

Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Closing Report

Global Campaign for Education, October 2012

Grant Number TF094688 of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE),
Education Programme Development Fund (EPDF)

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	p.3
2. Introduction and Background	p.12
3. Update on CSEF Project Completion Work Since January 2012	p.14
3.1 Finalising activities at the national, regional and global levels	p.14
3.2 Documentation and Communication of CSEF Outcomes	p.15
3.3 Independent Evaluation of CSEF	p.15
3.4 Ensuring a smooth transition to Bridge Funding provided by AusAID, and building support for future funding	p.16
4. Summary of Outcomes Related to Each CSEF Specific Objective	p.17
4.1 Establish broad based and democratically run national education coalitions	p.18
4.2 Strengthen the capacity NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reforms at country level	p.20
4.3 Establish credible and independent national civil society education funds at the end of a multiyear programme of action	p.28
4.4 Strengthen support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global level	p.31
5. Lessons Learned	p.43
6. Concluding Comments	p.47
Appendices	
Appendix 1: List of Worksheets	p.48
Appendix 2: Worksheets (separate document)	
Appendix 3: NEC Profiles (separate document)	
Appendix 4: Infographic of the Impact of NECs	p.49

1. Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

The Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) was an initiative of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) that received funding approval in December 2008 from the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) Committee. The overall goal of the CSEF was to support the core work of civil society National Education Coalitions (NECs)¹ to fully engage with and track the progress of national governments and donor groups in working towards the EFA goals. The CSEF project arose out of a collective desire from major stakeholders to build stronger civil society participation in education policy development. The aim was to enable civil society to more effectively take its place at the table alongside governments and donors, as affirmed in the Dakar Declaration of 2000, consistent with the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, and reflected in the FTI governance documents. A total grant of US\$ 17.6 million was made available by the EPDF Committee over the period September 2009-June 2012.

The specific objectives of CSEF were to:

1. Establish broad based and democratically run National Education Coalitions (NECs)
2. Strengthen the capacity of NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reforms at the country level
3. Establish credible and independent national civil society education funds at the end of a multiyear programme of action
4. Strengthen support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global levels

With the ambitious aim of supporting 45 FTI-eligible NECs in Africa, Latin America and the Asia Pacific, GCE developed a robust global and regional governance structure to ensure effective capacity support, broad participation, transparency and accountability in order for civil society to engage more actively in policy dialogue, influence national education strategies and monitor progress in implementation.

This report builds on the interim CSEF reports provided every six months during the project and published on the GPE website and they are useful sources of further information. For reasons of length not all the detail has been repeated here.

Update on CSEF Project Completion Work since January 2012

To note, the original EPDF funding for National Education Coalitions ended in December 2011; regional and national project completion work has been undertaken in the first six months of 2012.

CSEF project completion work in 2012 has focused on:

1. Finalising activities at the national, regional and global levels
2. Documenting and communicating CSEF outcomes at all levels
3. Helping to facilitate an independent evaluation of CSEF
4. Ensuring a smooth transition from CSEF to Bridge Funding provided by AusAID, and building support for future funding.

¹ In this report the terms NEC and coalition are used inter-changeably

Note on Data Differences between the GCE Closing Report and the Independent Evaluation Report

The Closing Report worksheets incorporate data that was not included by the Independent Evaluation (IE) team, and also corrects for inaccuracies or data misinterpretations in the IE's worksheets. This is not intended to reflect poorly on the work of the IE team, which did an excellent job with the data they assembled, and the knowledge they had. However due to our closer knowledge of the coalitions, we were able to spot inaccuracies in NEC reporting. Having said this, many of the findings concur with the broad findings of the IE Report, even if the numbers and percentages differ.

Summary of Outcomes Related to Each CSEF Objective

Specific Objective 1: Establish broad based and democratically run National Education Coalitions (NECs)

Indicators for this objective:

1) Number of NECs Established & Registered

During the CSEF period of 2009-2011, nine new NECs were established. This took the total number of NECs from 36 to 45, and constitutes a 25% increase in only three years. Additionally, 39 out of 45 coalitions or 86% were legally registered by 2012. Of these 39, 17 coalitions or 44% were registered in the years 2009-2012. This represents a 77% increase in registrations on 2008 numbers. These are significant growth achievements.

2) Number of NECs Strengthened in Relation to Democratic Governance and the Broadening of Bases

This is measured by:

a) Growth in the Number of NEC Members and the Breadth of the NEC Bases

Of the nine NECs that were established during the CSEF funded period, their membership grew to 405 in three years. On average, NEC membership grew almost 3.5 times its original number of member organisations. NEC membership consisted of national NGOs (42%), grassroots NGOs (42%), INGOs (11%) and teacher organisations (6%). Of the 42 coalitions where data was available, only one did not have a teacher organisation as a member. 41 out of 42 NECs, for which we have relevant data, have grassroots organisations as members. The number of district or provincial networks, members or branches is both large and becoming larger each year, with a remarkable growth of 43.4% in the three year period. This growth came from 23 coalitions. These results indicate a healthy and growing breadth of coalition membership.

b) Regularity of AGMs

There has been an improvement in the percentage of NECs holding AGMs from 2009 to the following two years. Close to all NECs now hold AGMs, which points to strengthened democratic governance.

c) Number and Frequency of NEC Board Meetings

The average number of board meetings increased from 4 per year in 2009 to over 6 per year in the subsequent two years, which points to NECs taking governance seriously.

d) Regular Addition of New NEC Board Members

On average NECs elected 2-3 new board members each year over the three year period, which is a healthy turnover.

e) Number of Women on NEC Boards

Of the total of 411 board members in 2011, 142 or 34.5% were women. The increase was caused by 13 coalitions and clearly more work needs to be done to facilitate more women board members in other countries, however these figures are encouraging given the low starting base and the cultural and gender constraints that many NECs face in particular countries.

In summary, the CSEF project has been very successful in relation to the first specific key objective, namely establishing broad based and democratically run NECs.

Specific Objective 2: Strengthen the Capacity of NECs to Advocate for Policy Change and Institutional Reforms at Country Level

Indicators for this objective:

a) Number of coalition staff and volunteers

The number of coalition staff and volunteers has increased enormously from 2009 to 2011. The number of staff (full time and part time combined) in 2011 represents a massive 62% increase on 2009 numbers. The increase in the number of volunteers is also impressive at 76% over the 3 year period.

b) The number and range of NEC capacity-building trainings organised

The combined number of capacity building activities is 858 from the 42 coalitions that submitted data, an average of 20.4 substantive activities per coalition, or an average of 6.8 activities per coalition per year. These figures indicate a significant level of activity when we consider that most activities do not just happen over a couple of days. While there is a culminating moment, they often take weeks or months of preparation and follow-up work.

c) Number of researches and publications undertaken

The total number of researches and publications was 286, which is an average of 6.5 per coalition, or an average of 2 per coalition per year, which is a considerable achievement.

d) Number and range of campaigns and advocacy initiatives undertaken by coalitions

100% of the 41 coalitions that submitted data in this area had undertaken a campaigns or advocacy activity. There were 206 advocacy or campaign activities reported, which is an average of 5 activities per coalition over the three year period, or an average of 1.7 per year. It is important to remember that an advocacy strategy or campaign will commonly be spread over many months, if not years. 16 policy change areas were identified, indicating a wide range of coalition campaign and advocacy activity. The report discusses the context and type of activities in greater detail.

e) Number of official committees that NECs have joined

38 coalitions (out of 45 with data) state they are fully or partially recognised as partners in the LEG or Education Sector Working Groups. Additionally 34 NECs indicate full or partial participation in Education Sector planning processes and annual joint sector reviews. It is interesting to note that the six coalitions that had no involvement in any official committees were all new coalitions, only 2-3 years of age, which suggests that with further time and support, their involvement is likely.

30 coalitions (out of the 41 NECs that provided data) participate in one or more education technical working groups (TWGs). The combined total of 110 TWGs represents an average of 3.6 for each of these 30 coalitions. Ten coalitions sit on four or more TWGs, while six are part of only one TWG. While these figures are promising, coalitions need to ensure the quality of their participation, since physical presence by itself doesn't indicate the level of input or influence.

f) Number of meetings held with government and donor officials

It is clear from the number of campaigns and advocacies, the number of formal committees that coalitions participate in and the meetings with donors in relation to resource mobilisation that NECs have been meeting frequently with government and donor officials, and that the frequency has increased during the CSEF period.

g) Acknowledgement by other stakeholders of increased coalition capacity and credibility

Acknowledgement has been made at both coalition-organised events and government-organised functions. Some education ministers have publicly thanked coalitions for their contribution, as can be seen in the [DVD produced by GCE featuring the Minister for Education from Senegal](#), or the ASPBAE DVD that features a Minister for Education from Bangladesh. Evidence can also be drawn from the number of official committees that NECs are now fully or partially participating in and the increased funding that NECs have been able to generate outside of CSEF, which would not have been possible if it had not been for a growing perception of improvement of NEC capacity and credibility.

h) Achievement of policy change or institutional reforms at the country level

The analysis shows a substantial contribution by NECs to policy change and institutional reform, even taking into account issues such as the enormously varying country contexts, the extent to which there were enabling environments, and issues of attribution of success to a coalition vis-à-vis other stakeholders and dynamics. Some of the more clear-cut examples of NEC success at education policy, budget and institutional change are discussed in the report.

In summarising, the evidence in relation to each of these indicators shows that the project has been very successful in terms of strengthening the capacity of NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reform at the country level.

Specific Objective 3: Establish credible and independent national civil society education funds (NCSEFs) at the end of a multiyear programme of action

GCE proposed NCSEFs as a model of funding support for coalitions at the national level. While there was some interest in NCSEFs, generally the response from donors, governments, CSOs and other stakeholders was less than enthusiastic. Many donors were reluctant to contribute to a single fund, preferring to retain their control over how they disbursed funds in-country.

As no single CSEF country was able to set up a functioning, sustainable and independent national fund, it was evident even by the end of 2010 that a different approach was needed. Greater attention was then given to assisting NECs to develop resource mobilisation plans that were more attuned to current realities on the ground and more likely to lead to resources sooner. Regional staff worked with coalitions in drawing up their resource mobilisation plans, identifying the most likely donors, mapping their particular education areas of interest, attending meetings with prospective donors, and assisting in writing funding proposals. In addition, GCE continued action at the international level towards securing a sustainable mechanism for ongoing funding of NECs to continue their education advocacy work.

