

Advocacy & accountability to deliver GPE 2020

The Civil Society Education Fund November 2016

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, in Global Partnership for Education (GPE) developing countries. Specifically, it aims to help civil society organisations come together to build diverse national coalitions – and to hold their governments to account for commitments to education. CSEF is coordinated by the Global Campaign for Education, through regional agencies: 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), and the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE). These agencies provide programmatic support to national coalitions. Coalitions also receive technical support from ActionAid Americas, Education International and Oxfam IBIS. The CSEF is funded through the Global Partnership for Education, with civil society playing a critical role in holding governments accountable.

Giving civil society a voice

CSEF is rooted in the vision that civil society is fundamental to holding governments to account for national and international education goals. A well-informed and active civil society is critical to ensuring effective development, implementation and monitoring of education plans and policies, and CSEF plays an important role in bringing together a wide range of citizens' voices and perspectives – including those not usually heard in policy-making.

National education coalitions, supported by CSEF, promote awareness of education rights, policies and realities, mobilise organisations and citizens to engage and challenge local

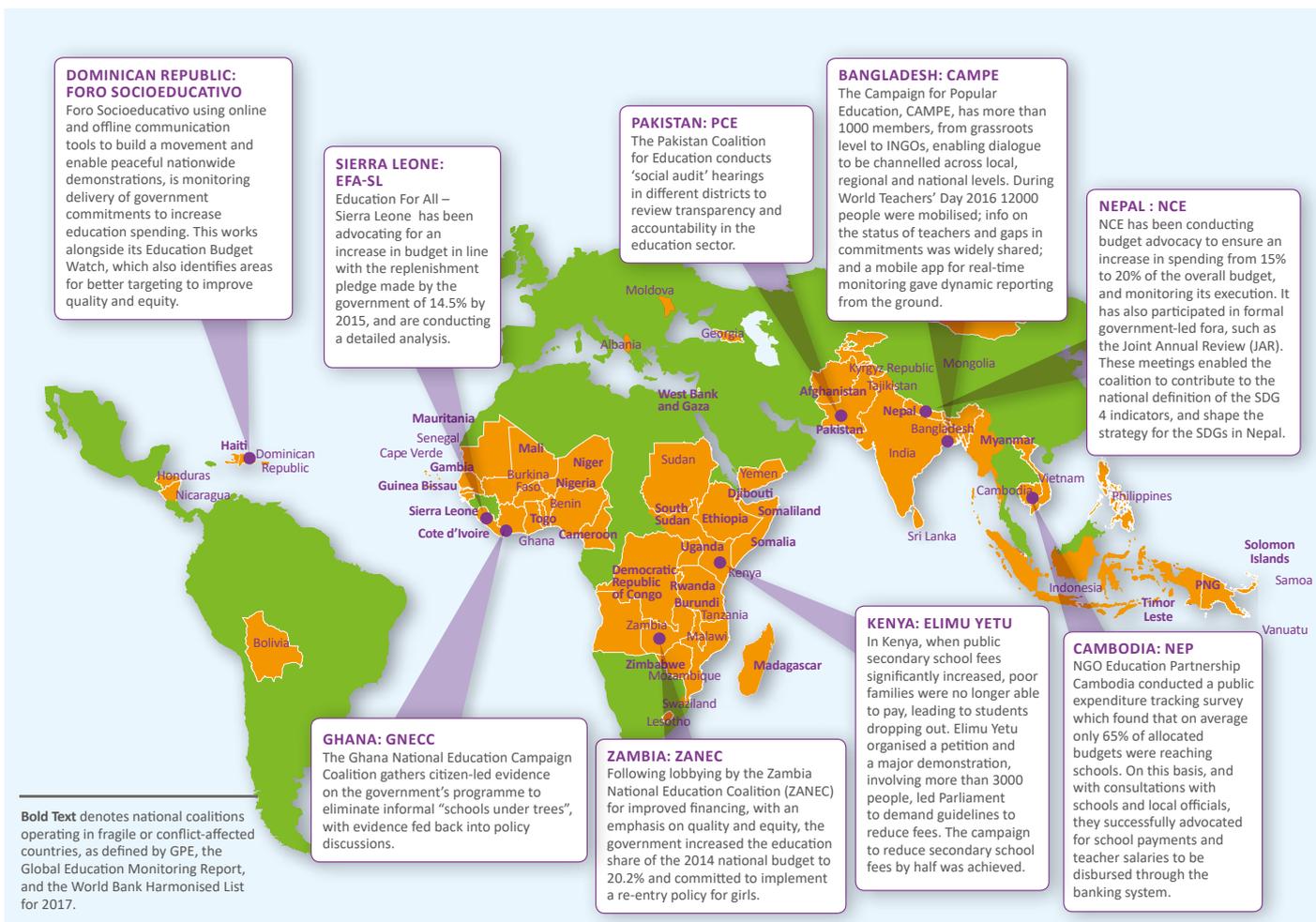
governments when their rights are not delivered, and represent citizens' views in official policy spaces. This can help to overcome some of the barriers to the realisation of quality education: lack of political will; weak policy frameworks; planning which does not respond to the realities of low-income families or the needs of excluded or marginalised populations; poor resource mobilisation; and misallocation – or misuse – of funds. Sometimes this involves being a mouthpiece for the marginalised or the excluded, and publicly challenging government actions through citizen mobilisation; at other times, it requires bringing citizen-led evidence or robust data to policy discussions.

