



GLOBAL
SCHOOLS
FORUM

Annual Impact report

2023-2024

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About Global Schools Forum

Global Schools Forum (GSF) is a collaborative community, innovation accelerator, and partnership builder for non-state organisations working to improve education at scale for underserved children in low- and middle-income countries.

The GSF community extends to over 131 organisations working across 60 countries, reaching 23.9m children.

Our vision is that all children can realise their potential through safe access to quality education.



Global learning community

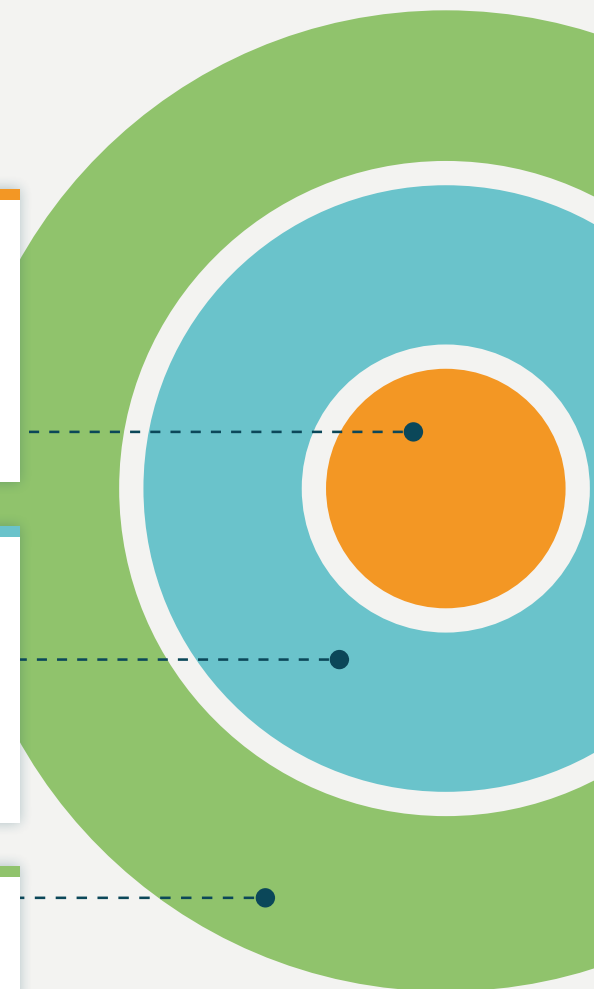
GSF connects a dynamic global community, engaging local leadership by sharing knowledge, insights and learning to drive systemic change in education.

Innovation accelerator

GSF incubates and ignites education innovations, testing and diffusing promising education solutions and empowering local leaders to implement these solutions.

Partnership builder

GSF strategically partners at a global level to strengthen education systems, engaging in policy-shaping dialogue, fostering partnerships, and advocating for the effective use of non-state capacity to enhance equitable education outcomes.



What drives us

250 million children lack access to education globally while close to 70% of school going children in low- and middle-income countries experience learning poverty.

There is a thriving and vast ecosystem of local schools, school networks, childcare providers, pre-primary centres, education entrepreneurs and leaders in low-and-middle-income-countries who are working alongside governments to provide education services, drive innovation and build partnerships to reach underserved children.

Global Schools Forum provides a vital platform for these local leaders to connect with each other engage in peer learning, support their scaling journeys, build evidence of what works, and create opportunities for partnership for this local leadership to support all actors achieve global education goals.



CEO welcome



Aashti Zaidi Hai

Founder and CEO,
Global Schools Forum

I founded Global Schools Forum (GSF) in 2017, recognising a need for a collective platform and voice for organisations delivering education services in the global south. Despite sharing common challenges and goals, these organisations often operated in isolation, lacking access to shared knowledge, support, and resources.