Funds Raised by NECs outside of CSEF

Some coalitions were very successful in securing funding additional to CSEF, while others struggled. Of the 43 NECs we have relevant data for, five were not able to raise any additional external funds, while an additional six NECs raised \$25,000 or less from 2009-2012. In stark contrast, 11 coalitions were able to raise over \$400,000 for the period.

If we take the wording of the third specific objective literally, the project did not succeed in *'establishing credible and independent NCSEFs at the end of a multiyear programme of action'*. However, GCE, regional organisations and coalitions themselves can be pleased with their collective ability to respond in light of the disappointing responses from key stakeholders, and shift the emphasis towards working with NECs to develop immediate and contextually relevant resource mobilisation strategies. The higher goal behind this third objective was to assist coalitions in locating additional resources to augment and continue their work. This was achieved in the short term in the majority of cases. Externally generated funds more than doubled from 2009 to 2011. However, GCE is aware that other strategies including mechanisms at the international level are needed to ensure the ongoing sustainability of NEC education advocacy work.

Specific Objective 4: Strengthen support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global level

1) Capacity support and coordination initiatives undertaken at the regional and global level for the benefit of NECs

Indicators for this objective are:

a) Number of capacity support visits by regional and global staff to NECs

A total of 311 visits by regional and global staff to NECs were undertaken in the 3 year period. This is an average of 6.9 visits per coalition for the 45 coalitions, or over 2.3 visits per coalition per year.

b) Type and range of capacity support provided by regional and global staff to NECs

The type and range of capacity support varied considerably from coalition to coalition, depending on the stage of development of the coalition, their size, degree of stability, context and the resources at their disposal. Capacity support was provided to new coalitions by regional staff in relation to basic institution building. This included assistance in drawing up a constitution, electing a representative board, selecting and training staff, setting up offices, establishing financial and administrative systems, ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, helping coalition members work together and create opportunities to participate and build a sense of collective ownership and commitment. Some existing coalitions also needed capacity support in these areas.

Additionally, staff assisted all coalitions in writing their proposals and developing budgets. Further capacity support was provided to develop skills in undertaking research, policy analysis, budget tracking, developing advocacy strategies, building alliances and networks, lobbying, engaging government and donor representatives and mobilising resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation

GCE and the regional management organisations ensured that monitoring and evaluation was a substantial and integral component of the CSEF project at the national, regional and global levels. The monitoring and evaluation strategy consisted of many aspects, including collecting NEC baseline data, detailed application forms, funding committee proposal appraisal processes, NEC quarterly financial reporting, half yearly narrative reporting, results frameworks, annual audits, visits by global and regional staff, regional and global workshops and trainings, regional and global financial and narrative reports, and project completion reports. The report describes monitoring and evaluation measures undertaken at each level.

c) Number and range of regional and international capacity development events organised by regional and global staff

Twenty six regional or sub-regional CSEF events were organised involving NEC representatives. Apart from addressing a range of key education policy and thematic issues, these events also included coalitions sharing their best strategies for advocacy, as well as lessons learned in building coalition constituencies. Sessions were also held on coalition financial management and the reporting requirements of CSEF. The report describes examples of these events, highlights the importance of regional and sub-regional level advocacy, and collaboration between regional organisations and NECs in that advocacy.

d) Feedback from coalitions regarding the added value of capacity support and training from regional and global staff

Feedback to regional and global staff from the staff and board members of coalitions was provided through NEC narrative reports, emails and at face-to-face meetings. Written evidence can also be found in the evaluations filled out by NEC participants at the end of regional and international events. This feedback indicates a high level of appreciation of the capacity support provided by the regional and global CSEF-funded staff. An additional outcome from sub-regional and regional events was that they facilitated separate coalition-to-coalition collaboration. Examples are provided.

e) Training and resource materials provided to coalitions by regional and global staff

A sample list is provided of the numerous training materials were passed on to coalitions to assist with capacity support and advocacy.

2) The strengthening of regional and global civil society advocacy

An important outcome of the CSEF project is that through it, regional and global education civil society advocacy was also strengthened. Regional and global capacities were built by virtue of the roles undertaken through the CSEF mechanisms, and due to the increased connection with NECs that the CSEF program provided.

The three regional secretariats, ASPBAE, CLADE and ANCEFA, now have a much deeper, richer set of skills and experience in what it takes to provide capacity support to national coalitions, ranging from basic institutional strengthening abilities to skills development in research, campaigns and advocacy, building networks and raising resources. Additionally, the three regional fund managers, ActionAid in Latin America, Oxfam in Africa, and Education International in the Asia Pacific, have developed enhanced skills in managing the disbursement of funds to a broad range of coalitions, providing them with guidance to improve their financial management, and in assessing their financial reports.

GCE as the CSEF Global Secretariat has also been strengthened in relation to its skills in managing a large and complex global program and its finances. This has involved setting up coordination mechanisms, liaising with all the stakeholders, negotiating contracts, writing global level reports, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, improving the communication of outcomes and expanding international lobbying on behalf of civil society.

Details are provided of the enhanced flow of information between national, regional and global education CSOs. GCE's global policy positions were enriched by being able to draw more extensively from experiences on the ground. Reciprocally, NECs are now more informed of regional and global education architecture, developments, platforms and events.

Linkages with International NGOs (INGOs)

At the regional level, INGOs play the important role of being Fund Managers in two of the regions: Oxfam in Africa, and ActionAid in Latin America. INGO staff are also involved in Regional Funding Committees, by virtue of their individual regional knowledge and expertise. In the Asia Pacific and Africa, staff from each of Oxfam and ActionAid participate on the Funding Committee, while in Latin America ActionAid Americas and Ayuda en Acción are members. In Africa the Open Society Foundation (OSF) was also involved.

At the global level, INGOs are represented on the GCE Board and have been very proactive in helping secure CSEF funding in the first place and then in helping to steer it over the last 3 years. GCE is looking at ways of increasing the future involvement of additional INGOs.

Linkages between NGOs and teachers' organisations

The linkages between NGOs and teachers' organisations have also been enhanced at national, regional and global levels through the CSEF project. 41 out of 42 reporting coalitions have a teachers' organisation as a member, and at least 9 NECs have organised an advocacy initiative on a teacher-related issue. At the regional level, Education International's Asia Pacific office has played the role of Regional Fund Manager. Due to ASPBAE's role as the Regional Secretariat, the two organisations have a greater appreciation of the respective work cultures and governance structures. This is also the case for Africa, where the Chair of the Funding Committee is from Education International.

Globally, the link between GCE and teachers' organisations was already strong, with Education International a key and founding member of GCE and strongly represented on the GCE Board. However, the whole process of designing the CSEF project, deciding on its governance mechanisms and interacting with the GPE Board and Secretariat has strengthened the collaboration. The most recent global expression of this was in September 2012, when GCE and EI jointly produced and launched the report [*'Every Child Needs a Teacher: Closing the Trained Teacher Gap'*](#) to highlight the severity of the gap in trained teachers, its impact on education systems and to make recommendations for closing this gap.

The analysis strongly affirms that the CSEF project achieved its fourth specific objective, with indicators showing significant strengthening of support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global levels, in terms of quality, quantity and range. This enhanced capacity is beneficial, not only for NECs but also for GCE and its regional partners.

In reviewing the outcomes in relation to indicators for the four key specific objectives it is evident that the CSEF project has been very successful.

Lessons Learned

There is much to learn from the three years' experience of the CSEF project in terms of what worked well and what could be adjusted to enable future CSO education advocacy engagement to be more efficient and effective. Some of the larger lessons include:

1. More timely transfer of funds and a greater certainty of funding

Despite the clear success of the CSEF project in achieving its objectives, the outcomes and impact of the project would have been even more impressive had it not been for the serious delays in the transfer of funds from the start, and the constant uncertainty surrounding funding for each year of the project. A substantial lesson to be learned is that in order to enable CSOs to function even more

effectively and efficiently at each level, funding needs to be guaranteed for multiple years, and needs to be released in a predictable, timely manner.

2. NEC capacity development is an ongoing process and is greatly enhanced by regional and global support

Another key lesson learned through the CSEF project is that capacity development is an ongoing process, not just something that is required at the front end of a project, to get coalitions up and running. The nature of the capacity support required adjusts to match each coalition's evolving needs according to its stage of development and as it responds to changing circumstances. As NECs gain in credibility and capacity, even more demands will be placed upon them, and success can bring further challenges. Examples are provided that show how regional and global capacity support enhanced NEC development.

3. Civil society education advocacy is more effective when there is collaboration between the national, regional and global levels

In an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing world, decisions made at global and regional levels can have a substantial impact at the national level. The policy environment at both national and international levels can change very quickly, due to factors such as a global financial crisis, a disaster or conflict, a change of government, or changes in personnel of key stakeholders at the different levels. New technologies are changing the way campaigns can be conducted.

These changes require a constant recalibration of advocacy strategies. Increasing collaboration is required that links in-country efforts with regional and global action. In this way up-to-date information about what is happening in-country can feed into regional and global CSO policy analysis and advocacy, and reciprocally, knowledge of global and regional developments can be made available to coalitions to strengthen their in-country advocacy. For civil society to maximise its contribution to education policy change, it needs to secure the resources and develop the capacities to engage at all three levels.

4. Sound project management and governance is essential

In terms of scale of funds and breadth of coverage for civil society education advocacy, the CSEF project has been the largest to date, so its management and governance mechanisms required careful consideration to ensure effective accountability, transparency in decision making, and to avoid conflicts of interest at the national, regional and global levels. A description is provided of the management and governance mechanisms in action at each level.

The Independent Evaluator has made some recommendations in relation to improving the global governance mechanisms, in any future project. The proposal that has been prepared for 2013/2014 has included an international advisory committee and makes important adjustments to responsibilities for managing the funds at the global level as extra measures to strengthen future global level governance.

5. Good governance needs to be sufficiently resourced

It is clear through the analysis in this report that regional and global governance mechanisms are essential in a project of this scale and breadth. It is also evident that there is a cost to ensuring high standards of transparency and accountability are achieved, and that if funds are reduced from this cost base it could jeopardise the whole project. It is important to note that economy of scale is involved since there is a 'critical mass' of global and regional level resourcing required to undertake the governance and capacity support roles effectively.

