



Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange

# KIX ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

*Mobilizing innovation to strengthen teacher professional development*





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**About IDRC**

As part of Canada’s foreign affairs and development efforts, [the International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#) champions and funds research and innovation within and alongside low- and middle-income countries to drive global change.

**About GPE**

The [Global Partnership for Education \(GPE\)](#) is a multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform that aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries to dramatically increase the number of children who are in school and learning. It brings together developing countries, donors, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector, and foundations.

**About KIX**

The [Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange \(KIX\)](#) connects expertise, innovation, and knowledge to developing countries that are building stronger education systems and progressing toward the Sustainable Development Goal of inclusive and equitable quality education for all (SDG4). KIX is a joint endeavor between GPE and IDRC.

**Acknowledgements**

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**Cover photo:** GPE/Kelley Lynch

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# ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

EMIS	Education management information systems
GEI	Gender equality, equity, and inclusion
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
KIX Africa 19	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in East, West and southern Africa
KIX Africa 21	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in West and Central Africa and the Indian Ocean
KIX EAP	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, and Asia-Pacific
KIX LAC	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in Latin America and the Caribbean
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
Primary research outputs	Outputs capturing the direct results and findings of research, including situational analyses, scoping studies, synthesis reports, and research reports
Regional learning partners	Organizations that implement KIX regional hubs
ROSIE	Research on scaling the impact of innovations in education
Secondary knowledge products	Videos, podcasts, newsletters, blog posts, policy briefs, and other knowledge sharing vehicles that communicate research findings and results to diverse audiences
TPD	Teacher professional development







Photo: GPE/Aya Kibesaki

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This third annual report on the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) highlights progress towards three key objectives:

- generating high-quality, demand-driven knowledge;
- mobilizing insights and evidence from applied research and learning exchanges; and
- strengthening the capacity of knowledge producers and users in the Global South to scale innovations and improve the use of evidence in education planning, policy, and practice.

KIX contributions in each of these areas were captured in an independent mid-term evaluation conducted this year, which confirmed KIX is on track, and proving valuable to the education partners it was designed to serve.

This report draws on emerging findings and profiles examples related to teacher professional development — one of six broad themes that have emerged as key priorities for GPE partner countries, and which proved vital in education responses to COVID-19 — to demonstrate how KIX-supported research and regional hubs work together towards our key outcomes.

## Knowledge generation

Following a call for proposals for applied research to strengthen early learning in East, West and southern Africa, five projects were added to our portfolio, bringing the total to 41. They are building evidence on six priority themes identified by partner countries, with a focus on gender equality, equity, and inclusion as both a core theme and one that cuts across the others. In all, research teams produced 70 primary research outputs this year. The KIX Observatory on COVID-19 responses in Africa’s education systems — established at the onset of the pandemic — released [five thematic reviews](#) on the impact of the pandemic on education financing, the well-being of school children, school reopening, teacher training and support, and learning, to help partner countries recover from learning losses and build more resilient education systems. In December 2021, the Research on scaling the impact of innovations in education (ROSIE) project released a report on scaling that reflects input from 15 applied research projects. It highlights the importance — and resilience — of teachers and other education stakeholders in adapting and scaling innovations during the pandemic and beyond.

## Knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening

With many projects now maturing, the number of knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening meetings and events hosted by regional hubs and applied research projects increased significantly. Despite the ongoing pandemic, the number of participants in KIX activities nearly quadrupled this year, to nearly 18,000. By the year’s end, 79% of GPE partner countries were showing moderate or high levels of engagement in regional hubs. Hubs and applied research projects are also sharing knowledge widely through newsletters, blogs, videos, podcasts, policy briefs, and other vehicles. This mobilization is bearing fruit, with many examples of KIX research being used in policy and planning at the national level, as highlighted in our [Progress section](#). The mid-term evaluation identified capacity strengthening of education stakeholders as the most effective type of support KIX offers. Country representatives have gained new knowledge and skills related to their thematic priorities that help them apply evidence in policy development and implementation.

## What we are learning

COVID-19, coupled with conflict and natural disasters in some countries, underscored the importance of taking an adaptive approach to managing KIX. The mid-term evaluation and insights from our monitoring, evaluation, and learning system offered us clear direction in refining engagement strategies and simplifying our communications and monitoring. Noting varied levels of country engagement in hub activities, the evaluation recommended tailoring engagement strategies to the unique circumstances of each partner country. As we move from purely online interaction towards more in-person events, we are reflecting on the balance, and noting that multiple connection points are needed to deepen engagement and strengthen capacities. On the issue of scaling, we have learned that projects have to be reflective and adaptive from the very beginning of a scaling process. Finally, we are recognizing the value of short-term, targeted research thanks to a series of smaller studies funded by some of the regional hubs and the rapid response research provided by the KIX COVID-19 Observatory. These have proven very useful to partner countries.

## Upcoming priorities

KIX will respond to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation by prioritizing adaptive support for regional hubs and applied research projects, bolstering their efforts to promote policy uptake. We will synthesize knowledge across thematic areas and continue to find ways to engage in key global events and dialogues. In the upcoming year, we will also adapt our strategies to reinforce the strategic priorities of both GPE and the International Development Research Centre.







## MESSAGE FROM THE KIX EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

As founding partners of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and GPE are excited to see KIX advancing on its aim of strengthening education systems in GPE partner countries. The contribution KIX has made was confirmed by an external mid-term evaluation conducted this year, which concluded that KIX has made significant progress, is valued by its stakeholders, and is well positioned for impact.

KIX is an ambitious and novel initiative that links evidence, research, and innovation directly with education stakeholders in GPE partner countries – low- and middle-income countries where one-quarter of children do not complete primary school and half do not complete lower secondary level. KIX supports a knowledge agenda built directly around their expressed needs. We are particularly pleased to have evaluation evidence that country partners find KIX useful. This can be seen in their levels of engagement in regional hubs and their uptake of evidence from applied research, even at the program's mid-point and during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many ministries of education shifted their priorities to learning continuity amid cycles of school closure and reopening. GPE partner countries have also noted the value of the platform KIX provides for them to learn from each other's experiences.

While there are many valuable innovations in education, a key challenge is that few are brought to scale, so we are gratified to see the evaluation note that applied research projects have been developing strategies for scaling innovation – a central focus for KIX. Evaluators also noted that most GPE partner countries covered by the KIX Observatory on COVID-19 responses in educational systems in Africa reported benefiting from the knowledge exchange facilitated by the Observatory as they worked to adapt their education systems in response to the pandemic. The Observatory synthesized education policy and practice responses to COVID-19 from 40 GPE partner countries in Africa and produced [five thematic reviews](#) that identify promising solutions to some of the most urgent challenges they face.

COVID-19's dramatic impact on the education sector has underscored the critical role of teachers, and the support they need in rapidly adapting to a changing context. This report highlights how the program's knowledge generation and mobilization, and capacity strengthening efforts, came together to meaningfully enhance teacher professional development in partner countries.