Today, our community has grown into a powerful collective of 131 inspiring schools, school networks, education innovators, and entrepreneurs across 60 countries, reaching nearly 24 million children. GSF fosters connections and collaboration across this global network, empowering local leadership to improve education outcomes worldwide through the power of our network.

The warmth, vibrancy, and energy of our community is truly inspiring. Our Annual Meeting in Ghana was a highlight, bringing together 140 individuals to discuss shared challenges and goals. Our Study Tour to rural Uganda was equally joyful as we learned from local school leaders about their unique challenges within their education contexts.

Our Impact at Scale Labs programme is now firmly established, directly supporting 14 organisations to deliver improved learning outcomes to approximately 100,000 children. With the launch of our third Lab, I am particularly excited to see us sizably grow our cohort, increasing our ability to support organisations to reach more children with quality education.

We are doing important work to support evidence translation and use for practitioners through our Evidence Hubs, for instance enabling local community-based and refugee-led organisations to strengthen their ability to deliver evidence-driven and critical Early Childhood Development services in situations of protracted crises.

Our policy and partnerships work, including the launch of our All Hands On Deck For SDG4 Action Toolkit, and our regulation work with UNESCO, continue to make significant strides; providing reports and resources to strengthen regulation, and supporting better collaboration and integration across national, subnational, and regional education systems.

Looking ahead to next year, I can't wait to see our community continuing to thrive, connect, collaborate, and feel energised and empowered through our global network.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aashti', written in a cursive style.

Our year in numbers

23.9m

children reached.

US\$2.1m

Contracts in place to disburse US\$2.1m to 14 promising local innovators, reaching 100,000 children.

44,000

website visitors from 172 countries.

31,362

additional students reached through our first Labs cohort.

131

organisations in our community.

80

organisations represented at our Annual Meeting.