6. Further dialogue is needed to clarify the role of INGOs vis-à-vis NECs

At the national level, 35 national coalitions include INGOs as members and INGOs contribute 32% of funds to NECs outside of the CSEF project. The dynamics between INGOs and national coalitions varies enormously from one country to another, however there are aspects of the INGO-NEC relationship that merit further discussion in order to maximise the potential of collaboration. These issues include in-country positioning for seats on important education committees such as Local Education Groups (LEGs), the degree of cooperation vis-à-vis competition for resources from donors, issues of conflict of interest if an INGO is a donor as well as a coalition member, and the extent to which INGOs see part of their in-country role as supporting NECs and acting in solidarity with them. As part of its reflection on the CSEF experience, GCE has recently begun discussions about formulating a set of principles of national level engagement between INGOs and NECs.

Concluding comments

The CSEF project has been a unique experience for CSOs committed to education advocacy at multiple levels. The scale of funds has enabled GCE and its partners to strengthen the capacities of 45 national coalitions, an extraordinary achievement in just three years, despite serious external constraints regarding the flow of funds. This conclusion is supported by the CSEF Independent Evaluation report (p. 9) which commented that in a short time the CSEF project *'...has been able to articulate, capacitate and empower a range of civil society networks advocating quality education all around the world...'*

GCE and its partners thank the GPE for its support for the CSEF project, and appreciate GPE's growing recognition of the value of strong civil society engagement in education policy at national, regional and global levels. It is clear that the work must not stop here; it is important to secure ongoing resources to enable civil society engagement to effectively play its role. To ensure progress on Education for All it is important that the donor funding for GPE partner countries is complemented by a much smaller amount to help strengthen the effectiveness of civil society education advocacy. GCE is submitting an application to GPE to cover support for 2013-14 and will also propose ideas for institutionalising longer term support to ensure this vital work can continue.

2. Introduction and Background

The Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) was an initiative of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) that received funding approval in December 2008 from the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) Committee. The overall goal of the CSEF was to support the core work of civil society National Education Coalitions (NECs) to fully engage with and track the progress of national governments and donor groups in working towards the EFA goals. The CSEF project arose out of a collective desire from major stakeholders to build stronger civil society participation in education policy development. The aim was to enable civil society to more effectively take its place at the table alongside governments and donors, as affirmed in the Dakar Declaration of 2000, consistent with the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, and reflected in the FTI governance documents. A total grant of US\$ 17.6 million was made available by the EPDF Committee over the period 2009-2012.

The specific objectives of CSEF were to:

1. Establish broad based and democratically run National Education Coalitions (NECs)
2. Strengthen the capacity of NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reforms at the country level
3. Establish credible and independent national civil society education funds at the end of a multiyear programme of action
4. Strengthen support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global levels.

With the ambitious aim of supporting 45 FTI eligible NECs in Africa, Latin America and the Asia Pacific, it was clear that a robust global and regional structure was required to ensure effective capacity support, broad participation, transparency and accountability. The CSEF Global Coordinator was appointed and a global secretariat was set up in GCE to provide overall coordination. The CSEF Global Coordinator reported to the GCE Global Coordinator, who reported to the GCE Board.

At the regional level, a number of structures were required to ensure separation of grant making decisions, provision of capacity support and financial management. Accordingly, three regional secretariats were appointed in 2009: ANCEFA for Africa, ASPBAE for the Asia Pacific and CLADE for Latin America. The regional secretariats were tasked with providing capacity support to coalitions and ensuring the smooth functioning of the project in their respective regions, including organising meetings of the regional funding committees. Each CSEF regional secretariat appointed a regional coordinator to lead this work.

The three regional funding committees consisted of experienced civil society education experts in each respective region who would meet to appraise national coalition proposals and decide on the fair and effective allocation of funds to coalitions. Additionally, three fund managing agencies were appointed: Education International Asia Pacific (EIAP) for the Asia Pacific, Oxfam for Africa and ActionAid Americas for Latin America. The fund managing agencies disbursed the funds to the coalitions and checked coalition financial reports to ensure they properly accounted for their project expenditures.

The coordination mechanism between these regional bodies varied per region. In the Asia Pacific region a Regional Coordination Committee was set up consisting of the head of the Regional Secretariat, the head of the Fund Managing Agency, the Chair of the Funding Committee, the CSEF Regional Coordinator and the CSEF Global Coordinator. The Regional Coordination Committee ensured regular communication, consultation and decision-making between the regional stakeholders, the national coalitions and the Global Secretariat. A similar Regional Coordination Committee was implemented in Africa, involving staff from the Regional Secretariat, the Fund

Management Agency and the CSEF Global Secretariat. In Latin America the Regional Secretariat managed the coordination of decision making between the regional stakeholders, the national coalitions and the Global Secretariat.

Funds began flowing to national coalitions in the final months of 2009 and by June 2010, 40 NECs were receiving funding support. By the end of the project 45 NECs received funding support. In Africa 28 coalitions were funded: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In the Asia Pacific region 13 coalitions were funded: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Vanuatu and Vietnam. In Latin America, the 4 coalitions that received support are: Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Nicaragua.

3. Update on CSEF Project Completion Work since January 2012

CSEF project completion work in 2012 has focused on:

1. Finalising activities at the national, regional and global levels
2. Documenting and communicating CSEF outcomes at all levels
3. Helping to facilitate an independent evaluation of CSEF
4. Ensuring a smooth transition from CSEF to Bridge Funding provided by AusAID, and building support for future funding.

To note, CSEF funding from the EPDF ended for NECs in December 2011. Additional funds to sustain NECs in 2012 were provided by AusAID, to ensure work continued while awaiting the opportunity to apply to GPE for longer term continuation funding. For the regional and global bodies, EPDF funding ended in June 2012 (allowing for evaluation and reporting).

3.1. Finalising activities at the national, regional and global levels

At the national level, national coalitions have submitted their project completion reports, results framework reports and financial reports, along with their audits. GCE utilised unspent funds from other areas of the project to allow additional expenditure for some national coalitions on activities that were in line with CSEF objectives. A small number of national coalitions were permitted to complete activities after January 2012, but these did not delay project closure and reporting deadlines.

At the regional level, unspent funds were provided to enable regional organisations to extend their capacity support role to national coalitions during the CSEF closure period and to complete regional closure processes through to end June 2012, three months beyond the original end March 2012 deadline. The allocation of these funds has proved to be very helpful in the complex process of bringing CSEF to a close.

Meetings of the three Regional Funding Committees were held since January 2012: in the Asia Pacific (Philippines) in March; in Latin America (Ecuador) in April, and in Africa (Senegal) in May. These meetings reviewed closing national coalition activities and reports and assessed their proposals for 2012 Bridge Funding. This latter component has been charged to the AusAID Bridge Fund grant. The Latin American meeting also included the participation of national coalitions where a draft report outlining financing progress country by country was discussed. In the Asia Pacific, a regional workshop with representatives of all 13 coalitions was held in Bangladesh in March, just prior to the funding committee meeting. In these regional meetings, a collective internal evaluation process was undertaken, and lessons learnt and good practices were identified and shared.

Closing narrative and financial reports and audits have now been submitted by regional secretariats and fund managers from all of the regions.

At the global level, GCE has collected and analysed national and regional coalition narrative reports, results frameworks, financial reports and audits in order to complete the global CSEF closing financial and narrative reports. The GCE Global Secretariat also increased its global staff capacity in the area of documentation and communications. The value of this has been demonstrated, with the production since January of quality brochures, case studies and a DVD, which highlight CSEF outcomes in line with the steer from the GPE Secretariat.

Increased GCE staff time has also been allocated to the engagement of CSOs in the GPE consultative processes, especially regarding the development of its strategic plan. GCE has also undertaken measures towards increasing national coalition engagement in local education groups (LEGs), including conducting a survey of their current participation in LEGs to use as a basis for developing further strategies to enhance CSO participation in LEGs.

3.2. Documentation and Communication of CSEF Outcomes

At the global level, GCE developed a range of materials to both document and communicate some of the key outcomes of the CSEF project to various stakeholders, including the GPE constituency. Materials included a 10 minute DVD entitled [‘Right to Education: Making it Happen’](#) that highlights the work of coalitions, and the support given to them by the regional and global CSOs. The DVD describes specific national examples of policy change achieved by civil society advocacy through the CSEF program, and includes words of support from the Minister for Education of Senegal, regarding the contribution of the national coalition in Senegal.

GCE also produced a [brochure](#) of the same name that summarises through maps and diagrams the CSEF project origins, structure, objectives, examples of the impact of the work of NECs, and the increased reach of civil society as a result of CSEF. A brochure entitled [‘Civil Society Advocacy: Good Practice and Case Studies’](#) was also produced. It focuses on achievements of African coalitions Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique in relation to influencing policy and the prioritising and delivery of education.

These and other publications were distributed at the GPE Board meeting, 6-8 June 2012 in Berlin. At this meeting GCE and its partners organised an event for Board members that showcased the work of civil society through the CSEF project. The event included a speech from the Chair of the GPE Board, Carol Bellamy, a screening of the DVD, and presentations from GCE and representatives closely involved in the CSEF project.

GCE also produced and disseminated [CSEF Bulletins](#) in March and July 2012 to a large e-list of stakeholders. These are available on GCE’s website in a dedicated CSEF section. The website has been upgraded in recent months and will shortly include sections in Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish, to enable greater dissemination of information about the value and impact of CSEF.

At the regional level, ASPBAE produced a compendium entitled [‘Persuading Powers: Stories from Education Coalitions in the Asia Pacific’](#), consisting of 24 stories of lessons learned and good practice of national coalitions during the CSEF funded period of 2009-2011. This was also distributed among GPE partners at the GPE Board meeting in Berlin. ASPBAE has also produced a 10 minute DVD by the same name that will be used for information sharing and promotional purposes with various stakeholders at both the national and regional levels.

3.3. Independent Evaluation of CSEF

GCE facilitated the process of drawing up a TOR, calling for tenders and selecting the CSEF independent evaluation team. Mr Toni Verger and his team from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona were chosen to undertake this role from June to September 2012. GCE and representatives of the regional organisations met Mr Verger and facilitated his team’s contact with a wide range of stakeholders at national, regional and international level.

The Independent Evaluation team selected the following coalitions for particular case studies as part of the evaluation: Cambodia, Mongolia, Bolivia, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Senegal and Mozambique.

GCE also provided Mr Verger with feedback on his draft report before it was finalised. GCE welcomes the report, is in agreement with much of what it contains, and is keen to ensure that its observations and recommendations are factored into future CSO education advocacy work at national, regional and global levels. GCE has made a number of changes in the CSEF proposal for 2013/2014 in light of the evaluation and the proposal to the GPE Board contains a section explicitly detailing the actions under each of the recommendations in the evaluation.

