

Citizen participation & the right to education

Civil Society Education Fund
June 2014



Civil society as a catalyst in education governance

Education is a fundamental human right and governments are obligated to guarantee this for all their citizens. Ensuring free and quality education for all is a major responsibility, requiring political will and commitment. Fortunately there is a wide array of actors within a country that can and should be involved in delivering on education. Civil society represents one of these partners and can play a crucial role in bringing voices together under common platforms to make the case for education.

Through these platforms, civil society can provide evidence and input to sector planning and monitor current policies and practice at the local level, encouraging increased spending on education, ensuring education budgets are spent well and that money reaches intended targets. By assembling NGOs, teachers' unions, parents' groups, community organisations and social movements into alliances and coalitions, civil society can make invaluable contributions based on knowledge and access to information on the ground.

Supporting and representing civil society

The Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) has paved the way for civil society to become a credible and influential partner in education sector dialogue through its work with national education coalitions representing local civil society organisations within a country.

CSEF is founded on an understanding that the achievement of education goals requires the broad-based and informed participation of citizens, and that this participation is dependent on effective and coordinated civil society formations to facilitate engagement. The programme therefore focuses its support on national civil society structures, with nationally driven agendas and objectives, which respond to local contexts and citizen priorities.

Core to the CSEF model is the principle of working with one national education coalition in each country: the aim is thus to support the engagement of a broad and representative group of civil society organisations in conducting coordinated

activity. This both strengthens the impact of participation and ensures better representation of diverse voices. CSEF also strongly encourages coalitions to develop and work through sub-national structures to increase their reach and influence.

CSEF programme background

The programme was set up by the Global Campaign for Education in 2009 to support the core work of national education coalitions so that civil society can fully engage with and track the progress of national governments and donor groups in working towards the EFA goals. Having gained financial support from a variety of funding sources including AusAid, AECID and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), CSEF demonstrates how GPE and the international donor community values civil society as a cornerstone in education sector processes.

With funding through GPE and supervision by UNESCO, the CSEF currently supports 49 civil society education coalitions across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East and Eastern Europe, with planned further expansion.

These coalitions play an active role in campaigning, advocating and engaging with governments and donors, working towards quality education for all citizens, including those who are excluded and vulnerable.

The Civil Society Education Fund works towards the following objectives:

1. Policy participation

Formal civil society participation in education sector policy and review processes and engagement with policy makers and parliamentarians is strengthened and better-recognised.

2. Public awareness and coalition-building:

National education coalitions are actively strengthening grassroots capacity to access and participate in education sector debates, through building awareness, knowledge and skills, and opening opportunities to participate.

3. Quality research, monitoring and analysis

Civil society research and analysis effectively contributes to national government plans, policies, financing and practices that better achieve the right to quality education for all and the six EFA goals.

4. Cross-country learning and networks for change

The CSEF project builds the quality and impact of civil society engagement in the education sector through promoting partnership, strengthening South-South collaboration, sharing learning, and facilitating impact on global policy processes.

CSEF is coordinated through regional agencies that provide programmatic support to coalitions: ANCEFA in Africa, CLADE in Latin America and the Caribbean, ASPBAE in Asia and the Pacific and ACEA for Middle East and Eastern Europe.



ACEA: The Arab Campaign for Education for All

ACEA was established in 2009 and is an independent, not-for-profit network comprising civil society coalitions, NGOs, community-based organisations, teachers' unions, and associations working to ensure the realisation of the right to education and EFA goals in Arab countries. In CSEF, ACEA plays the role of regional secretariat for coalitions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. www.arabcampaignforeducation.org



ANCEFA: The Africa Network Campaign on Education For All

ANCEFA was established in May 2000 following the acknowledgement of African civil society's lack of preparation for contributing effectively and in an organised way to the Education For All (EFA) process. Its vision and mission entails fighting against illiteracy through a positive influence on educational policies and practices at national and international levels. Today, ANCEFA operates in 34 African countries through national coalitions engaged in education and human rights in general. www.ancefa.org



ASPBAE: The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education

ASPBAE was established in 1964. It strives to strengthen an Asia-Pacific movement to support community and people's organisations, national education coalitions, teachers' unions, campaign networks and other civil society groups and institutions in holding governments and the international donor community accountable in meeting education targets and commitments. www.aspbae.org