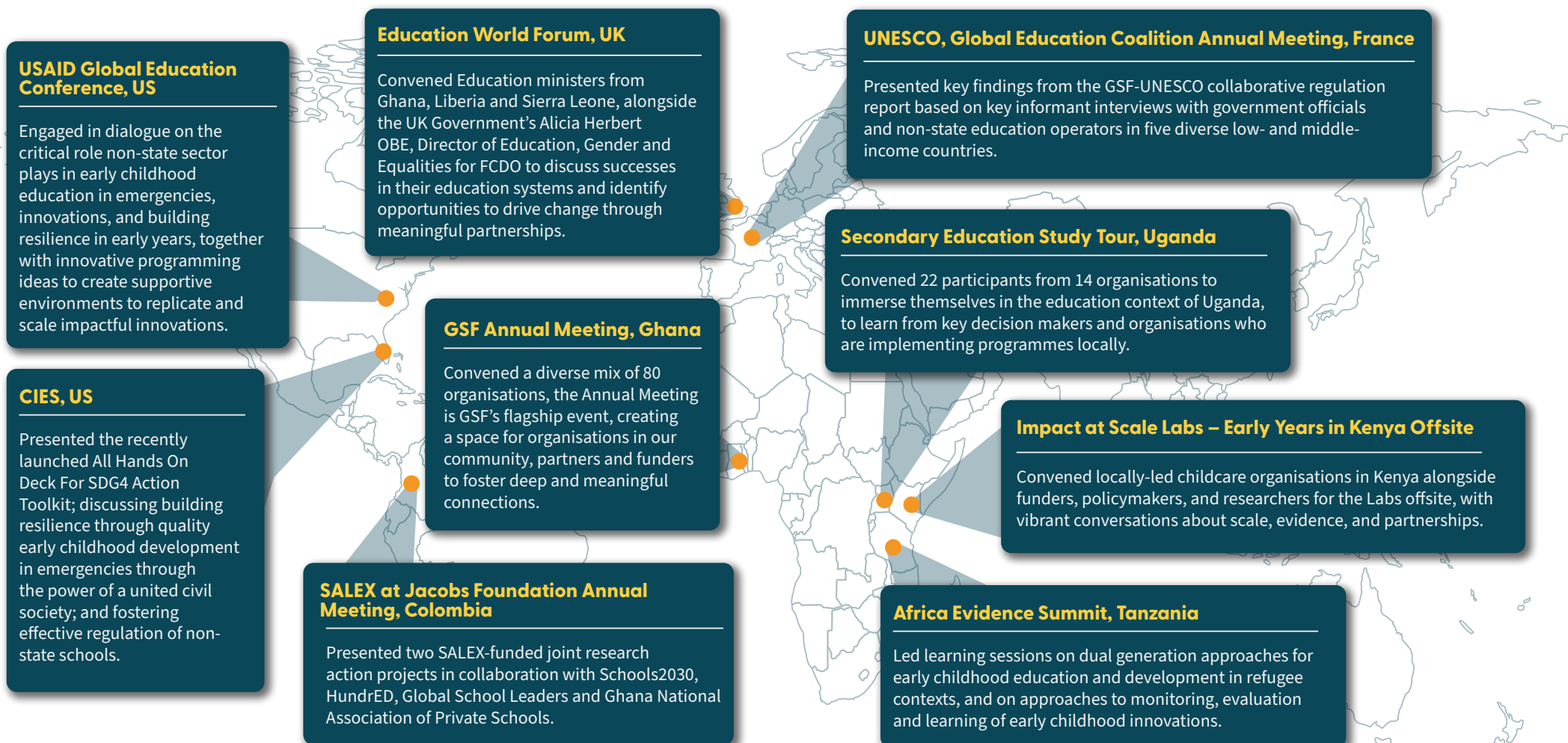
60

countries in the global south represented by organisations in our community.



Fostering global connections

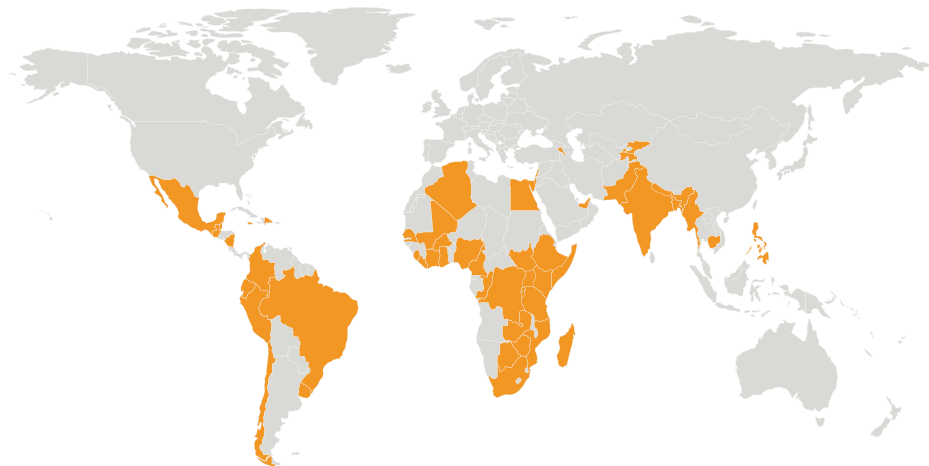
Global Schools Forum creates, curates and participates in global education events that cultivate community learning, innovation dissemination, and partnership building. By convening organisations in our community, partners, policymakers, education practitioners and civil society, we foster a collaborative environment for peer-to-peer learning.