In the coming year, we look forward to guiding KIX responses to the constructive recommendations for improvement offered by the mid-term evaluation. We will further synchronize and target our efforts to increase the program's influence and impact. This includes further leveraging KIX to link evidence, innovation, and knowledge exchange within GPE's work to mobilize partners around system transformations in partner countries.

We are pleased to share with you this annual report for 2021-22.

Naser Faruqui, Director of Education and Science, IDRC  
Margarita Focas-Licht, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, GPE



KIX connects expertise, innovation, and knowledge to support low- and middle-income countries in building stronger education systems and accelerating progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 4: ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. KIX works through two interconnected mechanisms. Through **four regional hubs**, KIX creates opportunities for people in GPE-supported education systems to share expertise, innovation, and evidence. We also fund **applied research** on priority topics identified through the hubs. This research builds evidence, mobilizes knowledge, and strengthens capacity to adapt and scale innovative approaches for education priorities of partner countries.

Photo: GPE/Arlene Bax

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This past year, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt education systems globally. As of the end of March 2021, nearly 182 million learners were affected by country-wide school closures, according to [UNESCO](#). By late February 2022, nearly 45 million learners were still affected by these closures. While the pandemic is not yet behind us, schools in most Global Partnership for Education (GPE) partner countries have reopened. Educators and policymakers are beginning to assess the learning loss caused by the pandemic. Their education systems are moving from crisis response to a focus on recovery and resilience, drawing on their experiences addressing COVID-19.

- **Knowledge generation** — producing high quality, demand-driven evidence through applied research, regional knowledge exchange, and research on scaling impact;
- **Knowledge mobilization** — sharing insights and evidence from research and learning exchanges through regional hubs and projects, as well as through the KIX digital platform; and
- **Capacity strengthening** — further equipping researchers and knowledge users in the Global South to improve the use of evidence in planning, policy, and practice and in scaling education innovations.

The issue of teacher professional development is one of six broad themes that emerged as key priorities in consultations with GPE partner countries. Future KIX annual reports will highlight other core themes.



# MILESTONES 2021-2022

- Inception phase of second cohort of 22 regional projects
- Initiation of work in 38 countries
  - Support for scaling
  - MEL training

JUN 2021

Call for proposals on early learning

JUL 2021

GPE Global Education Summit

Ongoing work of the KIX Hubs

OCT 2021

Creation of GEI implementation guide and tools

NOV 2021

Second Annual KIX Symposium

FEB 2022

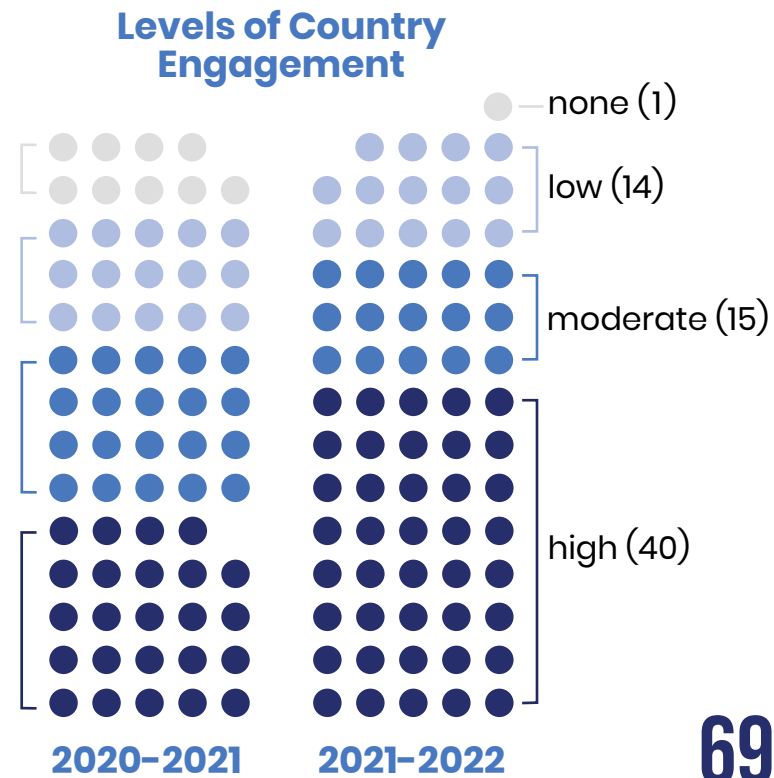
Start of early learning projects

MAR 2022

Mid-term evaluation

LAC EAP A21 A19

## AT A GLANCE: 2021-2022 ACTIVITIES OF APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS AND REGIONAL HUBS



**69**  
GPE partner  
countries  
participating  
in hub events  
and meetings

**41**  
Applied  
research  
projects in  
**53**  
countries



**421**

Knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening events



**57%**

Knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening events related to GEI



**17,786**  
Total participants



**13,294**  
Total participants  
from GPE partner  
countries

### Map Legend

**LAC**

- Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia
- Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guatemala, El Salvador

## EAP

- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan,
- Vietnam, Yemen, Moldova, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea

## Africa 21

Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Togo, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Republic of Congo

## Africa 19

- Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda,
- Zambia, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Liberia, Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland)

*Darker shading:* GPE partner countries with KIX applied research projects  
*Lighter shading:* Additional GPE partner countries that have participated in KIX hub events



# PROGRESS 2021-2022

In the third year of KIX, all four regional hubs and the full research portfolio were underway, with a final set of applied research projects launched in February 2022. Results are emerging from our earliest projects, and we have seen a significant increase in activities, reach, and outputs. As reflected in a mid-term evaluation conducted this year, we are beginning to see outcomes that demonstrate clear progress in:

- **knowledge generation;**
- **knowledge mobilization;** and
- **capacity strengthening.**

In monitoring KIX progress in knowledge generation, we look to see KIX responding to partner country needs, producing solid findings to scale the impact of education innovations, and addressing gender equality, equity, and inclusion.

In monitoring progress in knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening, we look for signs that regional hubs are increasingly owned by country partners who actively participate and share their priorities to guide each hub's agenda. We also want to see country representatives mobilize new knowledge and skills gained from KIX activities to strengthen their national education systems. We look for signs that education stakeholders are using KIX-supported research in debates about scaling in education, and are exploring how to scale relevant innovations with decision-makers. These are intermediate outcomes that we hope to see as KIX hubs extend their reach, and our research portfolio matures.

Early findings are now emerging, aligned with the needs and priorities of partner countries. Regional hubs and applied research projects are actively engaging with ministry officials, national organizations, teachers, and other knowledge users in webinars, workshops, and meetings. While most research and knowledge mobilization activities were

carried out virtually, this year we were finally able to support some in-person events. Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, KIX nearly quadrupled the number of events it hosted compared to last year, with the number of participants in KIX activities increasing in equal measure. The number of countries with high levels of engagement in KIX activities increased by two thirds, up to 40 from 24 last year.

The KIX implementation team continued to support our grantees. Recognizing the important role of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) in determining what works to help strengthen education policy and practice in a wide range of unique contexts, we provided MEL training for new cohorts of regional projects and continued to offer MEL support across all applied research projects and regional learning partners.

