no other funding sources exists for the completion of such tasks. A key contribution of BACKUP Education, identified by a range of partners, is its ability to step in and address shortfalls in technical expertise, capacity development efforts, or funding opportunities, in a timely fashion, and with less conditions and expectations

attached than might exist from other actors. At the same time, the quality check process, which BACKUP Education undertakes, ensured that measures it was considering funding were in fact not duplicating efforts in the sector, or ones that could be funded from other sources. By acting in this way, BACKUP Education was repeatedly identified in the study by a range of stakeholders as a fund that is able to ensure that GPE continues to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible – with relatively small initial levels of inputs and funding that are not available elsewhere.

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