

Girls' Education and Skills Programme (GESP)

Introduction

- In the UK's first education partnership of its kind, the UK government has joined forces with the private sector to boost girls' access to education in developing countries. Partners include Unilever, Pearson, PwC, Microsoft, Accenture, Standard Chartered, United Bank for Africa, Coursera, Vodafone, BP and Cognizant.
- The UK Government will be working in partnership with UNICEF's Generation Unlimited (GenU) to help deliver the programme, with key partners funding GenU being Accenture, Standard Chartered, Unilever, Microsoft, and United Bank for Africa.

Problem statement

- Girls' Education and Skills Programme (GESP) will set out to address the challenge of the skills deficit amongst adolescent girls, and the pressing need to diversify education financing.
- This situation is worse for girls who face social, financial, and policy constraints on their ability to make decisions affecting their education, work, and social capital.
- Too many adolescent girls face multiple and major barriers to an education. An education that would equip them with the skills they need for future jobs.

Context: why is girls' education important?

- The UK is playing a leading global role to improve girls' education in developing countries. During the UK's G7 Presidency last year it secured agreement to help get an additional 40 million girls into school by 2026; and secondly to help 20 million girls to learn to read by the age of 10 by 2026. In 2021, the UK hosted a successful Global Education Summit, which raised \$4 billion in pledges from world leaders to support schools through the Global Partnership for Education.
- Education is a gateway to other human rights and progress: it is essential for gender equality, lasting poverty reduction, and building prosperous, resilient economies and peaceful, stable societies.
- Between 2015 and 2020, the UK supported at least 15.6 million children to gain a decent education, of which 8.1 million were girls.
- However, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to undo many of the global gains of the last two decades in girls' education.

Engaging the Private Sector

- The private sector is deeply engaged with education around the world.
- Historically, Official Development Assistance (ODA) engagement with the private sector in the education sphere has been limited. The private sector, especially major businesses, have both financial and knowledge resources that can and should be put to work in support of girls' education.
- Capitalising on this opportunity is a priority for the FCDO, and the PM's Special Envoy for Girls' Education is leading this work by building this skills partnership with the private sector.

Background

- The Education Commission estimates that by 2030, in low and middle-income countries, half of the school-age children will not be on track to acquire the most basic skills they need to succeed and transition into the workforce. This situation is worse for girls who face social, financial, and policy constraints on their ability to make decisions affecting their education, work, and social capital.
- Evidence from UNESCO's World Education Indicator suggests that the rate of labour force participation for women increases with every level of education they receive, and that it does so significantly with tertiary education, bringing them closer to male counterparts.
- Despite rising demand, in most low- and middle-income countries, skills training and development is harder to access for marginalised groups and disproportionately benefits those who are better off. This widens inequality gaps and causes market inefficiencies when talented, but disadvantaged, young people do not fulfil their human capital.
- Failure to address this problem will mean continued barriers to girls successfully transitioning into the labour force, which is likely to fail to empower women/girls economically and further widen the gap between girls' potential and their ability to reach it.
- Elimination of barriers against young women working in certain sectors or occupations could increase labour productivity by as much as 25% in some countries.
- Furthermore, increases in female labour force participation accounted for approximately 30% of reductions in poverty and income inequality in Latin America between 2000 and 2010.
- Solving this problem is therefore not only the right thing to do, but it is also strategically sensible for major corporations as it will help to, amongst other things, develop human capital for their own future employment needs and create a more prosperous consumer base in markets around the world.

Girls’ Education and Skills Programme (GESP)

- GESP is a global partnership with 11 private sector companies and Generation Unlimited, working together to help educate adolescent girls and young women.
- The UK Government is matching the contribution of each business partners.
- The programme is managed by Generation Unlimited.
- This pioneering education partnership aims to demonstrate what can be delivered when the expertise, leadership, and resources of the private sector are brought together with the policy, networks and implementation experience of the FCDO and Unicef.

Programme framework

The programme will be delivered through two components:

Component 1: Challenge Fund

Component 2: Passport to Earning (P2E): Generation Unlimited’s digital skilling platform (see P2E concept note for information)

Challenge Fund

- Awarding grants, each between £750,000 to £1.5 million (GBP) via a competitive grant call process. This call is for projects operating in Bangladesh and/or Nigeria.
- It is expected that proposals will broadly focus on projects that: support/promote employment readiness, 21st Century skills, economic empowerment, and (STEM) education.
- Please refer to the Request for Proposals document for more detail on partnership composition and project selection criteria. The proposals will be reviewed by the GESP Board, which consists of senior representatives from the FCDO, the PM’s Special Envoy for Girls’ Education; Generation Unlimited, and each of the 11 private sector partners.
- Below is an example of the types of proposals which would be eligible. This is purely illustrative and not an exhaustive list.

Potential intervention areas and objectives
Curricula development and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-design training courses, in partnerships with industry, to be more relevant to high-growth and priority economic sectors, including STEM related fields. • Develop comprehensive interventions that support in-class learning with on-the-job training for adolescent girls, as well as apprenticeships and mentorship.
Pedagogical support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve teaching skills through training, train the trainer, assessments, and curriculum development where teaching and learning quality is a barrier to further education access or employment.
Regulatory and policy development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of skills pathways at senior high school level. • Strengthen accreditation of courses and qualifications recognition.
Inclusion of marginalised groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a combination of interventions which enable more adolescent girls and low-income students to benefit from skills training, e.g. remedial courses, bridging courses, institutional support, etc.