We also maintained our focus on sharing information, results, and learning through communications strategies, support, and key events such as the Second Annual KIX Symposium, which was held in November 2021. These efforts have helped us to continue building relationships with key stakeholders and increase our visibility. In total, KIX published 23 [blogs](#) this year, and KIX website users have nearly quadrupled, from 1,618 in 2021 to 6,234 in 2022.

*Our mid-term evaluation concluded KIX has made significant progress, is valued by its stakeholders, and is well positioned for impact.*

Further support to projects included workshops to provide them with tools for incorporating scaling into their plans and activities, and the development of a toolkit and implementation guide on gender equality, equity, and inclusion (GEI). The KIX

team also organized quarterly meetings to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among the four regional hubs.

The mid-term evaluation concluded that KIX has been run efficiently and that the program's adaptive management approach has been effective. It also concluded that KIX has made significant progress, is valued by its stakeholders, and is well positioned for impact. It notes strong progress on outputs and initial outcomes from both applied research projects and hubs, despite delays and challenges brought on by the pandemic. The evaluation indicates that KIX is providing a valuable service to educational stakeholders in GPE partner countries: 95% of country representatives indicated that they find knowledge exchange activities useful, which demonstrates that KIX efforts are aligned with the priorities of our country partners.

*Over 80% of KIX grantees consider gender equality, equity, and inclusion either very or extremely relevant to their work.*

The evaluation found that both applied research projects and regional hubs have incorporated GEI as a theme, and recognize it as an important cross-cutting issue. Over 80% of grantees consider GEI either "very relevant" or "extremely relevant" to their work. This year, we saw gender equality, equity, and inclusion increasingly addressed as a theme in research products and regional learning events. The percentage of women participating in KIX events also grew from 24% to 39%, though it remains below parity. KIX will continue to support projects and hubs to integrate GEI in their work.



1. Generating new knowledge on educational innovation and scaling

KIX projects identify promising or proven approaches to address regionally defined education system challenges, and undertake applied research to adapt, test, and investigate how their impact can be scaled. The emerging findings are helping to build an evidence base on how to effectively scale the impact of education innovations in low- and lower-middle-income country contexts.

Key challenges in education were identified in 2019 and further prioritized regionally in 2020, in consultation with governments and relevant stakeholders through the hubs. Across the regions, six core themes have emerged for KIX knowledge generation: teacher professional development, early childhood education, gender equality, learning, out-of-school children and youth, and data use. COVID-19 has also emerged as an important focus for education stakeholders.

In June this year, KIX launched a call for proposals focused on early learning in East, West and southern Africa, with support from the LEGO Foundation. Five new projects on this theme were launched in February 2022, responding to shared policy priorities of countries in the KIX Africa 19 regional hub. This brings the total KIX portfolio to 41 applied research projects with activities in 53 countries, implemented by 95 partner institutions.

With many applied research projects beginning to mature, we have seen a large increase in knowledge outputs: primary research outputs — such as scoping studies, situational analyses, and synthesis reports — have almost tripled in the past year, from 25 to 70. Of these, 81% were either somewhat or strongly related to gender equality, equity, and inclusion. Evidence is emerging on all priority themes identified with GPE partner country representatives.

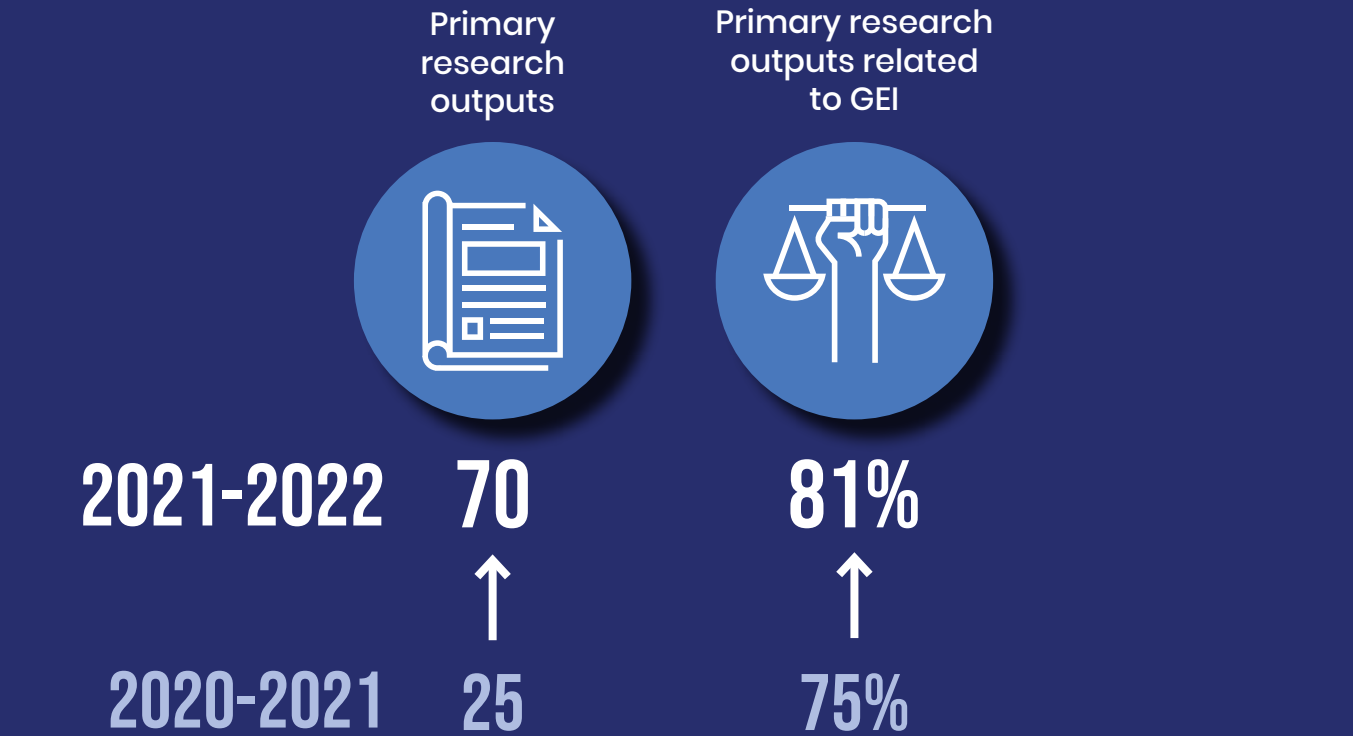
Scaling impact is an important area of KIX-supported research. In December 2021, the Research on scaling the impact of innovations in education (ROSIE) project released Scaling education innovations for

impact in low- and middle-income countries during COVID, a report capturing the initial reflections and emerging themes from 15 applied research projects. Its findings shed light on the importance — and resilience — of teachers and other education stakeholders in adapting and scaling innovations during the pandemic and beyond. It highlights for example, how the pandemic, despite its challenges, also presented opportunities, such as incentivizing smaller learning groups, and spurring creative use of new pedagogies and education technologies. This increased reliance on technology, however, raised some capacity concerns, as many rural learners lack Internet access and some teachers lacked the skills needed for online education. COVID-19 also reinforced the importance of recognizing that scaling champions and allies include not only donors, governments, and development partners, but also volunteers, community groups, and families. Building trust and involvement with these latter groups requires time and flexibility, but the effort is essential for it can potentially sustain local engagement beyond changes in political leadership. Finally, the report underscores the vital importance of teachers during times of change or uncertainty, and the value of supporting them in ways that reflect their own unique needs and the learning needs of their students.