The success of the Civil Society Education Fund so far

The second phase of CSEF was delivered between 2013 and 2015, during which its aim was to *“contribute to the achievement of national education goals and Education for All by ensuring the effective participation of civil society organisations and citizens in education debates and sector planning and review.”* Importantly, the context for this phase was the need for civil society to maintain pressure on governments to boost efforts towards the achievement of the Education For All goals and the Millennium Development Goals, before the deadline of 2015.

CSEF worked towards four mutually reinforcing objectives focused on policy participation, civil society and citizen awareness and engagement, quality research and analysis, and the building of knowledge and networks across countries and regions. This was supported by knowledge sharing, strengthening technical capacity, and funding global and regional support networks.

An external evaluation and a GCE-led global analysis in 2015 of the successes, achievements, and lessons learnt helped evaluate the impact of the second phase of CSEF, drawing the conclusion that it was an ambitious yet successful programme.



CSEF III: 2016-2018

The new phase of CSEF (CSEF III) started in early 2016, coinciding with the new global commitments to the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals and Education 2030 Framework for Action. In both frameworks the commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education is writ high, as is the importance of civil society in achieving the targets.

A growing movement

CSEF continues to grow, reaching up to 63 national coalitions of education campaigners and activists, teachers’ unions and civil society organisations across low- and middle-income countries, advocating successfully for the achievement of a quality education for all children and youth. The CSEF programme aims to have coalitions in all GPE developing country partners.

In numbers

- In 2009, 33 national coalitions were part of the CSEF programme.
- By 2015, this number had increased to 54.
- By 2016 63 coalitions were part of the programme.
- Of these, 23 operate in fragile states or countries affected by conflict – representing over 42% of the coalitions funded by the programme.



Coordinating across civil society, with a focus on diversity, and giving a voice to the most marginalised

A core part of the CSEF model is to build diverse coalitions that are able to represent a coordinated civil society voice by including national and local NGOs, teacher organisations, parents' associations, women's groups, disabled people's organisations, youth and student groups, and academic or research institutions. This offers CSEF a unique vantage point on education in each country.

It's not just about numbers, but ensuring that each national coalition also represents a wide spectrum of voices – especially those not heard in policy making usually: the most marginalised in a society, or those directly impacted by education policies (i.e. students, teachers and parents). CSEF aims to ensure that girls and women, people living with a disability, and young people, in particular, are represented.

To ensure representation of voices of the poorest and most marginalised, it is important that coalitions are connected to the communities in which they live. This means working with community-based organisations (CBOs) at local grassroots level to monitor delivery of education right down to the school level. Coalitions also have national-level members monitoring and engaging in national policy debates or budget discussions – enabling them to take perspectives from across the country and unify those voices in policy debates.

The number of local and national organisations which have joined national coalitions has doubled since the inception of CSEF: hundreds more – including academic and research institutions, and all major international non-governmental organisations active in the education sector – are collaborating in some way, with many providing in-kind technical support.