3.4. Ensuring a smooth transition to Bridge Funding provided by AusAID, and building support for future funding

AusAID has provided very important and much appreciated Bridge Funding of AUD\$ 5 million to ensure that the work of CSEF is able to continue through 2012, while GPE mechanisms for future funding of this work are being finalised. GCE and its regional partners have worked hard to ensure as smooth a transition as possible from CSEF to Bridge Funds. This has involved national, regional and global level consultations and planning to minimize disruption to coalition work and to maximize the use of available resources. The Bridge Funding program of activities is now well and truly underway, with the final tranche of funds having been distributed.

Global and regional staff have also scaled up dialogue with international donors to ensure enhanced understanding of the value of CSEF and to secure continued financial support for this work beyond the end of the Bridge Fund period.

4. Summary of Outcomes Related to Each CSEF Objective

This section will summarise the outcomes achieved by the CSEF project relating to each of its key specific objectives.

A Note on the Data Differences between this GCE Closing Report and the Independent Evaluation Report

At various points in this Closing Report, reference will be made to the Independent Evaluator's Report (IE Report), which provided a set of 22 worksheets of data relating to CSEF NECs, assembled by the IE team. In order to facilitate analysis of CSEF project outcomes, this Closing Report retains many of the worksheet formats and the same worksheet numbering used by the Independent Evaluator. However, not all the IE worksheets are relevant to the Closing Report, so we have deleted some and added worksheets B24, B25 and summary worksheet entitled *NEC Profiles – A Consolidated Summary of Data*. A financial report with a financial narrative component will be submitted separately to this Closing Report.

It should be noted that the data included in the worksheets of this Closing Report is different to and more up-to-date than the data in the IE's worksheets. This is because in the last few weeks GCE has gone over the figures based on NEC Project Completion Reports, Closing Results Frameworks, and other NEC documents, and in some cases has reverted back to coalitions to clarify data ambiguities. Also, some NEC reports were only made available after the Independent Evaluation. The Closing Report worksheets incorporate data that was not included by the IE team, and also corrects for inaccuracies or data misinterpretations in the IE's worksheets.

This is not intended to reflect poorly on the work of the IE team, who did an excellent job with the data they assembled together, and the knowledge they had. However due to our closer knowledge of the coalitions, we were able to spot inaccuracies in NEC reporting. For example, when Bangladesh omitted to report their externally generated funds for 2009 and 2010, it dramatically skewed the figures by over \$2 million (Worksheet B15). In another example, Mongolia listed 13 AGMs in one year, we knew the coalition misunderstood the question and included core group meetings held to formally establish the coalition. Unfortunately by the time these corrections had been identified it was not in time for it to be incorporated into the IE team's final report, due to their deadline for completion.

Having said this, many of the findings based on available NEC data concur with the broad findings of the IE Report, even if the numbers and percentages differ.

The Specific Objectives of CSEF

The specific objectives of CSEF were to:

1. Establish broad based and democratically run National Education Coalitions (NECs)
2. Strengthen the capacity of NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reforms at country the level
3. Establish credible and independent national civil society education funds at the end of a multiyear programme of action
4. Strengthen support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global levels.

The following is a summary of outcomes relating to each of these objectives by assessing them against relevant indicators. Throughout this section we will be referring to the data assembled in the Excel document entitled '*CSEF Closing Report Worksheets*', attached as Appendix 2. A list of the worksheets in this document is attached as Appendix 1. The last of these worksheets is a

comprehensive summary of all the other worksheets, entitled '*NEC Profiles – A Consolidated Summary of Data*'. From the consolidated worksheet we have produced a one-page profile of key information on each of the 45 coalitions, attached as Appendix 3.

4.1. Specific Objective 1: Establish Broad-Based and Democratically-Run National Education Coalitions

Key indicators in relation to this objective include:

- 1) Number of NECs established and registered
- 2) Number of NECs strengthened in relation to democratic governance and the broadening of bases as measured by:
 - a) Growth in the number of NEC member organisations and the breadth of the NEC bases
 - b) Regularity of AGMs
 - c) Number and frequency of NEC board meetings
 - d) Regular addition of new board members
 - e) Number of women on NEC boards.

1) Number of NECs established & registered

From Worksheets B6 and B7, we see that during the CSEF period of 2009-2011, nine new NECs were established: six in 2009 and three in 2010. This took the total number of NECs from 36 to 45, and constitutes a 25% increase in only 3 years. Additionally, 39 out of 45 coalitions or 86% were legally registered by 2012. Of these 39, 17 coalitions or 44% were registered in the years 2009-2012. This represents a 77% increase in registrations on 2008 numbers. These are significant growth achievements.

There were no new NECs in 2011 because GCE was conscious that while there is clearly potential to establish further national coalitions, it would require additional funds to disburse to the new NECs, unless funds to existing coalitions were to be spread more thinly.

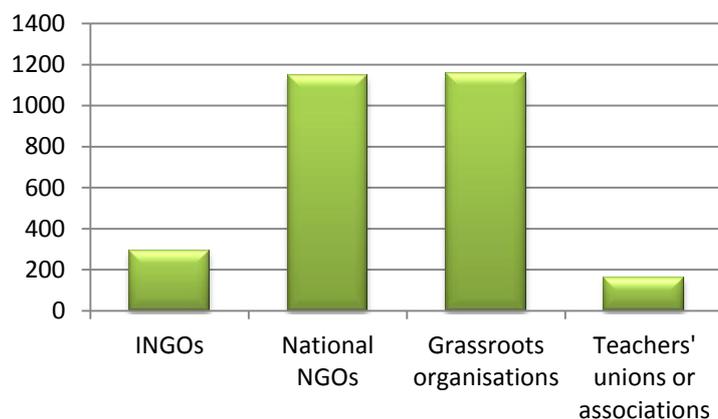
2) Number of NECs strengthened in relation to democratic governance and the broadening of bases

This is measured by:

a) Growth in the number of NEC member organisations and the breadth of the NEC bases

Of the 9 NECs that were established during the CSEF funded period, their membership grew to 405 in three years. If we look at the number of NEC member organisations at their year of founding compared to numbers in 2011, we find enormous growth, from 975 to 3,376. On average, NEC membership grew almost 3.5 times its original number of member organisations (See Worksheet B6). No NEC's membership is less at the end of 2011 than at the time of its founding. These data indicate a substantial and growing base of NEC membership.

Composition of member organisations



Regarding breadth of membership, drawing on the coalition results frameworks, NEC membership consisted of national NGOs (42%), grassroots NGOs (42%), INGOs (11%) and teacher organisations (6%) (Worksheet B8). Of the 42 coalitions where data was available, only one did not have a teacher organisation as a member (drawn from Worksheet B 6). 41 out of 42 NECs, for which we have relevant data, have grassroots organisations as members. 30 of these 42 have more than 5 grassroots organisations as members.

As a further indicator of membership breadth, Worksheet B11 lists the number of established district or provincial networks or branches per coalitions.

Number of district/provincial networks/members/branches of the coalition		
2009	2010	2011
585	707	839

We can see from this summary above that the number of district or provincial networks, members or branches is both large and becoming larger each year, with a remarkable growth of 43.4% in the three year period. This growth came from 23 coalitions. While the average is 20 per coalition out of the 41 coalitions that submitted data, there was great diversity in the numbers, where a large country such as India listed 235, while others such as Zimbabwe and Vietnam listed none. However the question asked could have been clearer since it doesn't account for the many coalitions that have member organisations based in the capital which themselves have broad provincial and district reach (such as Vietnam and Indonesia). Such members lessen the need for the coalition to set up separate networks or branches in the same provinces.

These results indicate a healthy growth and breadth of coalition membership.

b) Regularity of AGMs

The number of AGMs held in the years 2009-2011 by NECs:

- 35 AGMs from 43 NECs in 2009 (81%)
- 49 AGMs from 43 NECs in 2010 (114%)²
- 45 AGMs from 43 NECs in 2011 (104%)

² A few coalitions may have included other general meetings in their figures as distinct from just an AGM. Also some AGMs might fall either side of a calendar year and it is possible there were two in the same calendar year.

These figures are very encouraging. We see an improved percentage of NECs holding AGMs from 2009 to the following two years (see Worksheet B9). Close to all NECs now hold AGMs, which points to strengthened democratic governance.

c) Number and Frequency of NEC Board Meetings

As can be found in Worksheet B10, and summarised below, the number of NEC board meetings was:

- 145 in 2009, an average of 3.9 per NEC
- 267 in 2010, an average of 6.2 per NEC, and
- 260 in 2011, an average of 6.1 per NEC

This shows that the average number of board meetings increased from four per year in 2009 to over six per year in the subsequent two years. An average of six board meetings per year indicates that NECs are taking governance seriously.

NEC Governance	2009	2010	2011
Total number of Annual General Meetings	35	49	45
Total number of board meetings	145	267	260
Total number of new board members elected	86	136	82

d) Regular Addition of New NEC Board Members

The number of new board members was 86 in 2009, while in 2010 it was 136, and in 2011 it was 82. While the figures fluctuated between years, they show an average of 2-3 new board members each year over the three year period, which is a healthy turnover.

e) Number of Women on NEC Boards

Of the total of 411 board members in 2011, 142 or 34.5% were women (Worksheet B9). Of the 35 coalitions that existed in 2009 and had available data, 13 had increased numbers of women by 2011, 17 stayed the same, while 5 had fewer women on their boards in 2011 than they did in 2009 (NEC Profile Worksheet). Clearly more work needs to be done to facilitate more women board members; however, these figures are encouraging given the low starting base and the cultural and gender constraints that many NECs face in particular countries.

In summary, the CSEF project has been very successful in relation to the first specific objective, namely establishing broad-based and democratically-run NECs.

4.2. Specific Objective 2: Strengthen the Capacity of NECs to Advocate for Policy Change and Institutional Reforms at Country Level

Indicators of strengthened NEC capacity to advocate for policy change and institutional reforms at the country level include:

1. Number of staff and volunteers
2. Number and range of capacity building trainings organised
3. Number of researches and publications produced
4. Number and range of campaigns and advocacy initiatives undertaken by coalitions
5. Number of official committees NECs have joined
6. Number of meetings held with government and donor officials
7. Acknowledgement by other stakeholders of increased coalition capacity and credibility
8. Achievement of policy change or institutional reforms

Measures taken by the regional and global organisations to provide capacity support to NECs will be analysed in section 4.2.4 below.