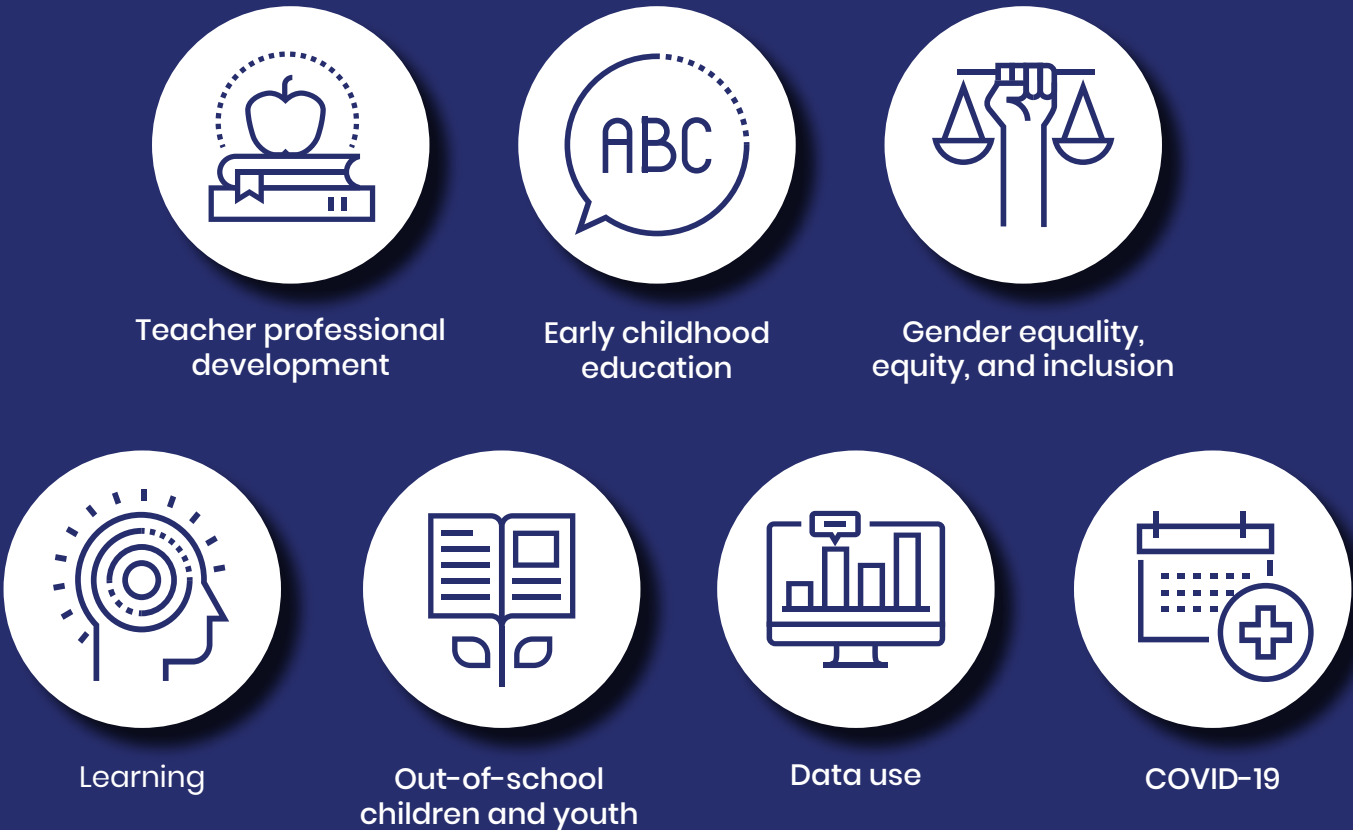
The KIX Observatory on COVID-19 responses in educational systems in Africa project — launched in November 2020 — produced a series of thematic reviews this year, based on its early research findings, to help education systems in Africa better prepare for future crises. These reviews focused on five key topics related to education systems during the pandemic:

- Education financing
- The well-being of school children
- School reopening
- Teacher training and support
- Learning assessment

Progress on knowledge generation and GEI



Key themes in knowledge generation and mobilization





## 2. Mobilizing knowledge to strengthen education policy and practice

In addition to generating new knowledge, KIX includes a strong focus on knowledge mobilization to ensure that evidence and innovation are used and incorporated into education sector policy and planning. Applied research projects and regional hubs have hosted a total of 421 such events this year. They have updated their websites and produced and shared user-friendly knowledge products such as newsletters, webinar recordings, event summaries, videos, podcasts, and news alerts with resources relevant to country representatives.

Projects and hubs have both far surpassed their milestones when it comes to hosting events and meetings to engage with key education stakeholders in the Global South. Regional hubs hosted 51 events and meetings — compared with only 33 initially planned — with 55% of these related to GEI. Applied research projects far surpassed their milestone of 86 events and meetings, hosting a total of 370 — 58% of which were either somewhat or strongly related to GEI. Relationship building and initial stakeholder engagement took longer than initially envisioned, and the pandemic necessitated more meetings — though shorter ones — than would have been required with in-person events.

These meetings have helped to spur the uptake of educational innovation. From November 2021 to January 2022, for example, the [Africa 21 hub](#) organized a series of national policy dialogues in [Senegal](#), [Benin](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Togo](#), and [Guinea-Bissau](#). These dialogues brought together key stakeholders in each country, including ministries of education, teachers, and teacher training institutions, to work together on developing strategies for disseminating and using educational innovations and knowledge. In Togo, these dialogues resulted in a strategy, endorsed by the range of stakeholders involved, for integrating new knowledge and innovations into the national education system. In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Education has already worked with education stakeholders to select

and analyze eleven promising innovations that could be used to strengthen national policy and planning.

This year, GPE began supporting countries to build partnership compacts. These compacts outline education system transformation priorities to guide the use of GPE financing and strengthen alignment across government and with partners. [SUMMA](#), the regional learning partner for the [LAC hub](#), supported the development of El Salvador's partnership compact between October 2021 and April 2022, in collaboration with GPE staff and the local education group — a collaborative stakeholder forum that includes civil society organizations and teachers' associations. SUMMA supported this process by drawing on their technical expertise to deliver workshops on priority topics, and by leveraging the trust they had established with the government to act as a neutral moderator of discussions. Their role in the partnership compact development process was highly valued by participants and by GPE, and demonstrates how KIX regional hubs can support this process in other countries.

