



The Civil Society Education Fund

Programme update and results
December 2014

What is the Civil Society Education Fund?

The Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) is a unique and ambitious global programme that supports **citizen engagement in education sector policy, planning, budgeting and monitoring**. It is founded on a shared understanding among key stakeholders that strong, broad-based and locally-driven civil society participation in these processes is crucial to delivering on EFA and other national and international education goals.

The CSEF programme was developed and is managed by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), in close collaboration with regional implementing partners, including the Africa Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA), the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), and Action Aid, Education International, and Oxfam.

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An International Partners Group, consisting of a range of INGOs, including ActionAid, Save the Children, VSO, Ibis, RESULTS, OSF, OSISA, Plan, and Oxfam provides programme advice and capacity support as requested to specific coalitions and regions.

The programme is currently funded through a two-year grant of US\$14.5m by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and supervised by UNESCO. Complementary funding has also been provided by the Australian government, 'the German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa', and through AECID support for non-GPE partner countries in Latin America, managed directly by CLADE.

CSEF supports national civil society education coalitions, currently operating in 54 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Through the programme, GCE and regional partners provide these coalitions with core financing, technical assistance, and capacity support, and help facilitate new partnerships, opportunities for engagement in regional and global policy processes, and cross-country learning.

CSEF aims to: *“Contribute to the achievement of national education goals and Education for All by ensuring the effective participation of civil society organizations and citizens in education debates and sector planning and review.”*

Objective 1: Formal civil society participation in education sector policy and review processes and engagement with policy-makers and parliamentarians is strengthened and better recognized.

Objective 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.

Objective 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.

Objective 4: The CSEF project builds the quality and impact of civil society engagement in the education sector through promoting partnerships, strengthening South-South collaboration, sharing learning, and facilitating impact on global policy processes.

CSEF model and principles

- A core fundamental principle of CSEF is that civil society has a distinct and crucial role to **hold governments and donors accountable** for their commitments, and to ensure **relevance and equity within education sector plans, programmes and budgets**.
- CSEF therefore focuses support towards **national civil society coalitions**. These coalitions must demonstrate **commitment to EFA**, be **democratic**, and work through **broad and diverse membership bases**.
- Coalitions supported by CSEF represent a wide range of members, including **teachers unions, grassroots organisations, women’s groups, parents associations, youth groups** etc., and memberships currently reach a total of **4,216 organisations**, an increase of almost a third since this phase of the programme started in 2013. A number of NGOs working in education are members of coalitions at national level.
- CSEF coalitions develop **independent and nationally driven advocacy plans**, based on local contexts and principles.



- CSEF supports **one national education coalition in each country** and encourages them to constantly strive towards **expanding their memberships** to ensure broad and genuine representation of citizen voices. Coalitions are also strongly encouraged to develop and work through sub-national structures to increase their reach and influence.

CSEF-funded coalitions



Key highlights of CSEF work during 2013-2014

The nationally-led model of the CSEF means that the independent coalitions and their members at national and local level pursue objectives and priorities relevant to their own country context, through a wide range of approaches, but falling into some major areas that reflect the overall programme objectives.

Most national coalitions are actively engaging with **Local Education Groups** to input to dialogue around policy development and to influence the Education Sector Plan. At present, CSEF supports 35 coalitions to engage with the LEG in their country; one third of these currently have permanent membership and formal, written agreements with LEGs, whilst others engage in a more informal or ad hoc basis while they consistently advocate for full membership. Most of those coalitions not engaged in the LEG are trying to engage further, though noting that some coalitions experience resistance in attempts to join the LEG or similar groups. Most recently, RNEPT Cape Verde

and RCEPT Guinea Bissau have joined the LEG in their countries.

Beyond the LEG, political engagement extends to relevant **education sector policy and review forums**, including significant participation in Technical Working Groups, government commissions, parliamentary committees and civil society forums. As of mid-2014, the 48 coalitions funded by CSEF were participating in a total of 224 such groups, most often a shared responsibility among the different civil society organisations that are members of the coalition.

These forums are often used as a vehicle to present civil society **research** and **analysis**, and **evidence-based recommendations**: Elimu Yetu (Kenya) for example, submitted proposals on curbing illegal fees to the Government-convened Task Force on School Fees, which were accepted, and a submission by AFE Mongolia to the Parliamentary Budget Standing

Committee on funding for inclusive education was incorporated into a proposed parliamentary resolution.

CSEF also puts emphasis on ensuring that supported coalitions encompass a **large number and diverse range of civil society organisations** in their country, providing a coordinated platform for organisations including national NGOs, local CSOs or community-based organisations, teacher organisations, parents' associations, youth groups, and other civil society groupings. CSEF-supported coalitions have a median number of 45 CSOs who are members. There are varied approaches to consultation and participation among coalition members; three quarters, for example, convene specific civil society thematic working groups to debate and develop coalition positions on specific issues. **Stakeholder representation and engagement** will be a focus for learning and exchange among coalitions in 2015 and onwards.