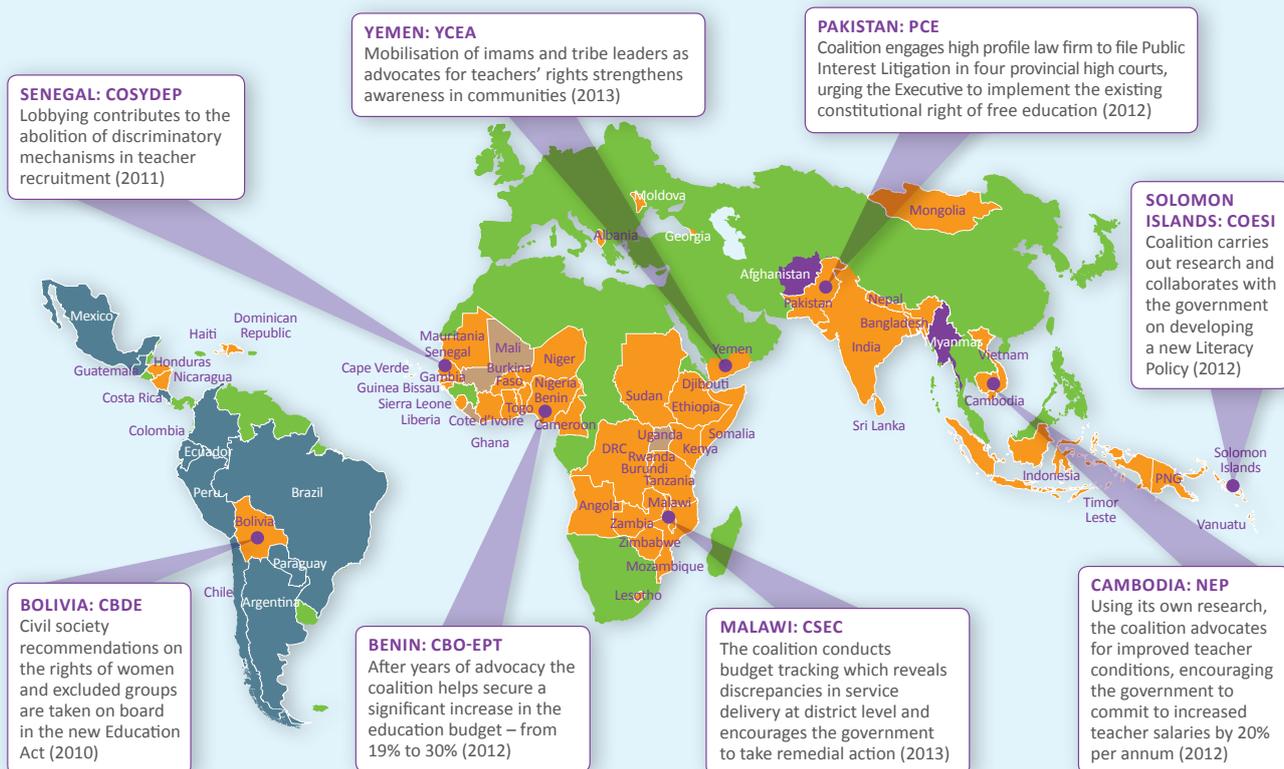
Campaña
Latinoamericana
por el Derecho
a la Educación

CLADE: The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education

CLADE is a network of civil society organisations acting in the defence and for the promotion of the right to free public education for all as a responsibility of the State, based on the principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and accountability. www.campanaderechoeducacion.org

In addition four financial management agencies are responsible for fund management and technical capacity building: Oxfam GB West Africa, ActionAid Americas, Education International Asia Pacific and GCE International.

CSEF achievements since 2009: a snapshot



More examples of the impact of civil society

Bangladesh: By supporting investigative journalism, CAMPE raises awareness of grievances in the education sector, such as inattention to the provision of teacher and learning materials, and prompts government to take action

Burkina Faso: Ministry of Education approves formal participation of civil society in Education Action Planning and budget processes.

Djibouti: Progressive teacher training and in-service policy formulated and in application.

Dominican Republic: secured commitment from the President to allocate at least 4% of GDP for education and worked with CSOs to push for immediate implementation.

Ethiopia: A policy change in early childhood care and education achieved through direct engagement of Basic Education Network - Ethiopia.

The Gambia: Abolition of user fees in schools.

Kenya: The coalition tracks the timeliness and accuracy of the decentralisation of the education sector and reminds government to stick to plan

Liberia: Revision/input to key policy documents, national curriculum and Education Act; influenced increased teacher salaries and increased education budget from 9 to 13%.

Mozambique: To influence policy on the penalties for violating the rights of children (and girls in particular), the coalition participates in a hearing by the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Human Rights and Legality on the revision of the Penal Code

Nicaragua: The coalition puts pressure on local authorities to address shortcomings in education service delivery, such as negligence of repairs in schools and classrooms, by organising citizen roundtables at municipal level

Sierra Leone: Long term campaigning and lobbying work influenced the government to increase the education budget by almost 100%, from 11.3% in 2011 to 20% in 2012.

Vanuatu: political analyses recommending free education up to Year 10 and recognition for kindergarten teachers, which were delivered during national elections, were adopted as policy by one of the political parties forming the coalition government.

Vietnam: Proactively engaged the Ministry of Education and Training on strengthening the non-formal education programmes by providing concrete recommendations and indicators for monitoring, resulting in new policies.

Zambia: Secured the introduction of a policy framework on teacher training.

CSEF-funded coalitions



Increased reach of civil society

Since 2009, CSEF has supported the development of 14 new national education coalitions



Through CSEF the memberships of coalitions have expanded greatly



Coalitions recognised by Local Education Groups or Technical Working Groups increased