The mid-term evaluation identified specific instances of policy uptake, with multiple examples of KIX research being used in policy and planning at the national level. For instance, the [Data use innovations for education management information systems in The Gambia, Uganda, and Togo](#) project is building out a platform for national digital health information systems to also include education management information system (EMIS) data. This has opened new opportunities to interlink health and education data, which is highly relevant in the context of the pandemic. In Uganda, after the project successfully piloted SMS-based reporting on COVID-19 monitoring data from schools in two districts, the system was adopted for scaling at the national level, with joint implementation planned by the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Health, together with education and health partners such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization. In December 2021, this platform was launched as the official national system for reporting on COVID-19 school-

based monitoring. When Ugandan schools reopened in January 2022, following the longest pandemic-related school closure period in the world, school-based surveillance and national data was visualized on the national dashboard for the Ministry of Education and Sports.

In early 2022, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Lesotho acted on [data](#) from the project [Using data for improving education equity and inclusion](#) that showed only 17% of children in Grade 3 have the expected reading skills and fewer than 10% have

the expected numeracy skills. The MOET is strengthening children's foundational literacy and numeracy skills by introducing rigorous models, such as Teaching at the Right Level, and structured pedagogy. The Ministry is further incorporating project findings into a comprehensive national strategy for learning continuity currently being developed.

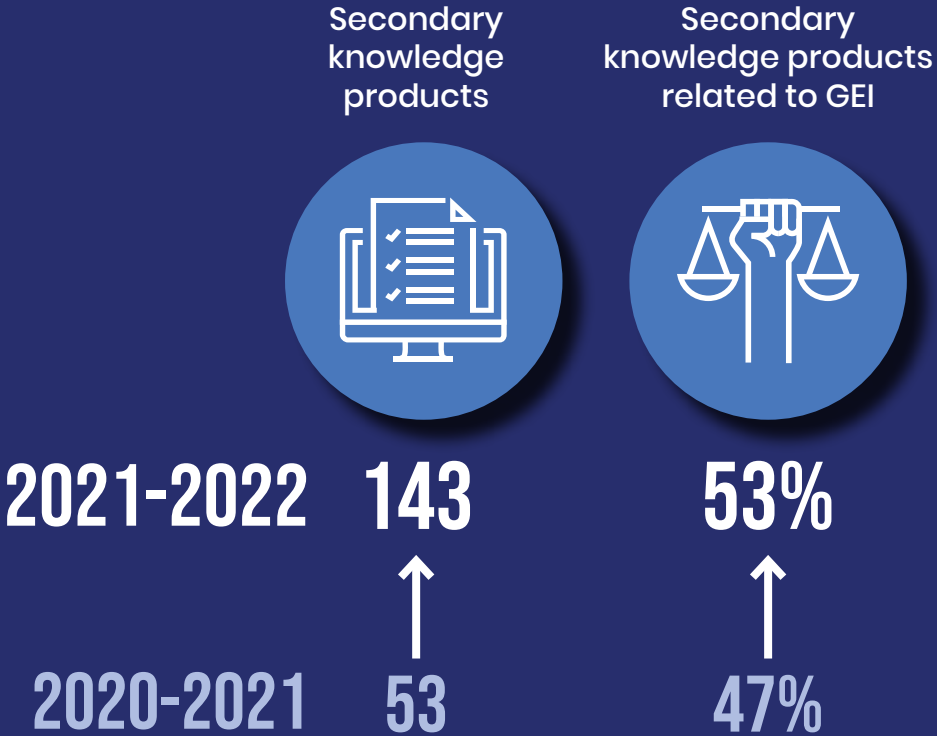
In all, representatives from 69 GPE partner countries engaged with KIX this year, and 55 of those countries had moderate or high levels of engagement.



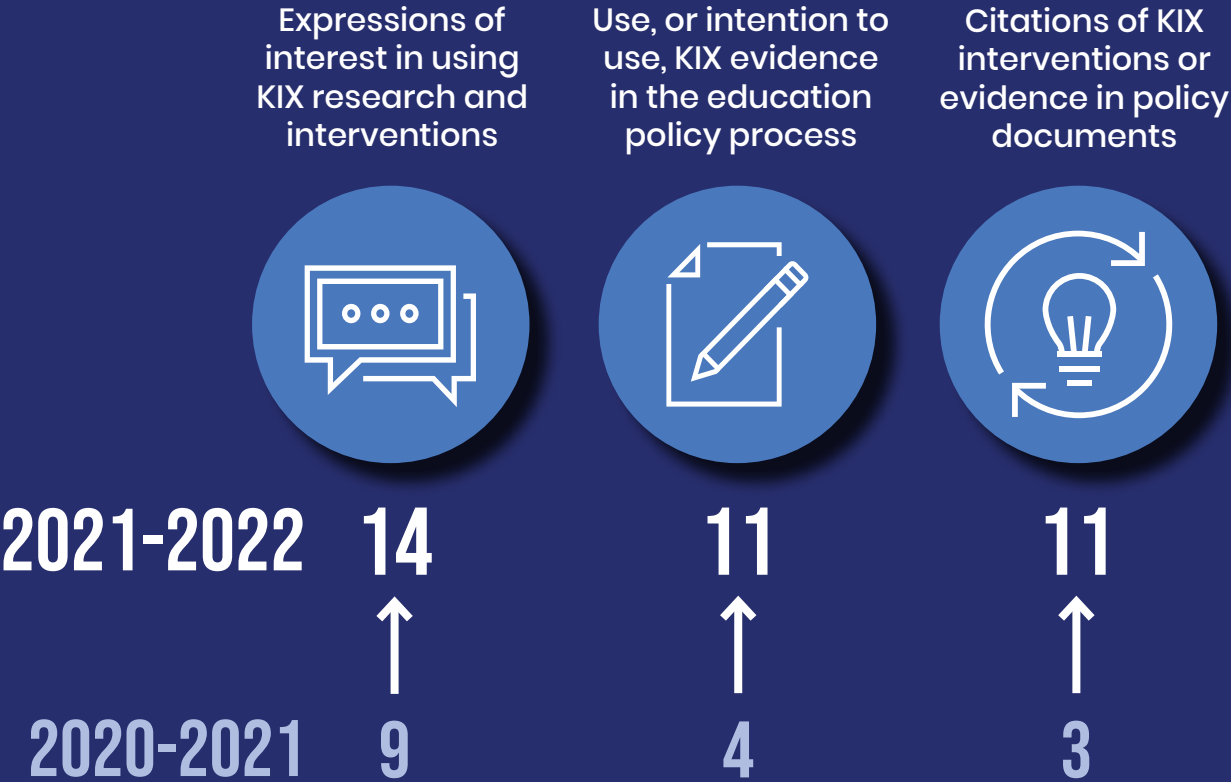
Photo: GPE/Carine Durand



Progress on knowledge mobilization products and GEI



Progress on stakeholder endorsement of research and interventions



3. Strengthening capacities to scale the impact of innovations and apply evidence

Incorporating evidence into policy and practice requires the right skills and tools. KIX supports the capacity strengthening of key stakeholders in a variety of ways, including webinars, workshops, learning series, training sessions, and professional development opportunities.

Our mid-term evaluation identified capacity strengthening of country representatives and other education stakeholders as the most effective type of support KIX offers. Over 50% of the successful outcomes reported by applied research projects and regional hubs relate to capacity strengthening. Surveyed country representatives indicated that they have a better understanding of evidence-based solutions to education challenges in their countries and feel more equipped to propose improvements in policy dialogues. Applied research projects and regional hubs have both been successful in delivering capacity strengthening events to educational stakeholders across GPE partner countries.