1) Number of coalition staff and volunteers

One indicator of strengthened NEC capacity is staff and volunteer numbers. In Worksheets B13 and B14, the numbers of staff and volunteers are listed per coalition. Here is a summary table:

Coalition Staff & Volunteers	2009	2010	2011
Total full-time staff	144	203	225
Total part-time staff	6	17	12
Total local volunteers	164	249	298
Total international volunteers	20	23	26

We can see from this table that the number of coalition staff and volunteers has increased enormously from 2009 to 2011. The number of staff (full time and part time combined) in 2011 represents a 62% increase on 2009 numbers and is a key part of the increase in coalition activity we see later on. The increase in the number of volunteers is also significant at 76% over the 3 year period. It is an encouraging sign of strengthened capacity when coalitions are able to attract and organise an increasing number of volunteers to participate in the implementation of their work.

2) The number and range of NEC capacity-building trainings organised

In the NEC Profiles Worksheet (columns towards the far right end) we have listed the number of coalition activities, in line with the categories of the NEC results frameworks, that was also used by the Independent Evaluation team, namely: capacity-building trainings, advocacy, campaigns, research and publications, network- and alliance-building, fundraising, and governance and strategic planning.³

However, these categories have important limitations. It is impossible to dissect NEC activities and neatly assign some of them the label of ‘capacity building training’ while other activities and events are labelled as ‘campaigns’ or ‘advocacy’ activities, or ‘network and alliance building’ or ‘fundraising’, or ‘governance and strategic planning’. In reality, all of these activities are either explicitly or implicitly ‘learning through doing’ capacity building activities.

Additionally, many coalition activities and events combine elements of these categories in the one event, for example a workshop would commonly combine advocacy and campaigns training and planning, and network and alliance-building dimensions. Having said that, the above categories can still be useful in painting a picture of the type, frequency and the extent of NEC activities. The following is a summary of the total number of activities per category reported.

³ This data draws on and is linked to the more detailed table in Worksheet B19. In that Worksheet we have used some columns similar to that of the Independent Evaluation team, however we updated and adjusted the activity descriptions and numbers.

NEC Activities Summary

Capacity Building	Advocacy	Campaign	Research & Publications	Networking and Alliances	Governance & Strategic Planning	Other	Fund Raising
141	132	74	286	65	80	26	54

From this data, we find the combined number of activities is 858 from the 42 coalitions that submitted data, an average of 20.4 substantive activities per coalition, or an average of 6.8 activities per coalition per year. It is likely that quite a few coalitions under-reported the number of activities they undertook in the period, especially in the categories of networking and alliance building, governance and strategic planning, and fundraising, partly because of differing understandings of what should be included in the results frameworks. However, the figures still indicate a substantial level of activity took place. Most activities need to be seen not just as happening over a couple of days. While there is often a culminating moment, they commonly take weeks or months of preparation and then follow up work.

NEC capacity building events focused on issues such as national government education policy and legislation, and the extent to which it is aligned to achieving the EFA goals. Other trainings focused on particular education sub-sectors or particular thematic dimensions, such as gender equality or policies relating to disadvantaged groups and the right to education.

Some training focused on increasing skill levels of board members and staff in relation to administrative and financial management, ensuring sound monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, proposal writing and utilising new technologies.

Other training involved coalition membership as well as board and staff, in areas such as how to understand, analyse and monitor education policies, how to track education budgets, how to build and mobilise constituencies in campaigns, and how to organise media events. Some training courses were also open to or even directed towards non-members, such as journalists, government officials and politicians, school boards and teachers.

3) Number of researches and publications undertaken

The number of researches and publications undertaken per coalition can be found in the NEC Profiles Worksheet. The data collected could not sufficiently differentiate published research from other publications. However, all of the 44 NECs (for which we have relevant data) carried out at least one piece of research or produced a publication for awareness-raising and advocacy in the three years of 2009-2011. The total number is 286, which is an average of 6.5 per coalition, or an average of two researches and publications per coalition per year.

Coalition research covered many issues, with the most common being:

- budget tracking, including school level budget tracking
- assessing coalition capacity and performance
- education laws and systems
- review of education policies in relation to EFA
- research on women, girls and gender issues
- teacher training, conditions and quality
- studies on the feasibility of a National Civil Society Education Fund
- adult and youth literacy (including literacy surveys) and continuing education

- school fees.

It is clear that research is considered by coalitions to be an important part of their work. There is broad recognition of its value in contributing to the evidence base for advocacy and policy formulation. It is also clear that NECs understand the importance of publishing their findings and analyses in order to raise broader awareness. Many coalitions commented that their credibility in the eyes of other stakeholders increased when they were able to produce good quality research and publications on education policy issues. They found that their views were more likely to be sought and there was increased willingness to invite coalition representatives to education policy meetings. One learning point that is being taken into the CSEF proposal for 2013/2014 is to ensure that an evidence-based approach to research is undertaken in all coalitions.

All NECs produced a range of materials to publicise and promote their work and messages. Apart from research reports they utilised newsletters, collections of good practice, policy briefs, and summaries of education reports in easy to understand language, prominent speeches, copies of Education Acts, lists of education demands, posters, brochures and event flyers.

4) Number and range of campaigns and advocacy initiatives undertaken by coalitions

100% of the 41 coalitions that submitted data in this area had undertaken a campaigns or advocacy activity. Since there is quite an overlap between campaigns and advocacy work, and diversity in the coalitions' interpretation of the terms, it is more useful to combine the figures of these activities. We find that 206 advocacy or campaign activities were reported, which averages 5 activities per coalition over the three year period, or an average of 1.7 per year. Once again it is important to remember that an advocacy strategy or campaign will commonly be spread over many months, if not years.

In Worksheet B24, we have listed what coalitions nominated as their key area/s of policy change initiative. The list can be summarised as follows in order of preferred issue:

- Promoting the right to education & ensuring it becomes enshrined in law (8)
- Increasing national education budgets (8)
- Strengthening education governance and financing (8)
- Fighting against school fees (7)
- Improving teacher training & conditions (6)
- Improving access to education for women and girls (5)
- Providing adults with basic literacy (6)
- Providing teacher training regarding children with special needs (3)
- Providing for inclusive education (3)
- Improving early childhood education (2)
- Support for community learning centres (2)
- Increasing vocational training (1)
- Supporting alternative education systems (1)
- Promoting the return of children who dropped out of school (1)
- Increased funding for quality basic education (1)
- Developing a policy on open and distance learning (1)

This list of 16 policy change areas highlights the wide range of coalition campaign and advocacy activity.

There are many different components to an advocacy strategy or campaign. NECs have listed activities such as face-to-face meetings with government officials, members of parliaments and donors in various settings, such as formal education working groups, round tables and specific thematic or issue-focused meetings. These are often augmented by the presentation of statements, demands, charters, petitions, research findings and policy recommendations. A common practice for NECs is to organise seminars, workshops, trainings or public meetings to which government officials are invited, and an exchange ensues so that various viewpoints are aired in front of a broader audience.

Regarding the number of NECs that participated in particular campaigns, the data is inconclusive because many coalitions in their results frameworks didn't specify which campaigns they were involved in. We do know as per the data in Worksheet B19 that there were at least 38 national campaigns linked to GCE's Global Action Week over the three years; however this is likely to be an underestimation. Other campaigns conducted by NECs were in relation to World Teachers' Day, International Literacy Day, the 1GOAL campaign coordinated by GCE, the Day of the African Child, and International Human Rights Day.

Coalitions frequently utilised mass media for their campaigns and public awareness-raising. This included newspaper articles and television and radio reports. Activities covered included marches, campaign events, presentation of petitions, talk-shows, interviews, utilising celebrities, seminars, debates, round tables and media conferences, community meetings and media releases. Many coalitions have websites (for example, Burkina Faso and Indonesia) and some use Facebook (for example, Papua New Guinea) and blog pages (for example, Vietnam), to disseminate their messages, including to their own constituencies.

Incentives were also provided to journalists to ensure a regular flow of media items on education. This included offering training opportunities, (for example, Nicaragua, Djibouti, Bangladesh), setting up a journalists' network that generated commitment to education (Nepal, Kenya), and events such as breakfast meetings with journalists (Mongolia).

5) Number of official committees that NECs have joined

From the data listed in Worksheet B12, we see that 38 coalitions (out of 45 with data) state they are fully or partially recognised as partners in the LEG or Education Sector Working Groups. Additionally 34 NECs indicate full or partial participation in education sector planning processes and annual joint sector reviews. It is interesting to note that the six coalitions that had no involvement in any official committees were all new coalitions, only 2-3 years of age, which suggests that with further time and support, their involvement is likely. One of these six coalitions, Bolivia, indicated that they have made efforts, but spaces are not yet available to them.

Of the 41 NECs that provided data, 30 participate in one or more education technical working groups (TWGs). The combined total of 110 TWGs represents an average of 3.6 for each of these 30 coalitions. Ten coalitions sit on 4 or more TWGs, while 6 are part of only one TWG.

While these figures are promising, coalitions need to ensure the quality of their participation, since physical presence by itself doesn't indicate the level of input or influence. This point was also made by the Independent Evaluator, and we recognise there is still much to do to increase the quality of NEC participation in LEGs and other important official education committees.

Another challenge NECs face, one that is brought about by gains in credibility and influence, is that sometimes they are invited to be involved in an increasing number of committees. This provides a

challenge to the depth of each NEC to find/train suitable, sufficiently knowledgeable representatives to commit to participate on TWGs. Often the TWGs require a significant commitment of time. It also requires important judgement calls on which committees are strategically the most important.

6) Number of meetings held with government and donor officials

It is not possible to quantify the exact number of meetings NECs have held with government and donor officials, since this data is not sufficiently explicit in the coalition reports. However, it is clear from the analysis above of the number of campaigns and advocacies, the number of formal committees that coalitions participate in, and the meetings with donors in relation to resource mobilisation discussed below, that NECs have been meeting frequently with government and donor officials, and that the frequency has increased during the CSEF period.

7) Acknowledgement by other stakeholders of increased coalition capacity and credibility

Many coalitions report an increased acknowledgement of their credibility and capacity to contribute to education policy discussions by other key stakeholder officials. This acknowledgement has been made at both coalition-organised events and government-organised functions. Some education ministers have publicly thanked coalitions for their contribution, as can be seen in the DVD produced by GCE featuring the Minister for Education from Senegal, or the ASPBAE DVD that features a Minister for Education from Bangladesh.

In the Dominican Republic, the national education coalition launched an Education Budget Watch in order to monitor the Ministry of Education's public budget. At the end of 2011, the Education Ministry sent a formal letter to the coalition, recognising the quality of the bulletins and promised to take the coalition's analysis into account. In some countries government officials have helped launch coalition reports, for example in the Gambia, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

In Mozambique, the coalition (MEPT) contributed to the government's Education Sector Plan for submission to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), ensuring that sections on pre-primary education were included in the Plan. In recognition of MEPT's contribution, the MEPT Board Chair travelled with Mozambique's Minister for Education in 2010 to present the country's funding application directly to the GPE Board.

