

Coalition slashes funding to Global Partnership for Education

by Jonathan Pryke
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Today Foreign Minister Julie Bishop announced that the government would be **committing** \$140 million to the Global Partnership for Education's latest replenishment round. You can read more about the GPE in **this interview** I conducted with their CEO Alice Albright last month. This represents close to a halving of Australia's \$270 million commitment to the previous replenishment. Australia has been the **fourth largest donor** to GPE to date, and gave the second largest contribution to the last replenishment round.

Such a high contribution in the last replenishment was out of line with Australia's donor ranking (currently 8th in OECD donors), which may have something to do with the reduction this time around. With the aid budget now frozen at \$5 billion, a reduction was also probably expected by the sector, but perhaps not of this volume.

But how did the overall replenishment fare? The **replenishment** was aiming to secure \$3.5 billion in contributions from donors, double that of their last replenishment. Their **outcome document**, however, reveals that a total of \$2.1 billion was actually secured. As we can see in the chart below, the donor profile has changed substantially between the two replenishments. Australia now ranks 5th overall in terms of contributions from bilateral donors, and 6th when including the EU. Clearly some EU members contributions have now been rolled into the total EU figures. Interestingly, Canada has also completely pulled out of funding the GPE (or at least a contribution was not announced at the replenishment).

GPE replenishment contributions (US '000s)



Overall this modest increase is not a terrible result for the GPE, but certainly not what they were hoping for. The last GPE replenishment also achieved almost \$500 million in additional funding after the replenishment weekend closed, so it's likely we will see this final figure for the 2014 replenishment creep upwards in the weeks to come.

GPE has shown positive performance in both **Australia** and the **UK's** assessments of multilateral agencies, but has been subject to a **severe critique** this week by former New York Times and Wall Street Journal journalists.

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