- The Challenge Fund model provides an opportunity for applicants to also capitalise on the non-financial resources available from across the GESP partners.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider within their proposals how they may wish to incorporate services and support offered by GESP's private sector partners (besides financial resources). These include:
 - access to Generation Unlimited Passport to Earnings
 - access to global mentors and trainers
 - advisory and consultancy services
 - communications support
 - digital devices (tablets)
 - textbooks
 - training/professional certificates, e.g., Facebook Marketing Analytics Professional Certificate, Google IT Support Professional Certificate and IBM Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate
 - monitoring and evaluation support
 - online learning content and resources
 - online safeguarding apps
 - thought leadership and research

Passport to Earning (P2E): Generation Unlimited's digital skilling platform

- A digital skilling platform which will provide young people aged 13-25 with free job relevant skills and position them for job opportunities.
- The P2E platform will provide skills and certificates for employment and entrepreneurship, and connect young people with coaching, mentoring, apprenticeship, and (self) employment opportunities where applicable.
- The initiative aims to reach 10 million young people in 15 countries by 2025.
- GESP partnership with GenU will ensure that adolescent girls can use the P2E platform to develop skills and receive training and certification needed to secure in-demand roles and access opportunities for improved livelihoods.

Target

The programme will focus on support to adolescent girls and young women between the ages of 13 - 25. It is expected that the target beneficiaries will include both adolescent girls who are:

- a) Out of school/formal education.
- b) In some kind of formal schooling/training but are at risk of dropping out without further support.

Geographies

- Challenge Fund focus countries for this call are Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Delivery Partners

- Grant proposals are invited from a broad range of stakeholders, applicants could include: charities, community-based organisations, multilateral organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social enterprises, youth-led initiatives, higher education institutions and colleges.

Please see Annex A for programme Theory of Change

Please see Annex B for programme KPIs

ANNEX A – GESP THEORY OF CHANGE



ANNEX B - Girls Education and Skills Programme (GESP) KPIs.

IMPACT: Increase the economic productivity and labour force participation of adolescent girls

OUTCOME 1 - Improved relevance of skills development and training to meet the needs of industry in areas key to national economic development	
KPI 1	Number (& %) of targeted adolescent girls and young women reached and participating in industry-relevant skills training through GESP (October 2022 to December 2025)
KPI 2	Number (& %) of targeted adolescent girls and young women who, at the end of the programme, believe they are more likely to a) find employment / start an enterprise b) go on to further education (disaggregated by age)
KPI 3	Number (&%) of engaged employers/organisations offering internships/ work experiences/ apprenticeships for young women (disaggregated by age); and b) Number of placements offered
OUTCOME 2 - Stronger employability outcomes from formal and informal vocational education and training provision in the public and private sectors	
KPI 1	Number (& %) of targeted adolescent girls and young women entering employment (disaggregated by age) (cumulative)
KPI 2	Number (& %) of targeted adolescent girls and young women earning decent living wages (adjusted for each country)
KPI 3	Number of jobs (including self-employed) created (cumulative)
OUTCOME 3 - Accelerated policy change. Including supporting national strategies, increased industry engagement and planning and legal environment strengthened.	
KPI 1	Number of national policies and/or strategies influenced by GESP.
KPI 2	Number (& %) of targeted adolescent women and girls who report having the confidence to a) resist early marriage; b) delay pregnancy
KPI 3	Extent to which employer policies and practices are supportive of inclusive female employment
OUTPUT 1 - Strengthen links between labour market/industry and skills sector -skills training links to improve employment readiness. Including redesigning skills driven curricula, improving instructor/teacher skills in key vocational areas relevant to market needs.	

KPI 1	Number (&%) of public and private sector employers engaged in skills driven curriculum revision and wider ways support to reaching adolescent girls and young women
KPI 2	Number (&%) of targeted adolescent girls and young women who report being a) 'employment ready' and b) actively seeking employment
OUTPUT 2 - Improve quality of skills development and training courses, working with TVET institutions and schools, as well as promoting inclusion to expand learning opportunities to adolescent girls outside of the formal education system.	
KPI 1	Number (&%) of instructor/teacher of skills, in key vocational areas, reporting an increase in their knowledge and awareness of relevant market needs.
KPI 2	Number (&%) of instructors/ teachers of skills (in key vocational areas), trained in learner-centred teaching, critical thinking, and gender, diversity and inclusion - contributing towards expanding learning opportunities for adolescent girls.
OUTPUT 3 - Enable and build government capacity to provide skilling and employability programmes. Including strengthening industry-education links.	
KPI 1	Number (&%) of education and skills institutions; Ministries, and education regulatory bodies engaged in % of GESP programmes
KPI 2	Number (&%) of engaged employers/organisations offering internships/ work experiences/ apprenticeships for targeted adolescent women and girls; and b) Number of placements offered
KPI 3	Number (&%) of target employers who participate in youth-employer networks
OUTPUT 4 - Increased/better access to education or skill training to enable better completion rates and obtaining formal qualifications, increasing the return on the educational investments in terms of lifetime earning potential.	
KPI 1	Number (&%) of targeted adolescent girls and young women who have accessed education or targeted skills training through GESP (October 2022 to December 2025)
KPI 2	Number (&%) of targeted adolescent girls and young women who have completed education or skills training programme and obtained formal qualifications
KPI 3	Number (&%) of targeted adolescent girls and young women reporting that their families support them to remain in education or vocational training

Annex C – GESP partners

1. Accenture
2. BP
3. Cognizant
4. Coursera
5. Generation Unlimited
6. Microsoft
7. Pearson
8. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)
9. Standard Chartered
10. Unilever
11. United Bank Africa
12. Vodafone