Evidence for this indicator can also be drawn from the number of official committees at which NECs are now fully or partially participating and the increased amount of funding that NECs have been able to generate outside of CSEF, which would not have been possible if it had not been for a significant improvement of NEC capacity and credibility. In countries such as Togo and Burkina Faso, the government formalised the participation of civil society into education sector planning and review processes. In Ethiopia, PNG and Vanuatu this formalisation was set out in an MOU between the governments and the coalitions to ensure their involvement in official policy processes is secured and facilitated. Some caution is required in such arrangements, in order for coalitions to protect their ability to speak independently of government.

8) Achievement of policy change or institutional reforms at the country level

We have seen in item 4) above, the list of 16 policy areas in which coalitions nominated as their chief area of initiative towards policy change or institutional reform at the country level. However, there are a number of issues to be addressed in relation to assessing achievements in policy change or institutional reform. One is to recognise that civil society is only one player amongst many stakeholders. While at their best NECs can conduct quality research, and organise highly visible

campaigns, mobilise many citizens, and provide credible, affordable policy recommendations, ultimately there are many factors outside of their control that can have an opposing impact on policy settings and institutional reform.

Varying national contexts and enabling environments

The diversity of national contexts in which the 45 NECs find themselves is enormous. There are a wide range of factors that come into play in terms of determining national education policy and budget settings, and the willingness of governments to adopt institutional reform. These factors include:

- the views of the government of the day
- a change of government
- the degree of reliance on external education aid
- the level of global financial stability
- the capacity of the government and its departments to implement and monitor policies
- the extent of corruption
- the degree of political freedom allowed to civil society organisations, including the right to express dissent or alternative views
- the power and influence of other countries or large corporations
- the effectiveness of other stakeholders in lobbying for finite government funds to be prioritised elsewhere
- states of emergency, due to political unrest or natural disasters.

A number of coalitions, such as those in Cambodia, Vietnam, Djibouti, Zimbabwe, Angola and Cape Verde, find they need to tread carefully in terms of their critique of government policy. Here, the strategy is not one of large public protests or marches, but more one of working behind the scenes - alongside governments, gaining trust as a credible voice and through dialogue - asserting the merits of the recommendations put forward, and persisting until there is policy and institutional reform. Similarly, in Mongolia, a country that is still adjusting to the relatively new experience of democracy, there are significant constraints in terms of the type of advocacy that can be undertaken given the limited extent of democratic thinking and the time it takes for notions of consultative, participatory governance to filter through to government officials.

In Malawi the Civil Society Education Coalition had for many years made substantial contributions to ensure increased spending on education, better policies and improved governance in Malawi's education sector. However, in 2010 the government decided to put restrictions on civil liberties through demanding payments for organising demonstrations. It threatened civil society actors including coalition staff and members. This put a halt to coalition activities and several activists were forced to go into hiding. With strong pressure from the international community, including petitions led by GCE and ANCEFA, the Malawian government eventually relented and civil society activism could resume.

Given these range of factors, sometimes advocacy efforts will not be successful, though through no fault of a coalition, and for no lack of competence or determination. Additionally, sometimes strong campaigns and advocacy are needed to stop education budgets being cut further or to prevent deterioration in education policy. However, often these important efforts can be overlooked if one only focuses on counting policy or institutional reform 'gains'.

Attribution of success to a coalition vis-à-vis other stakeholders and dynamics

If there is a range of potentially countervailing factors that can block policy change, then it is also true that if there is success in bringing about a positive policy change or institutional reform, then there is the challenge of fair attribution as to the cause of the change. The following examples

illustrate the two sides of this coin. The coalition FEDH-IPN in Nicaragua had its promising advocacy engagement halted by the appointment of a more hostile leadership in the Education Ministry, so the good work of the coalition reached a tough new barrier. On the other hand, the coalition COESI in Solomon Islands found to its joy that a newly appointed Education Minister was very supportive of their efforts to encourage the government to take adult literacy more seriously, and the Minister asked their advice on how to make this happen. Their previous efforts were clearly boosted by this turn of events.

There are a range of actors and forces that may contribute to positive change that a coalition may have been working towards. These could include:

- the replacement of key government officials leading to a policy re-think
- pressure from donors
- pressure from other internal stakeholders such as political opponents
- the availability of additional funds
- the influence of other governments.

The Independent Evaluator (p.12, 16 draft report) also refers to this ‘attribution gap’ and observes that, with civil society interventions more broadly, it is often more accurate to consider that a CSO has *contributed* to a particular policy change outcome, rather than being the main factor in the change. This is not at all to belittle the contribution, but to place the important work of CSOs into a broader perspective.

Another attribution question raised by the Independent Evaluator (p.11-12 draft report) relates to how much of the capacity development that coalitions are displaying is a result of the CSEF project. The answer, in respect of most coalitions, is that CSEF can take most of the credit. Some of the more established and well-endowed coalitions may have progressed on a trajectory of increased capacity development without CSEF, but even some of these coalitions such as Bangladesh and Cambodia, have commented on the importance of the CSEF project not just in terms of the funds it provided, but in the project infrastructure that enabled their staff to receive training and enable them to be more exposed to developments and good practice of other NECs, and important information about regional and international education platforms, events and campaigns.

Some of the more clear-cut examples of NEC success at education policy, budget and institutional change would include:

- In Sierra Leone and Cambodia, achieving an increased budget allocation for education and better spending through funding for specific programs such as higher teacher salaries
- In Kenya and Bolivia, having specific inputs included in a new Constitution or Education Acts
- In Malawi, Ghana and the Dominican Republic achieving enhanced transparency and better education governance by taking officials to court for misappropriation or pushing for mechanisms for eliminating ghost teachers from payrolls
- In Solomon Islands securing agreement from the government for a specific policy on literacy and in Zambia securing the introduction of a policy framework on teacher training.

In summarising this review of the achievement of the CSEF project in relation to the second key specific objective, the evidence in relation to each of the indicators listed above shows that the project has been very successful in terms of strengthening the capacity of NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reform at the country level.

4.3. Specific Objective 3: Establish credible and independent national civil society education funds at the end of a multiyear programme of action

NCSEF concept & rationale

From the outset GCE recognised the need to ensure that national coalitions became sustainable; that they had the means to secure ongoing funding to maintain their work at the country level beyond the life of the CSEF project. GCE proposed the model of a National Civil Society Education Fund (NCSEF) which as the name suggests, aimed to emulate the global CSEF in that coalitions would be able to draw money from a collective fund which is contributed to by multiple donors, preferably in an on-going arrangement. The model was discussed and developed after a wide ranging consultation of over 500 respondents, including national coalitions and other stakeholders from 20 countries in 2007 and 2008.

The NCSEF structure was to include an independent national board of credible individuals from civil society and other stakeholders, which would make strategic grants to national coalitions and other CSOs based on transparent criteria. The fund would require a small secretariat to facilitate capacity building, monitor grants, ensure accountability and to promote the fund.

Part of the rationale for NCSEFs was to locate new funds for CSO education advocacy activities, rather than compete with existing donor funding of CSO education service delivery. NCSEFs were intended to provide resources for advocacy related CSO activities such as strengthening education CSO coordination, building capacity to engage in LEG and other key government education committees and processes, supporting policy oriented research, tracking education budgets, promoting public dialogue, improving domestic accountability, and designing effective campaigns on EFA.

This model aimed to build on donor commitments to coordinate aid provision and to support stronger civil society participation in policy development. Drawing funds from one collective donor fund was seen as much more efficient and streamlined. It would save CSOs much of the time taken in drawing up and submitting numerous smaller proposals to different donors each, with their own guidelines, proposal requirements and reporting timelines and procedures.

GCE and partner efforts towards setting up NCSEFs

GCE recruited a Project Officer to catalyse and provide support for NCSEF related activity in CSEF. A research process was launched involving 6 pilot countries – Ghana, Senegal, India, the Gambia, Mozambique and Kenya, to help develop a better understanding of the challenges of establishing NCSEFs on the ground and to provide key recommendations for how to proceed in differing national contexts. This included identifying funding sources, strengths and weaknesses of existing funding programs, donor trends and opportunities for CSO education funding, and identifying key risks and concerns of different stakeholders regarding the setting up of an NCSEF.

In addition to the work of the global NCSEF Project Officer, staff of CSEF regional secretariats worked with national coalitions, firstly to explain the key components of the NCSEF model and then to explore local interest from other stakeholders in setting up NCSEFs. Meetings were set up with in-country donors and government officials. For example, meetings were held with Education Sector Working Groups (ESWG) in Cambodia, Kenya, the Gambia and Mozambique and included bilateral donors such as Irish Aid, DFID, DANIDA, USAID and Canadian CIDA, and other donors such as the European Union, the World Bank, the Royal Netherlands (SNV), UNICEF, UNESCO and international NGOs such as ActionAid. The meeting in Mozambique resulted in an agreement to establish a joint NCSEF national task force. Some coalitions such as the Education for All Campaign, the Gambia, also approached the private sector.

Less than enthusiastic responses from stakeholders

While there was some interest in NCSEFs, it soon emerged that there were muted responses to the model from donors, governments, CSOs and other stakeholders. In many countries there was a lack of clear understanding of the concept and differing interpretations about the structure and functioning of an NCSEF. There were also complexities about the legal form an NCSEF would take, and concerns about capacities to manage such a fund and ensure it was transparent and accountable.

Many donors preferred to work within existing funding mechanisms available to CSOs. In some countries there were already multi-thematic funding mechanisms for CSOs such as the GARI in Ghana, to which major donors such as DFID, EU, DANIDA and Netherlands were already committed. This made it more difficult to establish a separate civil society fund for education.

In some countries there wasn't sufficient political support, so coalitions would need to undertake substantial consensus building with no guarantee of success that an NCSEF would be set up. A number of stakeholders wanted to see the national coalitions prove themselves further before considering such a funding arrangement. Despite the statements about the desirability of donor coordination and collaboration, many donors were reluctant to contribute to a single fund, preferring to retain their control over how they disbursed funds in-country. Additionally the global financial crisis added a layer of nervousness and hesitation amongst donors regarding news schemes of this nature.

It became clear that even where there was some interest, the setting up of NCSEFs would take years to become a reality and would involve complex time-consuming consultations and negotiations specific to each country context. This would draw heavily on the limited resources of national coalitions, taking them away from their education advocacy work.