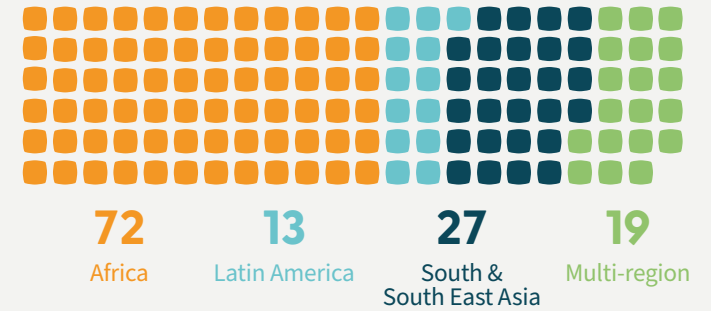
Our community

The Global Schools Forum is a vibrant global community of 131 diverse organisations, including schools, school networks, education support organisations, entrepreneurs, and innovators. GSF connects and empowers this community by fostering the exchange of knowledge and resources among local practitioners and education providers.

-  **131** organisations
-  **23.9m** children
-  **256,702** schools
-  **828,108** teachers
-  **60** countries



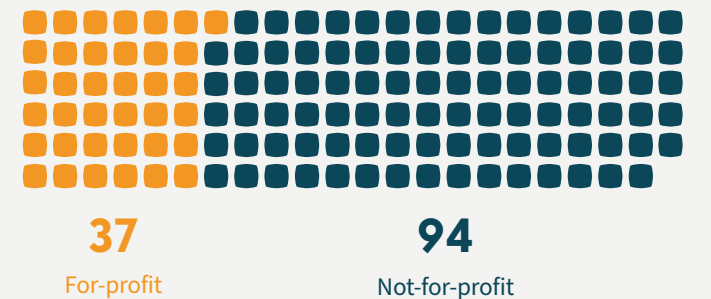
Region of operation



Organisation type



Operating model





Strategic priority 1

Global learning community

GSF is a collaborative global community that fosters connections, collaboration, and learning among diverse education leaders, engaging them to drive systemic change and improve education outcomes locally.

72%

of organisations are using the knowledge from GSF learning products and activities in the implementation of their projects.

70%

of organisations strongly agreed that GSF embodied the values of openness, sharing and collaboration.

84%

of organisations agreed or strongly agreed they have benefited from being in the GSF community.

GSF 2024 community feedback survey

GSF's Annual Meeting: Building resilient, sustainable and impactful education systems

This year's Annual Meeting, in Accra, Ghana, convened 140 attendees including organisations in our community, partners, government officials, policymakers, practitioners, funders and researchers for a rich and collaborative three days of networking, workshops and presentations. The Annual Meeting is GSF's flagship event that brings our diverse community together to foster deep and meaningful connections within and outside the community, access new and relevant information that will broaden thinking, and collectively move the community further in our shared goals.

100% of respondents agreed that the Annual Meeting enabled them to build and deepen their relationships and networks.

Annual meeting survey



Watch: Ghana's Deputy Minister for Education, Rev. John Ntim Fordjour's keynote address at the event.



Watch: Annual Meeting highlight videos.



“

I am still buzzing from an incredible week at the Global Schools Forum Annual Meeting in Accra. Despite stiff competition from previous editions, this was maybe the best one ever: so energising to catch up with old friends and make new ones. It also gave us the chance to kick off the first in a series of events commemorating the 10th anniversary of Rising Academy Network's founding. It felt very fitting to be celebrating Risingat10 with a group that have walked so much of that journey with us”.

Paul Skidmore, Executive Chairman,
Rising Academy Network.

Secondary education study tour

The secondary education study tour in Uganda convened 22 individuals from 14 organisations, allowing attendees to immerse themselves in the education context of Uganda and learn from key decision makers and organisations who are implementing programmes in the country. Attendees experienced the power of a learning network that collectively strengthened their resolve to navigate programmatic and systemic challenges in secondary education across diverse contexts.

100% of Study Tour participants were able to access new ideas and perspectives to help strengthen their organisation and work.

Study Tour participant survey



Read: Secondary education study tour reflection report.