For example, the [EAP hub](#) organized [learning cycles](#) that strengthened the ability of groups of country representatives to scale innovation, promote equitable access to education with geospatial data, and integrate 21st century skills in curriculum. These hands-on, policy-relevant learning cycles provide unique opportunities for national education stakeholders to work together, learning from other national groups as they proceed through the cycle in a process facilitated by international experts. Each country group develops a practical product that can be put to immediate use in their context. Staff of the education planning department in Cambodia, for instance, enhanced their knowledge and skills in geospatial data analysis. They developed maps showing which districts have low performance and high dropout rates for use in a mid-term review of their country's current education strategic plan. Groups from 12 other countries participated in that

same learning cycle, combining geographic, demographic, and education system data to understand issues relevant to their countries, such as disaster risk management for schools, improving educational quality, and reducing dropout and repetition rates.

Through a [KIX data challenge](#) hosted by the [Africa 19 hub](#) between September and November 2021, country representatives reviewed and updated a tool to assess national educational management information systems. They also had the opportunity to become accredited Regional EMIS Experts by the African Union's Pan Africa Institute of Education Development. Participating representatives from 14 ministries of education in the region then used the tool to assess their own national EMIS. Representatives from The Gambia used the new skills acquired to conduct an intensive review of their educational management information systems at the national, regional, and school levels. As a result, The Gambia has decentralized its EMIS and disaggregated its data collection to give a clearer picture of each learner.

In March 2022, the [Strategies to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and foster equity in rural schools](#) project brought together teachers from rural educational institutions across Nicaragua to build their knowledge of gender-based violence (GBV). After participating in these activities, teachers had new understandings of GBV and began to explore ways to address the issue, including through adapting curriculum content.



# SELECTED CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH UPTAKE

## The Gambia

The **Gambia** has decentralized its EMIS and disaggregated its data collection after Ministry of Education representatives used new skills and knowledge gained from a KIX data challenge hosted by the Africa 19 hub to review their EMIS at every level.

## El Salvador

The LAC regional hub supported the development of **El Salvador's** partnership compact to outline education system transformation.

## Nicaragua

Teachers in **Nicaragua** are exploring how to integrate GBV into the curriculum after receiving training on the topic from the Strategies to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and foster equity in rural schools project.

## Burkina Faso

Following a national policy dialogue organized by the Africa 21 hub, Burkina Faso's Ministry of Education has worked with education stakeholders to select and analyze 11 promising innovations that could be used to strengthen national policy and planning.

## Uganda

The Data use innovations for education management information systems in The Gambia, Uganda, and Togo project scaled up an innovative platform connecting health and education information systems in learning institutions across **Uganda**.

## Lesotho

**Lesotho's** Ministry of Education and Training used findings from the Using data for improving education equity and inclusion project in developing a comprehensive national strategy for learning continuity.

## Cambodia

Representatives from **Cambodia's** planning department gained skills and knowledge on using geospatial data to improve equitable access to education from a learning cycle hosted by the EAP hub, and used this to conduct a mid-term review of the national education sector strategic plan.

## Map Legend

This year, evidence of results from KIX supported

- **knowledge mobilization** and
- **capacity strengthening** can be seen in:
- **LAC**
- **EAP**
- **Africa 21**
- **Africa 19**



# FEATURE THEME: MOBILIZING NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SUPPORT TPD

The COVID-19 pandemic — with its excessive burden on teachers, critical loss of learning for pupils, and massive disruption of ill-prepared education systems — underscored the vital importance of professional development for teaching staff. The KIX mid-term evaluation found that, among priority research themes, country representatives valued research related to teaching and learning most highly.

Our contributions to enhancing TPD also illustrate how efforts in our three core results areas come together. Knowledge mobilization has been a central part of KIX work on TPD, with 35 related events. Capacity strengthening activities have involved 1,295 people from 22 GPE member countries. Teacher professional development is a central theme in 12 applied research projects, covering 31 countries and involving over 30 research institutions. Although it is still early in the research cycle for most projects, findings are beginning to emerge on better ways of implementing innovative teacher training and support programs. This focus on TPD reflects the demand from KIX partner countries for ideas and solutions that can strengthen teaching through urgently needed training plans and policies.

TPD-centered applied research covers a diverse range of topics adapted to local realities, such as:

- developing innovation skills for school teachers;
- using blended, technologically appropriate pedagogies in rural areas; and
- exploring various models of peer support, tutoring and mentoring.

Several KIX projects are developing teacher training curriculum, even outside the core TPD portfolio. For example, projects on gender-based violence prevention, STEM, distance education, early learning, and learning

assessment all consider TPD a central element of their research. They develop curricular units, resources, and training materials on specific themes, and strengthen capacity through working group techniques and training modules.

Through their knowledge mobilization activities, KIX applied research projects are beginning to influence public policy discussions on TPD; strengthen alliances with universities, teacher training agencies, and international organizations; and collaborate directly with governments and decision-makers.

The wide TPD “umbrella” covers a range of problems and challenges. Here we highlight early findings and outcomes on sub-themes that emerged as key priorities within our TPD portfolio this year.

## Scaling TPD models

One cluster of projects aims to identify the most effective ways to scale the delivery of teacher training, including by exploring the role of digital technologies and schools of pedagogy. Questions of how to expand teacher training beyond individual schools are crucial. What TPD innovations could be effectively and efficiently scaled up? What conditions must be in place for this to occur? How do we support teachers as partners in this effort, recognizing their motivations and challenges?

The [Teaching at the Right Level](#) (TARL) project seeks to strengthen teacher support in Côte d’Ivoire, Zambia, and Nigeria by increasing the effectiveness of monitoring and mentoring, and the cost-effectiveness of scaling up. They have identified effective strategies for improving teacher engagement — shedding light on the knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, and skills teachers need to develop for the project to be scaled successfully.

In August 2021, the [Africa 19 hub](#) and the TARL project collaborated to convene country representatives for a [webinar](#) on scaling innovations in teaching and learning. Country representatives remarked on how directly applicable the interactions and insights were to their work, and how they could draw on the experiences of other countries. Knowledge



Photo: GPE/Deepa Srikantaiah  
Photo: GPE/Paul Martinez  
Photo: GPE/Kelley Lynch



mobilization activities such as this provide a crucial opportunity to explore, through KIX hubs, how a proven approach could work in other public education systems.

Another project, [Adapting and scaling teacher professional development approaches in Ghana, Honduras, and Uzbekistan](#) (TPD@scale), explores how digital TPD technologies can be used to increase equitable access to quality training. This project conducts field tests on adapting the TPD@scale model to unique country contexts by strengthening teachers' digital skills and widening access to tailored online content. Decision-makers in all three countries have actively engaged with TPD@scale and its emerging findings. For example, Ghana's National Teaching Council has adopted the project's testing model and used the data collected on teacher motivation to make their models more appealing to teachers. In Uzbekistan, the two leading agencies in charge of TPD — PIIMA and Avloniy Institute — have joined in project activities, establishing possible strategies for improving their models. At a meeting in December 2021, an adviser to the President of Uzbekistan stated that the government intends to use the TPD@scale model to strengthen the national education system. In Honduras, the project is actively contributing to the design of a new teacher development policy through the National Education Council. These instances of policy uptake have helped the project identify what works best in testing TPD models in public education systems in order to replicate them at scale in other countries.