In numbers

- CSEF has contributed to a significant expansion of coalition memberships and civil society reach.
- In 2009, the 33 coalitions collectively represented 1129 organisations.
- At the end of 2015 CSEF represented 4,256 civil society organisations in 54 countries.
- By mid-2016 this had grown to 4,335: this includes 1178 grassroots organisations, 369 parents and teachers' associations, 484 youth-led organisations and 952 women-led organisations.
- The average coalition membership in 2009 comprised 34 organisations, rising to 79 in 2015 – an increase of over 100%.
- The number of countries reporting they had sub-national chapters has risen from under half to nearly two-thirds over the course of the programme.

Engaging in GPE and education sector policy-making processes

Once broad coalitions have been built, and are able to represent the coordinated voice of civil society, the CSEF approach focuses on channelling this into policy-making processes, including inputting into and monitoring the implementation of education sector plans or budgets.

This is a role that is embedded in the overall Global Partnership for Education's approach – that all parts of the Partnership will work together to reinforce mutual accountability and transparency. CSEF is also committed to GPE's 2020 strategy, so that together,

the Partnership can help to achieve equitable, quality education and learning for all in all GPE countries.

CSEF is particularly focused on supporting more effective and efficient education systems and increased financing by helping to strengthen education sector planning and policy implementation. Specifically, the programme aims to help coalitions to engage with the official GPE planning processes – which in most cases are coordinated through a Local Education Group (LEG).

Generating citizen-led data for evidence, and driving forward citizen action

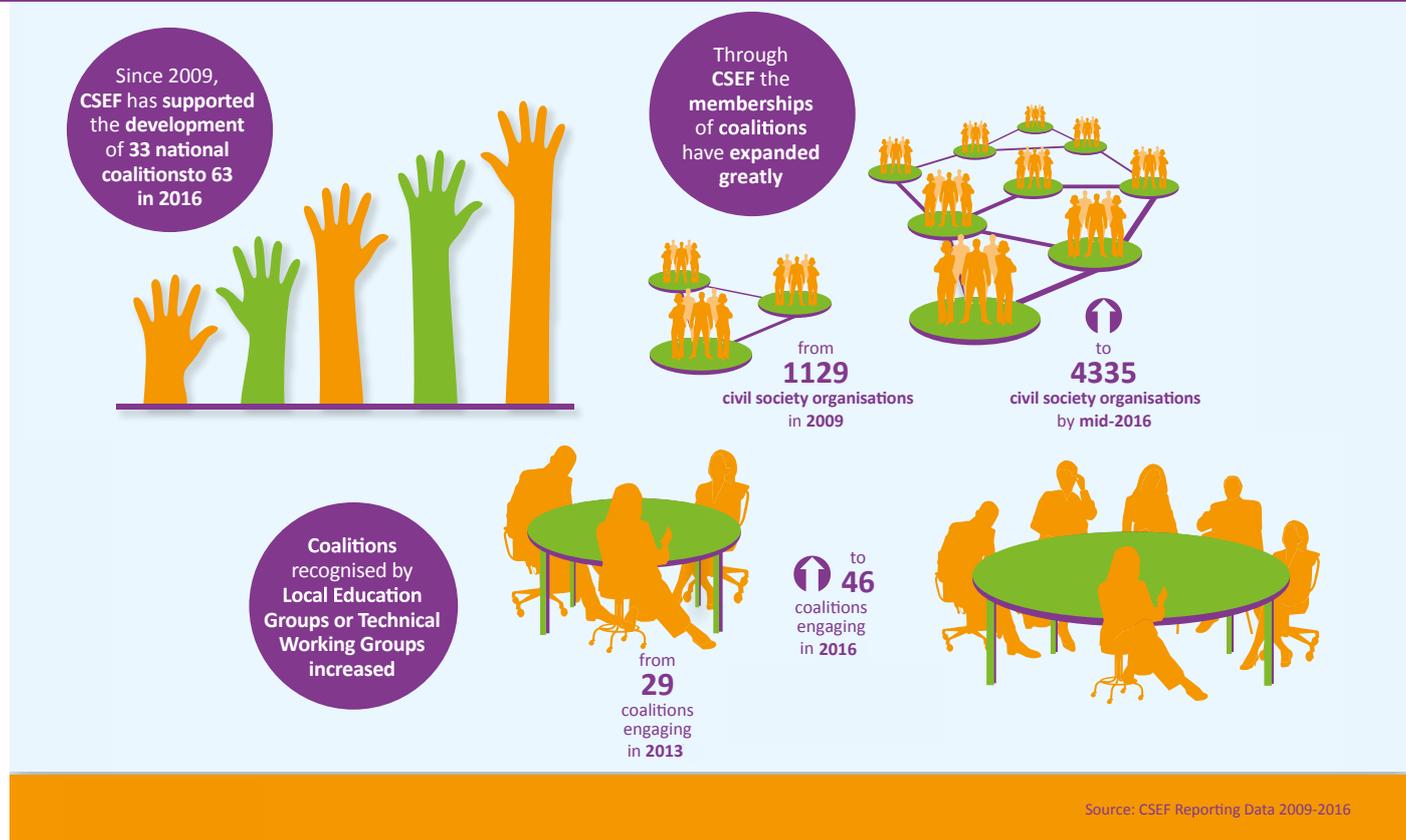
CSEF coalitions also conduct a wealth of campaigning and mobilisation activities to support their advocacy goals, adding public pressure for action by their governments. CSEF is particularly focused on generating citizen-led data and evidence; monitoring and gathering data on government delivery of the commitments they have made as part of the Education 2030 Framework for Action; and agreed national education programmes and policies to implement these and other commitments.