Community learning & engagement

GSF curated a rich and diverse programme of online learning and engagement events for organisations in the community and wider ecosystem to learn, develop and grow through shared and meaningful connections. From Foundational Learning and Secondary Education Communities of Practice to Spotlight Sessions, Ask The Expert, and new member meetups, this rich series of online and in-person events foster connections and shared learning to enable the community to share ideas and empower the community to build resilience and grow.



Watch: Community of practice on secondary education.



Watch: International Day of Play: Learning through play webinar with UNICEF.



Strategic priority 2

Innovation accelerator

Global Schools Forum is an incubator for testing and diffusing promising education innovations. By providing flexible funding and expert coaching, GSF supports the scaling of localised solutions with the potential to transform education outcomes. GSF distils global best practices and generates evidence on what works in education and what makes organisations more effective, empowering leaders to implement these solutions locally.

72%

of organisations are developing education innovations.

GSF 2024 community feedback survey

70%

of organisations agreed that being in the GSF community has helped them establish new partnerships.

Impact at scale lab participant survey

10/10

Organisations participating in the Labs programme rate the support provided 10/10.

Impact at Scale Labs

GSF's Impact at Scale Labs will have disbursed a total of US\$2.1m in funding and provided technical support to 14 organisations scaling education solutions to reach an additional 100,000 children. Now in its third year and cohort, the Labs identifies and nurtures promising, primarily locally-led, education solutions that have the potential to scale and improve outcomes for children in the global south. This technical support focuses on scale strategy, evidence, finance, and partnerships to drive learning outcome improvements.

Innovations for learning recovery

Concluded after 18 months of activities, the inaugural Lab provided tailored technical support and distributed over US\$300,000 to scale up innovations and drive learning outcomes to Dignitas, Gyan Shala and Sabre Education. Key wins from this collaboration with organisations include:

100% of grantees report that they couldn't have advanced their innovation (either to a new phase of scale or back to ideation phase) without GSF's technical and financial support.

75% of the respondents agreed that the Labs has improved their access to new funding to scale-up their organisation's innovation; and the overall satisfaction with the programme was rated as 10/10.

31,362 organisations went from reaching 2,441 students to reaching 31,362 students with their innovations.

Impact at scale lab participant survey



Learning outcomes

All three organisations were supported to put in place the monitoring, evaluation and learning systems that support them to track the impact of their innovation on learning outcomes in the long term.



Early years in Kenya

GSF's second Lab focuses on supporting four promising, locally-led organisations working to improve child development outcomes for children aged 0-6 in Kenya with \$400,000 alongside technical expertise. This Lab works to establish catalytic partnerships between government and non-state sector for service delivery at scale, as well as inform decision-making at the national and local levels through evidence and learnings.



“We are excited to be part of GSF's Impact at Scale Labs programme. It has given us the opportunity to understand our model in detail and where we want to go and create a roadmap for how to get there.”

Prisca Muyodi, Director, Totocare Taraji Afrika Educational Group

Intermediate outcomes

Participant organisations rated the usefulness of coaching as 10/10 and overall satisfaction with the Labs as

9/10

All organisations have refined their programme designs for scale, enhancing their capacity to meet the needs of children aged 0-3.

Impact at scale lab participant survey

Foundational literacy and numeracy

GSF's third Lab will support seven organisations to scale innovative solutions aimed at improving learning outcomes in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN). The finalist organisations selected are delivering a range of innovative methods to deliver structured pedagogy, targeted instruction and new pedagogical approaches at the primary level.

“The CLR-LFE teams are humbled and beyond excited to be selected for the 2024 GSF Impact at Scale Labs programme! As we continue to serve the underserved rural children of Maharashtra (India), we are keen to leverage the vast experience of GSF's leadership team and organisational network to help us learn from global best practices and apply them in our local contexts.”