Given the changes in the global financial climate since the NCSEF idea had been developed in 2007 and 2008, it was not feasible to raise enough money so that the coalition not only covered their own activity but so they could begin grant funding to individual CSOs.

Change of Strategy Required

As no single CSEF country was able to set up a functioning, sustainable and independent national fund, it was evident even by the end of 2010 that a different approach was needed. This was accentuated by the uncertainty surrounding future funding for CSEF from GPE, the amount of potential funding and the timing of its availability.

Greater attention was given to assisting NECs in developing country specific resource mobilisation plans that were more attuned to current realities on the ground and more likely to lead to resources sooner. Regional staff worked with coalitions in drawing up their resource mobilisation plans, identifying the most likely donors, mapping their particular education areas of interest, attending meetings with prospective donors, and assisting in writing funding proposals.

In the Asia Pacific this proved to be successful in Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, leading to specific funding support. In Latin America, there was success in Bolivia. In Africa, Kenya's Elimu Yetu Coalition secured substantial funding partly due to consistent engagement mounted by the ANCEFA Nairobi Office. Also, the coalition in Sierra Leone secured core funding from Ibis after consistent consultation, spearheaded by ANCEFA.

In some instances coalitions were able to benefit from the direct resource mobilisation efforts of regional organisations such as ASPBAE, which was able to secure AusAID funding to augment CSEF funds in each of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor Leste. The existence of the CSEF project was an important element in being able to secure these additional funds. Similarly, funding from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID) for 15 Latin American coalitions that were not eligible under the CSEF funding criteria, was substantially facilitated by the existence of the CSEF project, since AECID could see its funds would add value to an existing working mechanism. Currently 10 of these coalitions are implementing projects with AECID funding.

Funds Raised by NECs outside of CSEF

As can be seen from Worksheets B15, B16 and B17, some coalitions were very successful in securing funding additional to CSEF, while on the other hand many struggled. Only \$256,800 was raised over three years by NECs internally. This is an average of only \$1,900 per coalition per year. In fact, only 8 coalitions were able to raise more than \$4,000 internally in 2011, while 11 coalitions raised no internal funds. Funds raised internally constituted only 1.8% of funds raised externally, outside of CSEF.

Of the 43 NECs we have relevant data for, 5 were not able to raise any additional external funds, while an additional 6 NECs raised \$25,000 or less from 2009-2012. In stark contrast, 11 coalitions were able to raise over \$400,000 for the period. While there is not a consistent correlation between the age of a coalition and the ability to secure funds, clearly coalition age is an important factor, since the average age of those unable to raise any funds is 2.8 years while the average age of the top 12 resource mobilisers is 12.25 years.

A further note on attribution

A reasonable question to ask is: what is a fair attribution of achievement due specifically to the CSEF program given that some coalitions were funded by other sources? There are a number of points to highlight. While most of the NECs secured other funds apart from CSEF funds, these tended to be smaller amounts and more often were 'project' funds as distinct from funds for core costs such as staff and overheads. This is where CSEF funding played a crucial role. For the vast majority of coalitions, and especially the younger ones, CSEF provided a bedrock of core funding which increased core capacity of the coalition and also acted as an enabler for other funding to be put to more efficient project use. Additionally none of the other funding sources came with such a commitment to coalition capacity strengthening and a regional and global infrastructure to support project implementation. Finally, CSEF funds enabled capacity strengthening in relation to how to raise other resources to supplement CSEF funding.

Concluding comments on the third objective

If we take the wording of the third specific objective literally, the project did not succeed in *'establishing credible and independent NCSEFs at the end of a multiyear programme of action'*. However, GCE, regional organisations and coalitions themselves can be pleased with their collective ability to respond effectively in light of the disappointing responses from key stakeholders and the prevailing funding environments at the national level and shift the emphasis towards working with NECs to develop immediate and contextually relevant resource mobilisation strategies. This was a good example of the project's collective monitoring and evaluation in action. After actively exploring NCSEF interest and options, and closely monitoring responses, CSEF staff at global and regional levels were able to evaluate and respond to the circumstances and shift the emphasis towards working with NECs to develop immediate and contextually relevant resource mobilisation strategies.

The figures taken together highlight the considerable variability in coalition success in finding in-country resources. However, the data shows some promising trends. Funds raised both internally

and externally outside of CSEF increased in 2011 compared to 2009 and 2010. Internal funds increased by 70% over the 3 year period, while externally generated funds more than doubled from 2009 to 2011.

The higher goal behind this third objective was to assist coalitions in locating additional resources to augment and continue their work. This was achieved in the short term in the majority of cases. However, GCE is aware that other strategies including mechanisms at the international level are needed to ensure the on-going sustainability of NEC education advocacy work.

4.4. Specific Objective 4: Strengthen support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global level

The main aspects of this specific objective are:

- 1) capacity support and coordination initiatives undertaken at the regional and global level for the benefit of NECs
- 2) the strengthening of regional and global civil society advocacy

1) Capacity support and coordination initiatives undertaken at the regional and global level for the benefit of NECs

Indicators include:

- a) Number of capacity support visits by regional and global staff to NECs
- b) The type and range of capacity support provided by regional and global staff to NECs
- c) Number and range of regional and international capacity development events organised by regional and global staff
- d) Feedback from coalitions regarding the added value of capacity support and training from regional and global staff
- e) Training materials provided to coalitions by regional and global staff

a) Number of capacity support visits by regional and global staff to NECs

Drawing from the figures in Worksheet B13, in the 2009– 2011 period the following capacity support visits to coalitions were undertaken by regional and global staff:

Number of visits by the CSEF Regional Secretariat staff			Number of visits by the CSEF Fund Managing Agency staff			Number of visits by the CSEF Global Staff		
2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
46	94	85	2	23	23	4	21	13

Here we see the total number of visits by Regional Secretariat staff over the three years was 225, while the total number of visits by staff from Fund Managing Agencies was 48, and the total number of visits by Global Secretariat staff was 38. The combined number of visits was 311. This is an average of 6.9 visits per coalition for the 45 coalitions over the 3 year period, or over 2.3 visits per coalition per year. It is not surprising that numbers were much lower in 2009, since most of the regional capacity support staff were employed in the latter half of the year, some only in the last months of the year. The number of visits increased in the final two years as the program got into full swing.

One constraint to more visits was the limited travel budgets of regional and global staff, while another factor was the small number of capacity support staff in relation to the number of

coalitions, especially in Africa. Nonetheless, the figures show a substantial level of capacity support from regional and global staff which was further added to by face to face meetings with NEC representatives at regional and international events, and regular email, phone and skype contact, especially by regional secretariat staff.

b) Type and range of capacity support provided by regional and global staff to NECs

The type and range of capacity support varied considerably from coalition to coalition, depending on the stage of development of the coalition, their size, degree of stability, context and the resources at their disposal.

New Coalitions

As we have seen, 9 coalitions were assisted to become established in the 2009-2011 period. This required regional staff to undertake reconnaissance visits to those countries, and identify the key CSOs most committed and involved in education, especially education policy change. Representatives of these organisations and other stakeholders were brought together to discuss the level of interest in forming a national education coalition. Regional staff liaised with the CSO leaders tasked with moving the process forward and organising key meetings. In these meetings regional staff would lead discussions on the international and regional context and education architecture, information about GCE, GPE, CSEF, regional organisations, and the growing number and strength of national education coalitions in many countries around the world.

Regional staff provided these newly formed NECs with support and advice in relation to basic institution building. This included drawing up a constitution, electing a representative board, selecting and training staff, setting up offices, establishing financial and administrative systems, ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, helping coalition members work together and create opportunities to participate and build a sense of collective ownership and commitment. The focus of early training was on the new coalition staff and board members, to ensure they fully understood their responsibilities and obligations and were equipped to carry out their roles.

All coalitions

Some existing coalitions also needed capacity support in these areas, especially where there had been a substantial turnover of staff and / or board members in a short period of time. Additionally, a significant part of regional secretariat staff support went into assisting coalitions in writing their proposals and developing their budgets, so that they could be reviewed by the Regional Funding Committees. Since a number of coalitions had little previous experience in managing the amounts available through CSEF, it was important to ensure skills were developed in project and financial management.

Apart from the range of capacities newly formed coalitions require in getting started, it was not too long before they joined the established coalitions in needing capacity support to develop skills in undertaking research, policy analysis, budget tracking, developing advocacy strategies, building alliances and networks, lobbying, engaging government and donor representatives, and mobilising resources. Regional and global staff provided capacity support in all of these areas through a range of means. This included making presentations, facilitating sessions at coalition meetings, developing training agendas and assisting with bringing in relevant resource people, accompanying coalition leaders to meetings with government and donor officials, the media, and other important stakeholders, and providing information and training resource materials.

Regional and global work behind the scenes

Behind the scenes, global and regional staff worked to set up the regional and global CSEF governance infrastructure, developed financial and narrative reporting formats and guidelines, as

well as monitoring and evaluation tools for NECs. Additionally, time was spent in developing strategies to assist coalitions in coping with the serious delays in funding, and the lack of funding certainty experienced a number of times through the life of the CSEF project.

Fund Managing Agencies provided capacity support through visits to coalitions, and inputs at regional workshops, working with NECs to ensure they understood the financial reporting requirements and developed the necessary financial management skills to effectively utilise the funds and efficiently report on expenditures against budgets. Face to face contact was augmented by regular emails with guidelines, reminders to send reports, and feedback offered on financial reports, to help get them in order before the next tranche of funds was able to be released. Augmented by financial management training provided by regional secretariat staff, these efforts paid dividends, with a clear improvement in the quality and timeliness of submission of financial reports from NECs in the latter part of the CSEF project.

Regional Funding Committees also played a valuable role in providing capacity support to NECs. Funding Committee meetings were often held in a country of a CSEF recipient coalition, and special sessions would be organised for the Funding Committee members to meet the NEC board, staff and some of the members of the host coalition to gain a deeper appreciation of the context and work. These exchanges also gave coalitions a sense of the broader regional and global context of CSO education advocacy work. Funding Committee members gave generously of their volunteer time in appraising coalition proposals, deciding on allocations per coalition and making suggestions on how to improve project designs and budget allocations. The benefit of these efforts was a clear improvement in the quality of coalition proposals in the second year of the project.