In order to raise the **national profile of education**, coalitions put a lot of emphasis on reaching out to citizens to create **awareness** and encourage **public debate on education** – both at national and grassroots level. This encompasses a huge range of activity, for example mass mobilisation campaigns, training workshops, public events and discussions and media engagement. Most coalitions hold **public events**, including locally, some oriented towards public awareness-raising, some facilitating community debate and discussion, and others enabling engagement with decision-makers.

Media engagement is heavily concentrated towards television and radio, including community radio. CAMPE Bangladesh, for example, is running a popular radio magazine programme through community radio stations on education-related issues. Other coalitions – including, for example, PEAN Papua New Guinea, host phone-in shows to encourage citizen discussion of government policies, plans and delivery in the education sector.

Coalitions are also reporting a marked increase in use of **online and social media**, such as websites, electronic newspapers, You-Tube, Twitter and Facebook. This may reflect shifting use in coalition countries as a whole and/or greater knowledge and familiarity with such platforms.

Coalitions have initiated 112 **research, tracking or monitoring** exercises with CSEF support so far during this phase of the programme. Topics covered in research exercises so far have a survey examining the nature and causes of exclusion from education in rural parts of Benin, an assessment of the outcomes of teacher training in Togo, tracking and assessment of school-level grants in Vanuatu, and budget-monitoring and analysis in the Dominican Republic.

Some coalitions liaise with **academics**, or include **research institutions** in their membership, and use these members' or allies' research in their policy engagement. Various coalitions, particularly in Africa, have links to or include organisations conducting household assessments of learning outcomes. Elimu



Yetu Kenya, for example, has been conducting advocacy, using research produced by coalition member Uwezo.

CSEF-supported coalitions have been using this research as **submissions to ongoing policy forums**, presenting it directly to ministries, and/or providing it as an input to periodic reviews and EFA assessments.

CSEF-supported research and consultation at national level is fed into **regional and global policy processes**, including regional EFA consultations, the GPE replenishment debates, and global discussions on post-2015 education frameworks.

Regional and global partners run CSEF-supported **learning and training events** – including on planning and programme management, skills for policy engagement, and on specific thematic education issues. They also produce a variety of **publications** to aid national-level work, including – for example – resources on GPE replenishment and tools to support replenishment-related advocacy; documentation of best practice; a handbook on engagement with national education sector planning processes, and resources on issues such as inclusive education and mother tongue education.

Snapshots: CSEF good practice

Engagement in planning and policy development: In *Ghana*, the coalition (GNECC) facilitates an annual civil society review of the education sector, ensuring inputs from across its membership to develop policy positions and demands. In 2012, the coalition inspired a process to develop a comprehensive policy on girls' education, with specific provisions on the re-entry of girls who drop out of school due to early pregnancies.

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

Research and evidence-gathering: Analysis carried out by the coalition in *Vanuatu* (VEPAC) recommending free education up to Year 10 and recognition for kindergarten teachers was delivered during national elections. Recommendations were adopted as policy by one of the political parties forming the coalition government.

Budget work: In *Malawi* the coalition (CSEC) conducted budget tracking in 2013 that revealed discrepancies in service delivery at district level and put pressure on the government to take remedial action.

Social accountability: The coalition in *Nicaragua* (FEDH-IPN) put 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.

Awareness-raising and public debate: The *Yemeni* (YCEA) coalition mobilised and collaborated with tribal leaders to create awareness around girls' education in communities, particularly among parents that do not send daughters to school (often due to early marriages).

Partnering with the media: By supporting investigative journalism, CAMPE *Bangladesh* raised awareness of grievances in the education sector, such as inattention to the provision of teacher and learning materials, and prompted the government to take action.

Civil society engagement in the GPE replenishment

The 2014 GPE replenishment provided a key opportunity to influence financing for education, with the Replenishment pledging conference in June as a high point. CSEF coalitions were supported by GCE, ACEA, ANCEFA, ASPBAE and CLADE to lobby their national governments to increase domestic resources for education. For example, EFA Sierra Leone made a written submission to the Education Development Partners Forum, calling for the government to increase resources and participate actively in the replenishment, CONEPT DRC ran radio announcements about the replenishment campaign, ZANEC Zambia put forward its demands in a meeting with the Education Ministry and CN/EPT Burkina Faso met with the Minister of Education who confirmed her support for the replenishment campaign. Several coalitions also attended the replenishment conference and representatives of CSEC Malawi, ZANEC Zambia and Elimu Yetu Kenya participated in panel debates, allowing civil society voices to be heard in global discussions. Developing country governments ended up pledging US \$26 billion in total as national commitments to education, far exceeding the target of US \$16 billion. This demonstrates the crucial role of civil society in ensuring citizen dialogue with governments and holding them accountable for their responsibility to deliver on education.

Policy focus

CSEF coalitions develop their own priorities and strategies in line with national contexts, which fit under the umbrella of one or more of the overall programme goals. Across the programme, activities are diverse and focus on a variety of policy areas. While most coalitions focus on more than one policy area, a strong reflection of core GPE themes is evident.

