SUPPORT TO THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION
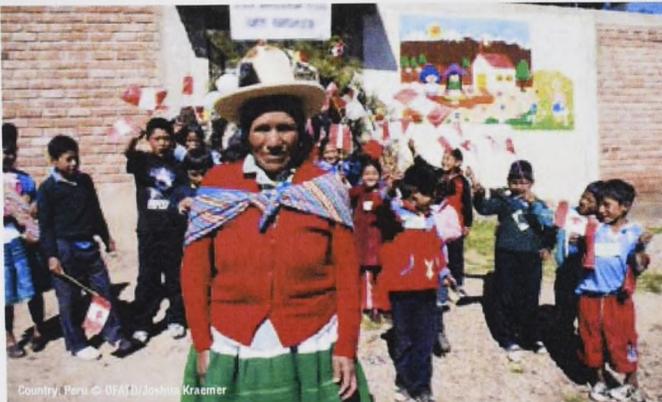
In 2014–2015, Canada provided $30 million to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) as part of Canada's larger contribution to the GPE of $120 million over four years (2015-2018). The GPE is the only multilateral partnership devoted to supporting national education systems in developing countries to deliver quality basic education, focusing on the most vulnerable. The GPE comprises some 60 developing countries, as well as donor governments, international organizations, businesses, teachers and civil society organizations.

With Canada's support, the GPE has achieved significant results in its partner countries, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states, in primary school enrolment, literacy and girls' education. Since 2002, about 64 million more children have been enrolled in primary school; 69 percent of girls have finished primary school, compared to 56 percent before 2002; and 31 countries are close to achieving, or have achieved, gender parity in primary education. The number of children completing primary school in fragile and conflict-affected countries has also increased by 19 percent over this period. Since 2004, the GPE has contributed to the training of over 300,000 teachers, as well as to the building, rehabilitating and equipping of 53,000 classrooms and the distribution of nearly 50 million textbooks.

convictions. Canada also contributed to the strengthening of technical and logistical capacities of 20 police and justice institutions (nine units of the special police for combatting sexual violence, five tribunals, three prosecutor's offices and three courts of appeal).

In 2014–2015, Canada provided $20 million in funding to UNICEF to end CEFM in six countries where Canada supported the development of the CEFM policy and legislative frameworks and a budgeted national action plan for the elimination of child marriage. In addition, Canada's efforts have helped pave the way for several improvements on the draft amendment to Bangladesh's *Child Marriage Restraint Act* (1929), such as the issue of accountability in the verification of the marriageable age and penalty for falsifying the proof of marriageable age.

Country: Peru © DFATD/Joshua Kraemer

ADVANCING DEMOCRACY

Democracy has shaped Canada's history and institutions. Canada believes that democracy leads to a better quality of life, engenders a more equal society, contributes to greater security and stability both nationally as well as globally, and represents the best pathway to prosperity. Democracy is also a cornerstone of lasting development outcomes, resulting from greater inclusion and increased accountability of governments to their citizens.

In the last 30 years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented expansion of freedom and democracy. New democracies arose in Africa and Asia after decolonization; autocratic regimes gave way to democracy in Latin America; the Iron Curtain lifted in Eastern Europe; South Africa abandoned apartheid; and the world entered the digital age, with all the benefits it brings.

Notwithstanding the significant gains of the previous decades, democracy is now under greater threat as recent gains realized in some countries are being outweighed by democratic backsliding in others.

In 2014-15, Canada employed both programmatic and advocacy tools to advance democracy and strengthen international norms and standards. Canada's efforts were aimed at supporting five elements to sustainable democracy:

- a strong and vibrant civil society;
- independent media and Internet freedom;
- free and fair electoral processes and institutions;
- well-functioning legislatures; and
- well-developed political party systems.

Canada also advanced the protection of human rights and the subordination of power to the rule of law as two essential underlying conditions of democracy.

Civil Society, Independent Media and Internet Freedom

An empowered citizenry helps foster a culture of openness for debate, dissent and diversity, and popular participation in public life and political processes. Civil society organizations form a critical link between people and their elected governments, and are fundamental to any democracy. Canadian supported programs assisted civil society by providing training and technical support, and by working to promote and protect civil society space.