Madhukar Banuri, Director Centre for Learning Resources (CLR) & Director Leadership For Equity (LFE)

7 organisations

5 countries

US\$1.4m funding



Launching the impact at scale toolkit

The impact at scale toolkit offers valuable insights and practical tools to enhance education innovation solutions towards scale. Designed to share the tools, resources, and learning from the Labs with the wider education community, it includes a combination of tools for specific challenges, case studies on how these tools have been implemented across different contexts, and unique stories of challenges and solutions other organisations are facing when scaling their impact.



Read: Access the toolkit here.



Watch: Scale toolkit video series.



Watch: Scale toolkit and DVF framework launch webinar.

Early childhood education and development in emergencies evidence hub

The early childhood education and development in emergencies evidence hub provides practical resources to support grassroots organisations working in emergencies to enhance their early childhood education and development (ECE) services. The hub serves as a central repository of information and tools designed to improve the quality and effectiveness of ECE programmes in crisis contexts. The evidence hub is practitioner-led, prioritising the voices and experiences of frontline workers. By incorporating their insights, the hub will ensure that the resources it provides are relevant, accessible, and responsive to the unique challenges faced by grassroots organisations.



Read: Access the evidence hub here.



Watch: Monitoring, evaluation and learning toolkit launch webinar.





Strategic priority 3

Partnership builder

GSF strategically partners to shape policy and scale solutions, engaging in global policy processes to harness non-state capacity for equitable education outcomes. By fostering relationships with key stakeholders, GSF empowers local leadership to scale promising solutions.

83%

rated as high or very high the effectiveness of GSF increasing the visibility of non-state education actors in global policy and planning frameworks.

61%

of organisations considered that being in the GSF community helped them establish new partnerships.

GSF 2024 community feedback survey

Government & non-state partnerships evidence hub

The recently launched evidence hub includes a rich set of resources for practitioners, policymakers, and education leaders to strengthen collaborations within the non-state education sector. The hub incorporates toolkits, case studies, and materials designed to help policymakers and non-state education providers understand different partnership types and foster more innovative and impactful collaborations locally.

“There is recognition about the value that the private sector and non-state partners can bring and that’s really quite an agnostic but pragmatic approach we bring to our work with low- and middle-income countries. We support any mechanisms that can open up access to out of school and marginalised children”.

Ian Attfield, Senior Education Advisor, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office



Read: Explore evidence hub.



Watch: Government & non-state partnerships evidence hub launch.

All hands on deck for SDG4 action toolkit

The toolkit comprises a set of resources including case studies, presentations, guides and facilitator notes to support better collaboration and integration across national, subnational and regional education systems. All hands on deck for SDG4 calls for affirmative action by all education stakeholders, so that governments can benefit from the experiences and expertise of the affordable non-state sector through their voice in policy development, implementation, and monitoring.



Watch: All hands on deck for SDG4 action toolkit webinar.



Read: Access the toolkit.

“

This collaborative approach to system strengthening is critical to achieving SDG4 and ensuring quality education for all children. The need for system strengthening is vital and requires all stakeholders to come together for All Hands on Deck to contribute towards a unified solution. We’re excited to see the toolkit empower others to join this movement and unlock the collective potential of all education stakeholders.”

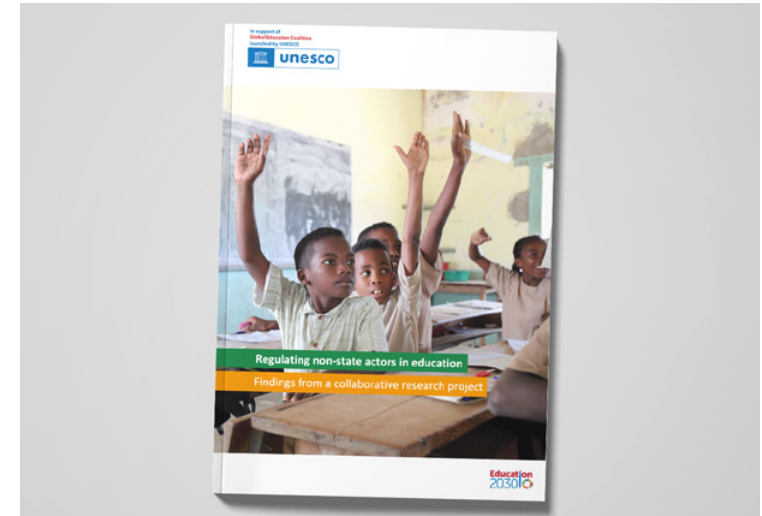
Shaveta Sharma-Kukreja, CEO & MD, Central Square Foundation