### Providing peer support and leadership from the ground up

Another group of projects seeks to generate knowledge on how new approaches to promoting and leveraging leadership within schools can support local innovation capacity, collaborative work, and peer mentoring among teachers and school principals.

The project [Data must speak about positive deviance approaches to learning](#) has generated new evidence indicating that having female teachers in the lower grades

reduces the learning gap between girls and boys. These results inspired the creation of UNICEF's Women in Leadership Learning project, which aims to strengthen the quality of girls' education by addressing the challenges of female school leadership.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a working meeting was held in 2021 with the leaders of teachers' unions in KIX member countries in the region. The event — titled [Innovations for teacher professional development: What role do teachers' unions play?](#) — provided a space for essential and often neglected voices to join the debate on TPD. It also offered an opportunity for the TPD@scale project to present its research and early results. Since then, union leaders have engaged actively in national debates organized by the [LAC hub](#) in Guyana and Dominica.

*Reforms to pre-service training will benefit 20% of the teaching force in the East Caribbean over the next 10 years.*

### Improving curricular content for TPD

KIX has allocated some resources to leverage short-term windows of opportunity to mobilize knowledge to improve teacher training. For example, [SUMMA](#), the regional learning partner for the [LAC hub](#), supports the University of West Indies (UWI) in improving the quality of pre-service teacher training in the Caribbean. UWI is leveraging international evidence and best practices to transform their associate and bachelor's degrees in education to promote innovative skills and effective teaching practices. These reforms will benefit 2,750 teachers in the next 10 years — 20% of the teaching force in the East Caribbean sub-region. In collaboration with the Education Endowment Foundation, this project also brings together key education stakeholders from the region to share knowledge on teacher training reform through a series of [webinars](#), seminars, and workshops.

Curricular development for teacher training was a core part of the knowledge mobilization efforts of KIX regional hubs this year. Between June and September 2021, the [EAP hub](#) shared evidence on effective curricular modalities for in-service training with participating government officials in its [Integration of 21st Century Skills in Curriculum](#) learning cycle. The [Africa 21 hub](#) also organized a series of capacity building and knowledge sharing events that addressed the renewal of [teacher competencies in the 21st century](#), quality assurance of [initial teacher education](#) in sub-Saharan African countries, and the issue of [recruitment and retention](#) of teachers.

In July 2021, the [Africa 19 hub](#) hosted a [workshop](#) to discuss good practices and challenges in teacher continuous professional development within competency-based education systems. The workshop strengthened the related capacities of 31 stakeholders from eight ministries of education and local education groups in East, West, and southern Africa.

### TPD responses to COVID-19

COVID-19 massively disrupted primary and secondary education. Today, issues associated with the reopening of schools and profound learning losses are at the center of the debate. A better understanding of TPD requirements will support teachers in “building back better” in education systems.

[Teacher training and support in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) was the focus of one of five thematic reviews published this year by the [KIX Observatory on COVID-19 responses in Africa's educational systems](#). The report synthesizes evidence on the teacher training and support policies and practices of 40 sub-Saharan African GPE partner countries during the pandemic, highlighting gaps between teachers' needs and available support. The report highlighted the necessity of reinforcing teachers' capacity to address the needs of vulnerable learners, and of greater investment in teacher training to reverse learning losses and build more resilient education systems.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, KIX partners are providing the most comprehensive snapshot of teacher training and support since the onset of the pandemic. In 2021, KIX regional learning partners, [SUMMA](#) and [the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States](#), conducted a regional survey of more than 200,000 teachers from 21 countries — including all [KIX LAC](#) countries. A policy report on TPD and COVID-19 responses in education will be presented with the survey results as part of a significant knowledge mobilization effort on post-COVID learning responses and recovery in the region.

The [LAC hub](#) also hosted its [first international conference](#) on TPD in the context of COVID in April 2021. The conference gathered regional educational experts and stakeholders, including the Minister of Education of Guyana, bringing together more than 700 virtual attendees.

In East Asia, the project [Distance education to improve quality and access to school education in Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Tajikistan](#) presented on [approaches to education responses to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) at the [EAP hub's first Education Policy and Innovation Conference](#) in October 2021. The presentation highlighted how the project supported teachers from rural regions of Kyrgyzstan in mobilizing and self-organizing to learn new information and gain technological skills. In this way, the EAP hub created a platform where emerging results from applied research projects could be presented to policymakers and practitioners from across the region, thus linking KIX knowledge generation, knowledge mobilization, and capacity strengthening efforts.

# WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

The evolving reality of the COVID-19 pandemic this year demanded that KIX maintain an adaptive approach to program management. By April 2021, KIX hubs and projects had for the most part adapted well to virtual knowledge generation, capacity strengthening, and knowledge mobilization, with some significant limitations. The pandemic caused ongoing disruptions to education systems, as well as to KIX field work and travel and affected the well-being of KIX staff, grantees, and others with whom we work. Some project activities were delayed. Online meeting formats necessitated more frequent, shorter events. While online engagement can be effective in reaching larger audiences and involving key stakeholders, it is less effective at fostering the deep connections that in-person gatherings facilitate.

Program implementation was also interrupted in some countries that experienced conflict and natural disaster, which interfered with field work and made participation in hubs difficult or even impossible. In a few countries, significant political changes required starting new efforts to build relationships and knowledge mobilization strategies. The collective and comparative nature of our multi-country projects suffers when implementation becomes difficult in one or more countries.

The mid-term evaluation noted this challenge of operating in diverse contexts and observed that some countries have very limited or no engagement in their hubs, while others engage extensively and ask for additional support. The evaluation recommended tailoring strategies for hub engagement to the unique circumstances of each partner country. Moreover, while the evaluation noted the significant reach of KIX activities, it recommended further targeting our knowledge mobilization efforts to ensure strong links with policy dialogue opportunities and decision-making across diverse contexts.

These challenges, and the areas for potential improvement identified in the KIX MEL system and our mid-term evaluation, have brought home some valuable lessons. When KIX was originally conceptualized, we intended to build our efforts around a small group of strategic national stakeholders who would engage in KIX activities. However, because KIX programming began during the COVID-19 pandemic, most events were virtual and had a much broader reach than anticipated. Now that pandemic restrictions have begun to loosen, and in-person events are more possible, we are reflecting on what a more hybrid model of engagement might look like. We are also considering how to balance the value of open participation — reaching a large virtual audience — with the need to establish deeper connections with a key subset of stakeholders at the center of relevant policymaking circles. We have learned that, whether events are held virtually or in person, the most effective strategies for deepening engagement and strengthening capacities involve multiple connection points. Establishing communities of practice or involving the same stakeholders in learning cycles over the course of many events are examples of how these connections can be reinforced.

