

Citizen participation & the right to education:

Civil Society Education Fund
November 2013



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.

With funding through the Global Partnership for Education and supervision by UNESCO, the Civil Society Education Fund currently supports 49 civil society coalitions across Africa,

Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America, with possible further expansion. These coalitions play an active role in ensuring that 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 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 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.

Since its initiation, CSEF has supported over 50 civil society education coalitions across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, which 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. Formal civil society participation in education sector policy and review processes and engagement with policy makers and parliamentarians is strengthened and better recognised.
2. 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. 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. 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, 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



Asia South Pacific Association
for Basic and Adult Education
Learning Beyond Boundaries

CLADE: The Latin-American Campaign for the Right to Education

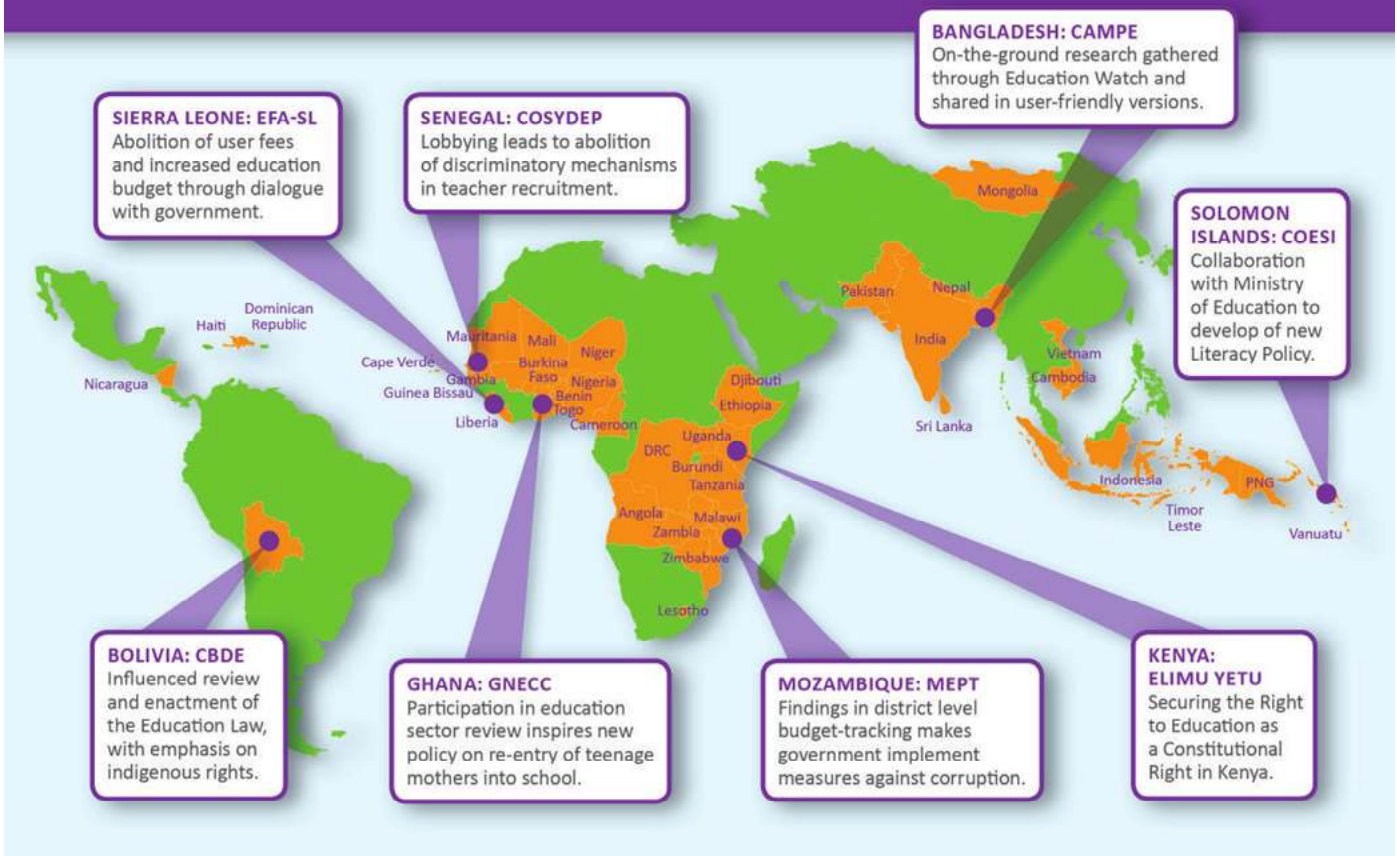
CLADE is a plural network of civil society organisations acting in the defence and promotion of the right to free public education for all as a responsibility of the State, based on the principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and accountability. It seeks to promote a transformation towards the implementation of a new development model that fulfils the Andean 'living well' concept, social justice, human dignity and the harmonious relationship with the environment in Latin-American and Caribbean countries. www.campanaderechoeducacion.org



Campana
Latinoamericana
por el Derecho
a la Educacion

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.

Examples of the impact of civil society



More examples of the impact of civil society

Benin: After years of advocacy, secured a significant increase in the education budget - from 19% to 30% - in 2012.

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

Cambodia: Through conducting out research on teachers' conditions and advocacy for increased salaries, influenced government commitments to increased teachers' salaries by 20% per annum.

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.

Gambia: Abolition of user fees in schools.

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

Malawi: Enhanced transparency and better education governance through acting against misappropriation of education funds.

Pakistan: engaged high profile law firm to file Public Interest Litigation in four provincial high courts, urging the executive to implement the existing constitutional right of free education.

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