UNESCO-GSF Regulating non- state actors in education: findings from a collaborative research project



Read: the report.

UNESCO and Global Schools Forum collaborated on a research project, 'Regulating non-state actors in education: Findings from a collaborative research project' to shed light on how regulatory systems operate and the implications for shaping regulatory frameworks. The report is based on key informant interviews with government officials and non-state education operators in five diverse low- and middle-income countries: Colombia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Uganda.



Innovative financing

GSF, Kaizenvest, IDP Foundation and Varthana came together in early 2023 to define the initial concept of a blended finance fund through a US\$200,000 design grant from the SDG Impact Finance Initiative. The consortium of partners undertook a landscape assessment to assess the potential for lending to non-state education providers. The scoping work will result in a US\$50m blended finance fund, focussed on improving holistic well-being of children, especially around improved health, education and climate resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa. As the first phase investment of this Fund of US\$2m, IDP Foundation and GSF have launched an Incentives for Learning programme in Kenya alongside two local Kenyan financial partners.



Member voice

“GSF has curated a valuable family. This network allows organisations to find action-oriented peers with whom they can collaborate and solve thorny educational challenges. At a macro level GSF’s work highlights the value of its members through webinars and focussed publications, then zooms in and enables dialogue between them. Rangeet has directly benefited: we ran a webinar during Earth Week which culminated in a partnership with the SEED Foundation, Nigeria. Earlier, we attended an in-person conference in Johannesburg which catalysed a relationship with the Global Teachers Institute, South Africa. GSF’s network has helped Rangeet expand its footprint outside India.”

Simran Mulchandani, CEO and Co-founder, Rangeet

“It is rare to find an organisation that seamlessly blends global education vision with focused ground-hugging projects. Collaborating with the GSF ECEDiE Evidence Hub has been an extraordinary experience for me this year. We built a landmark sector resource together, which gave me deep insight into GSF’s learning ethos and partnership values. I love their ever-present urgency to move the needle on behalf of the most disadvantaged children.”

KanuPriya Jhunjunwala, Head of Education & MEL, Children in Crossfire

“Being a member of Global Schools Forum at Lab 2 has provided an opportunity for LRDP to connect, network and learn from partners working on innovative childcare program solutions in Kenya and beyond. Onboarding coaching sessions have strengthened our organization’s capacity in developing and implementing programs that create impact on child developmental outcomes at scale. Hands on work and sessions with the various GSF team members and consultants is the greatest thing that has happened to LRDP. My participation in the Uganda study tour has increased my networks and given diversified learning experiences and perspectives. It was a lifetime experience.”

Peter Shikuku, CEO, Lake Region Development Program



Our supporters

In partnership with mission-aligned funders and philanthropic institutions, GSF is dedicated to transforming the lives of marginalised children. Their invaluable support enables us to deliver impactful programmes that improve education outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.

If you share our vision and would like to support our future work, we would be delighted to speak with you. Please email ashti.zaidi@globalschoolsforum.org





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Photo credits

P1: Children in Crossfire

P2: NABU

P3: Inspiring Teachers Ghana

P4: The Citizens Foundation

P6: Inspiring Teachers Ghana

P12: NABU

P15: Children in Crossfire

P16: United World Schools

P17: SEED Care & Support Foundation

P18: Jackfruit Finance

P19: Jackfruit Finance