*We have learned that the most effective strategies for deepening engagement and strengthening capacities involve multiple connection points.*

Important observations about the types of research that are most relevant and useful to partner countries also surfaced this year. Scaling innovation has been an important KIX focus, and the ROSIE project is poised to make a unique contribution that could also apply to projects beyond KIX. In relation to [scaling](#),

we have learned that adaptation must be a mindset: projects have to be reflective and flexible, viewing adaptation as an ongoing, culturally embedded practice from the very beginning of a scaling process. To effectively adapt an innovation, they must demonstrate their relevance and effectiveness in new contexts and decide which core elements to preserve, adjust, simplify, or let go. They must also pay attention to factors affecting their quality in new settings. Finally, it is critical to involve relevant stakeholders early: the more buy-in and ownership they demonstrate, the better the chances that an innovation will succeed.

In addition to the multi-year, multi-country research KIX is funding, other types of research have also proven particularly valuable this past year. For example, the [KIX COVID-19 Observatory](#)

has demonstrated the value of rapid response research, shaped by the evolving priorities of education policymakers in the Global South. A series of smaller studies funded by some of the regional hubs also proved especially useful to partner countries. For example, the [LAC hub](#) developed a [set of country reviews](#) that ministries note they would draw on for future education sector planning. The [EAP hub](#) produced a [series of case studies](#) on scaling innovation from its first learning cycle. Country representatives are now working to mobilize that learning in their home countries.

## Lessons from the KIX mid-term evaluation

Our learning is informed by ongoing engagement with partner countries through the KIX regional hubs and by our monitoring, evaluation, and learning system. This year's independent mid-term evaluation, conducted by experts at Delivery Associates, provided important insights to strengthen KIX. Its key recommendations include:

- **Leverage and target efforts to maximize potential impact.**
  - ◊ Leverage KIX in GPE's system transformation mission and activities.
  - ◊ Strengthen links between the main components of the program, so there is a clearer path for applying lessons from research.
  - ◊ Tailor support to countries according to their levels of engagement in the hubs to better support highly committed delegations.
  - ◊ Identify relevant stakeholders to engage in hub activities.
- **Streamline some program aspects to increase effectiveness.**
  - ◊ Simplify KIX communication to motivate, engage, and align different stakeholders; state the program's vision, purpose, and value proposition in simpler ways that can help stakeholders understand, share, and prioritize.
  - ◊ Refine the MEL model to maximize its use.



# UPCOMING PRIORITIES

Looking forward, KIX will respond to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation as we continue implementation of our five-year strategy. We will prioritize adaptive support for regional hubs and our applied research projects, bolstering their efforts to promote policy uptake by mobilizing the increasing number of outputs and results being generated. We will synthesize knowledge across thematic areas and continue to find ways to engage in key global events and dialogues.

## Knowledge synthesis

A key priority next year will be to synthesize knowledge from applied research projects on key themes. We will leverage these connections to consolidate emerging evidence on promising solutions and share key program results and achievements with the broader education research community. Knowledge synthesis will also help us identify remaining knowledge gaps to inform future education research; it will generate lessons for future crises about how applied research on education systems in the Global South can be effectively implemented during a pandemic.

## Diversified hub strategies

Part of our tailored support to hubs will include working with them to adapt their capacity strengthening strategies in light of the growing number of requests for technical assistance they receive and the varying levels of country engagement. We will also collaborate with hubs to develop engagement strategies that reflect the greater number and range of actors who regularly take part in hub activities, beyond those originally nominated as official country representatives.

## Ramping up knowledge mobilization

As more actionable evidence emerges from KIX-funded research, we will reinforce connections between applied research projects and the regional knowledge exchange hubs to strengthen engagement with policymakers and amplify key outputs. Our success in mobilizing knowledge, linking to policy debates, and ensuring country ownership rests on the ability of regional hubs to convene the right stakeholders, ensuring participation from governments, educational institutions, civil society, and the research community. We will continue to support this strategic engagement. Strengthening the KIX national ecosystem in GPE partner countries will be key, including a stronger focus on supporting national dialogues across African countries.

## Maintaining and reinforcing the principles of adaptive management

As we adjust our platforms, tools and support mechanisms to suit the specific needs, priorities and capacities of regional learning partners and applied research projects, we will simplify and streamline our communications and MEL platform. We will continue to tailor our support to hubs and projects at various phases in their lifecycles, including the early learning projects launched at the beginning of 2022.

## Leveraging KIX within GPE and IDRC strategic priorities

In the upcoming year, we will adapt our strategies to reinforce the strategic priorities of both [GPE](#) and [IDRC](#). We will leverage KIX experience in engaging with country partners to support GPE in mobilizing country-led system transformation. We will also continue to share KIX evidence and experience to shape the priorities of IDRC's Education and Science division.

In the coming year, the GPE and IDRC boards will consider the mid-term evaluation and decide whether KIX should be extended. Should that be the case, defining longer-term strategies will also become a priority.



Photo: GPE/Kelley Lynch



# ANNEX I: FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The approval of KIX in 2019 came with an important financial milestone: all research funding had to be allocated by June 30, 2021. This milestone was met, with the last of the regional projects allocated by June. In addition, KIX ran an additional call for proposals with funding to GPE from the LEGO Foundation, resulting in \$5 million allocated for projects on early learning in the first months of 2022.

In terms of expenses, KIX made up ground this past year. In 2020–21, KIX was underspent on a number of budget lines. This year, expenses caught up and came in very slightly over budget (3%).

The largest category in the KIX budget, the funding mechanism for applied research, expensed 5% over budget for the period. Project expenses increased, particularly from regional projects, catching up from the previous year. Initial payments to the early learning projects were also over the projected budget. The projections were made prior to the call for proposals being launched. Once projects were selected, IDRC established a schedule of payments based on actual project plans and institutional risk assessments. This resulted in issuing a somewhat larger amount overall.

Other variances include extra maintenance costs for the digital platform, and lower direct program management costs due to staff vacancies and the lack of travel, due to Covid-19.

	USD (\$)	BUDGET	ACTUALS	VARIANCE
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES				
1. Learning exchange mechanism				
Regional learning partners		2,047,926	2,051,172	-3,246
2. Funding mechanism				
Global grants		6,286,015	6,012,621	273,394
Regional grants		6,915,063	7,618,253	-703,190
Early learning grants		899,756	1,249,448	-349,692
Research on scaling		615,319	631,529	-16,210
3. Supporting activities				
Program activities*		416,236	409,592	6,644
OAM fund**		553,048	514,270	38,778
Digital platform		162,784	186,207	-23,423
EXTERNAL AUDIT		18,984	12,287	6,697
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT				
1. Direct costs		1,966,410	1,739,573	226,837
2. Indirect costs (7%)		1,391,708	1,429,747	-38,039
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		21,273,248	21,854,699	-581,451

\*Program activities include monitoring, learning, and evaluation and communications and engagement.

\*\*OAM stands for the Opportunity and Adaptive Management support fund.



Photo: GPE/Arlene Bax  
Photo: GPE/Kelley Lynch