In numbers

- Over 86% of all coalitions in countries with an active LEG were engaging in this process at the end of 2015, using evidence and data to engage in national education planning processes, and tracking of implementation of education plans and programmes.

- During 2013-2015 40 coalitions made formal submissions into LEGs or other formal education sector planning and monitoring processes; 44 coalitions engaged with relevant parliamentary structures, submitting some form of statement to parliamentary forums, using data, research or analysis generated either by the coalition or through their engagement in citizen-led data and evidence gathering.
- At the end of 2015, all coalitions that were part of CSEF – at that stage, 54 country coalitions – were involved in some form of public engagement for greater government accountability including campaigning and mobilisation activities, helping to support their advocacy goals.
- In 2016, 48 countries have already carried out public campaigning activities.

Increased reach of civil society



Building bridges across countries and regions

CSEF also seeks to share learning and good practice across the global network, developing examples of effective campaigning across civil society – from Albania to Zambia. It aims to amplify its impact by building bridges from national to regional, and regional to global policy debates. For instance, 80% of coalitions have engaged in regional and/or global consultation processes on the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) or the Education 2030 agenda, and over 40% participated in the global consultation on education financing – helping to ensure that global education

debates and policy-making fora are informed by citizen perspectives in developing countries.

CSEF also engages in the global processes of the GPE, with representatives elected by the civil society constituencies to the GPE Board of Directors. This helps coordination across all members of the Partnership and enables civil society to input into the global decision-making processes.

Priority areas for national coalitions

CSEF takes a unique approach to country planning: just as the GPE model aims to be country-led, so do the coalitions' focus areas. This is driven by the principle that advocacy and campaign successes will only be relevant, and ultimately successful or sustainable if they are driven by actors and realities on the ground. Local ownership ensures that advocacy is truly relevant, both to stakeholders and communities, and to the government and other official actors with whom they engage.



At least 49 coalitions aim to influence strong education systems through **increased and improved financing for education**, primarily through lobbying around amplified domestic resource mobilisation, and by pushing for fair and progressive tax systems. More than 28 coalitions will also engage in dialogue to enhance governance in the education sector, by promoting leadership, transparency and accountability in the management of education at national, sub-national and school level.



53 coalitions have indicated a focus on promoting **inclusive and equitable access to education**, with an emphasis on influencing plans, programmes and policies in support of marginalised populations. While target groups vary, at least 22 coalitions will focus on education for girls and children with disabilities. There will also be an emphasis on other excluded groups such as ethnic and indigenous minorities, i.e. Roma children, children living in poverty and slums and those based in rural and hard-to-reach areas. More than 10 coalitions operate in countries affected by conflict or disasters, and will work on encouraging robust strategies on education in such contexts.



52 coalitions have highlighted **quality education and learning** as a priority area, with a particular emphasis on improving policies around teacher training, conditions and incentives, as well as ensuring safe learning environments, appropriate infrastructure, and quality learning materials. Several coalitions will participate in dialogue around curriculums and literacy, as well as in discussions and planning around learning outcomes.