Quality & learning

- **CN/EPT/BF Burkina Faso** submitted a proposal on improving recruitment processes to ensure more qualified teachers by replacing ineffective tests with more appropriate methods, and to cease recruitment of volunteers as educators. The government is acting on the suggestion with the coalition following up.
- **CBOEPT Benin** presented proposals at an education roundtable to reform the recruitment process of teachers. New regulations have since been introduced requiring primary school teachers to have at least one professional degree.
- **Other coalitions with CSEF activities focused on quality include:** Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, India, Mongolia, PNG, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste

Education Financing

- **ZANEC Zambia** used research to advocate and build a case for increased government spending on education as a tool towards improving access and quality in education. Following this, 2014 saw the national budget at an all time high – with 20.2% allocated to education
- **EFA-SL in Sierra Leone**, after long term campaigning and lobbying work, contributed to a government decision to increase the education budget by almost 100%, from 11.3% in 2011 to 20% in 2012.
- **Other coalitions with CSEF activities focused on financing include:** Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Dominican Republic, DRC, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Lesotho, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Girls' education

- **CBDE Bolivia** submitted policy contributions on a new law focusing on gender equality in the curriculum and also requested better data provision around the status of women. The coalition is following up to monitor progress.
- **EFASOM Somalia**, during a national workshop with government officials, voiced disparities between girls' and boys' experiences of school, and urged the government to achieve gender equality in schools.
- **Other coalitions with CSEF activities focused on girls' education include:** Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Yemen

Access & inclusion

- **EYC Kenya** produced a written submission to the Government-convened Task Force on School Fees on the affordability of secondary education, calling for additional government funding and regulation to curb illegal fee increases. The proposal was accepted and incorporated into the Task Force's draft report.
- **ACCE Albania** participated in a working group on conditions of the ethno-linguistic Roma minority, and submitted a set of recommendations to improve current legislation to integrate Roma children in education, from pre-school to higher levels. These proposals are being considered.
- **Other coalitions with CSEF activities focused on access and inclusion include:** Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, DRC, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, India, Indonesia, Lesotho, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Togo, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Education governance

- **NEP Cambodia** requested timely submissions of funding to schools, to which the government responded that resources would reach schools before the start of the school year. The coalition will be following up to ensure accountability.
- **CNT/EPT Togo** urged the government to take quick measures to reopen classes after a violent strike at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. The coalition's letter of appeal was taken to the national assembly who called the Minister of Education to account through a questioning session, resulting in the government and unions committing to restart classes.
- **Other coalitions with CSEF activities focused on governance include:** Bangladesh, Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, DRC, Guinea Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Senegal, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Addressing challenges and way forward

- CSEF is a uniquely ambitious and complex programme, with 59 independent coalitions and networks implementing contextually-determined plans at national, regional and global level, as well as three INGOs overseeing grant disbursement and financial management across different regions, and a further 9 INGOs providing advice, technical support and links to their own programmes facilitated through the CSEF International Partners' Group. In this context, the demands for **management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation** are significant. In late 2014, GCE has increased capacity for monitoring and evaluation, in recognition of the need to expand this area. We are also increasing the capacity at global level to support coordination and management in Africa, where half of the CSEF-supported coalitions are located; this is happening in partnership with ANCEFA and Oxfam (the implementing partners at regional level in Africa).
- There is also a need for a **more intense focus on documentation and learning**; the huge variety and scale of activity in the CSEF programme, as well as the nationally-driven model, means that there is significant variety and experimentation in the work being conducted. Capturing that, learning what works and why, and sharing the lessons remains a significant challenge. One lesson has been that more dedicated capacity, and greater systematisation of the sharing of resources, will be necessary. This will be a major focus in 2015 and beyond, and GCE has recently brought on more staff capacity to take this work forward.
- CSEF-supported coalitions operate in diverse and unique contexts, and there is a need for **stronger and more tailored support for coalitions operating in challenging environments**, such as those facing conflict, disasters (health, natural, etc.) and political repression. In 2013 to 2014, a considerable portion of the capacity for national-level support has already been dedicated to support in Afghanistan, Haiti, Lesotho and Myanmar, while there has been difficulty in re-commencing the CSEF-supported work in Liberia, which was suspended during a previous phase in the programme. In the last few months, work in Sierra Leone has had to shift to take account of the Ebola crisis, which has – for instance – disrupted the coalition's plans for community meetings around the country and instead diverted attention to approaches such as the use of radio. This is an ongoing challenge, which 2015 plans and the design of a future 2016-2018 phase will take into account. In particular, we are looking at how to make use of members of the International Partners' Group to support learning and communities of practice on working in various challenging contexts.
- Building and maintaining coalitions is not a one-off activity, but one that requires ongoing attention and effort. In the CSEF context, specifically, it is very important to **ensure that CSEF-supported coalitions are genuinely broad-based, legitimate and representative**, and that they reach out to relevant, affected communities. GCE and regional partners have started to increase their focus on this area, including intensifying the monitoring to understand more deeply the composition, nature and ways of working of supported coalitions and working to share best practice on coalition-building and member engagement. In particular, there is a growing focus on ensuring that out-of-school youth and parents are consistently involved in CSEF-supported coalitions and activities, learning from the best examples of this within the programme.