Regional Coordination Committees in the Asia Pacific and African regions consisted of the key management stakeholders, the Chair of the Funding Committee, the head of the Regional Secretariat, the head of the Fund Managing Agency, the CSEF Global Coordinator and the CSEF Regional Coordinator. These committees played an important role in providing effective communication and coordination between the various regional CSEF governance mechanisms and the global secretariat, and worked to ensure orderly and timely decisions were made and communicated to NECs. As Worksheet B25 indicates, there were 18 face to face funding committee or coordination committee meetings from 2009 to the first part of 2012. Given budget constraints, these were supplemented by meetings conducted by skype.

Decisions made by regional coordination committees included requests by coalitions to shift funds from one of their budget lines to another and agreeing to adjust the reporting timeline in light of frequent delays in funding. They also determined how to deal with a coalition that hadn't reported fully or accurately on their expenditures, and decided on how to deal with a coalition where there was internal conflict or governance concerns.

Global Secretariat staff coordinated CSEF at the global level, including reporting to the GCE Board, liaising with the GPE Secretariat, and ensuring the submission of overall CSEF financial and narrative reports. The Global Secretariat participated in each of the regional coordinating bodies, and developed a range of reporting and monitoring formats, guidelines and tools. They visited some NECs and provided valuable input in relation to advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilisation, including exploring possibilities for a national civil society education fund (NCSEF). They also made frequent visits to the regional secretariats and fund manager offices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

GCE and the regional management organisations ensured that monitoring and evaluation was a substantial and integral component of the CSEF project at the national, regional and global levels.

The monitoring and evaluation strategy was multi-level and multifaceted, including collecting NEC baseline data, setting detailed application forms, funding committee proposal appraisal processes, NEC quarterly financial reporting, half yearly narrative reporting, results frameworks, annual audits, visits by global and regional staff, regional and global workshops and trainings, regional and global financial and narrative reports, and project completion reports.

National level monitoring and evaluation

At the national level, NECs were requested to provide initial baseline information about their coalition in order to measure progress over the life of the project. The global secretariat in consultation with the regional staff developed a detailed application form that all NECs were required to fill out. This included information about country context, education policy context, coalition membership and history. It also included requiring NECs to outline how they were going to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of their project implementation. The application form required NECs to develop a log frame that linked objectives to strategies, activities, indicators and expected outcomes. A timeline and detailed budget was also required. The budget activity numbering was required to match the numbering of activities in the log frame. NEC proposals also needed to indicate the degree of consultation amongst members in preparing the proposal and the signatures of board members was required before it could be submitted.

CSEF regional staff worked with their assigned coalitions to ensure the proposals were in good order ahead of their appraisal at the regional funding committee meetings. Funding committee members provided feedback to further improve the proposals. While the application form was demanding, it set up many NECs well to begin with a coherent plan and program of work, and enabled regional funding committees to make considered decisions and ensure quality monitoring and evaluation was possible.

NECs were required to submit quarterly financial reports, and although some coalitions commented that this was onerous, the decision by global and regional management was that quarterly financial reporting was an important discipline to enable frequent tracking of expenditure and a faster response time if a particular NEC's quarterly report showed any cause for concern, such as irregular or unapproved spending, or if an NEC was having difficulty in submitting their report on time.

CSEF regional secretariats and fund managing agencies invested significant time training NEC staff, especially coordinators and finance officers, in how to keep their financial records and to report according to the formats that CSEF developed. Many hours were spent sitting alongside finance officers and liaising with them over email, skype and phone to assist them in getting their financial reports in order. This investment of time and effort paid dividends as there was a distinct improvement over time regarding the quality and timeliness of NEC financial reports. In the Asia Pacific region an additional measure of the regional funding committee was the requirement of an NEC quarterly internal audit which involved three members of the NEC Board reviewing the financial report, offering comments, and signing that they approved it to be sent to the fund manager. While not popular initially with some NECs, once they got into the habit of undertaking the internal audits, there was recognition from NECs of its value.

NEC narrative reports were initially also set as a quarterly requirement in some regions, however there was agreement that this was too frequent, and so was adjusted to 6 monthly narrative reporting. This was an example of the CSEF management monitoring its systems and adjusting according them to feedback and whether they were working effectively.

As mentioned earlier, NECs received training in monitoring and evaluation at regional and global workshops and from staff during visits and email interaction. While other measures are important,

there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings to ensure effective monitoring. This was an important feature of the CSEF project design.

Regional level monitoring and evaluation

Apart from measures taken by regional management in relation to monitoring and evaluating NEC project progress, the CSEF design ensured that regional organisations also were subject to monitoring and evaluation. Regional secretariats and fund managers were required to submit quarterly financial reports, half yearly narrative reports and a project completion report. The narrative reports required summaries of NEC progress but also information about the activities of regional organisations, such as the number of staff visits, the number of regional events, and the number of funding committee meetings, and any issues arising that require special attention. Additionally, minutes were kept of regional funding committee and regional coordination committee meetings, and participants filled out evaluations forms relating to regional and global events they attended. Regional staff performance appraisals were also conducted.

The CSEF Global Coordinator was able to monitor first-hand the progress and performance of respective regional mechanisms since he and other global staff attended regional funding committee meetings and met separately with the regional secretariat and fund managing agency staff to review progress and any issues arising at the regional level. Additionally the Global Coordinator was a member of the Regional Coordination Committees and so was able to monitor closely the issues that arose.

Global level monitoring and evaluation

At the global level, the CSEF Global Coordinator reported to the GCE Global Coordinator, who reviewed the performance of global CSEF staff. The GCE Global Coordinator in turn reported to the GCE Board. It was the responsibility of the global secretariat to synthesise the multitude of reports from the regions and the results frameworks from the coalitions, and produce the global reports. Half yearly global narrative and financial reports were submitted to the GPE Secretariat.

Global secretariat staff also organised global level events attended by regional and national level representatives, that incorporated monitoring and evaluation dimensions. These are referred to in item c) below. This Closing Report and its attached worksheets is a product of substantive records of performance that was garnered through the project's monitoring and evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

The importance of well-considered and designed monitoring and evaluation tools

One important lesson to learn for any future CSEF style project is the need to ensure well-considered and designed monitoring and evaluation tools. It is not surprising for such a new and large project that it took some time to work out what sort of information should be sought and recorded at the different levels. Various forms and revisions of forms were used in different regions at different times, and this made it difficult to ensure the same information was collected from all NECs and regions.

More could be done in future to streamline the number of forms, ensure consistency and avoid the duplication of questions. Questions in such forms need to be as clear as possible to avoid misinterpretation, so that we are better able to 'compare apples with apples'. An additional lesson is the importance of good quality translation of key documents and forms to facilitate clear understanding, and also the value of translating NEC reports into English once received, to facilitate an effective, centralised and progressive recording and processing of data. This in turn will make the task of producing global reports much more efficient.

Troubleshooting

Another important role played by regional and global staff was that of troubleshooting in relation to governance and financial management problems with a small number of coalitions. This required a substantial investment in time to liaise in a more concerted way with the coalitions in question, undertake visits, interview the key people involved, ascertain the extent of the problem, and ways of bringing it to a resolution. This was the case with countries such as Lesotho and Cameroon. Sometimes the CSEF Global Coordinator was called upon to make a visit and play a mediating role, as was required in India.

Global and regional staff would sometimes undertake a joint field visit to ascertain the problem and assist in finding solutions, as in the case of Nigeria and Angola. In other situations the Regional Fund Manager, sometimes accompanied by the Global Fund Manager or Regional Secretariat staff would make a visit to discuss financial management and advise on action required, as in the case of Sri Lanka and Liberia. Some of this work required a delicate balance between maintaining the objective of supporting the coalitions, but also being firm in relation to issues of financial management and good governance.

It is true to say that a number of coalitions would not have been able to start effectively, or would not have survived if it wasn't for the capacity support efforts of CSEF regional and global staff and the support mechanisms that were put in place.

c) Number and range of regional and international capacity development events organised by regional and global staff

Apart from in-country capacity support visits, CSEF regional and global secretariats organised numerous sub-regional, regional and international events that built the knowledge and capacities of NEC staff and Board members. As can be seen from the list in Worksheet B25, from 2009 to the first quarter of 2012, 26 regional or sub regional CSEF events were organised involving NEC representatives. For example, in Africa, ANCEFA held a series of sub-regional training workshops on budget tracking, public expenditure monitoring, and developing education financing campaigns.

In Latin America, CLADE had a strong focus on the right to education in its regional and sub-regional meetings. In the Asia Pacific, ASPBAE looked at opportunities for national advocacies to link with regional and international campaigns and platforms, building on the work in this area from the previous Real World Strategies project. Apart from addressing a range of key education policy and thematic issues, these events also included coalitions sharing their best strategies for advocacy, as well as lessons learned in building coalition constituencies. Sessions were also held on coalition financial management and ensuring all coalitions understood the reporting requirements of CSEF.

In addition to these events, regional organisations held events with funds sourced elsewhere with which they consciously included coalition representatives to help build NEC knowledge and capacities. For example, in April 2011, ASPBAE organised regional workshops on issues such as understanding public-private partnerships, the privatisation of education, official development assistance in education, and benchmarks for quality adult education. Officials from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank participated on panel discussions.

The CSEF Global Secretariat also organised a number of events from 2009 to early 2012 that brought together representatives from coalitions and regional organisations from the different regions. The Global Secretariat organised a meeting in London in March 2010 to discuss ways in which we could collectively ensure effective complementarity between the RWS program that was winding up and the CSEF program that was just gathering momentum. All stakeholders were keen to ensure we

maximised the gains and opportunities made from RWS and fed them into CSEF planning. A second objective was to review CSEF monitoring and evaluation, and to clarify reporting requirements.

A larger global meeting of the CSEF national coalitions and regional partners was held in Paris, to coincide with the GCE World Assembly in February 2011. Sessions focused on sharing good examples of CSO participation in national policy spaces, discussing strategies for financial sustainability, and reviewing CSEF monitoring and evaluation progress.

A more recent meeting was organised by GCE global staff in London, September 2012 involving regional and NEC representatives, to reflect on CSEF Phase one and a draft of the independent evaluation which had just been released. Though funded by AusAID it provided an important inter-regional reflection on the progress made on CSEF and the improvements that could be made to the project in the future.

Regional and sub-regional level advocacy

The importance of regional and sub-regional level advocacy, and collaboration between regional organisations and NECs in that advocacy, can be seen in the following examples.

In Latin America, in September 2010, CLADE worked with the national coalitions at the International Civil Society Forum (FISC), to develop advocacy actions within the framework of the Ibero-American Education Congress and at the meeting of Ibero-American Education Ministers, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This regional advocacy aimed to change the 'Education Goals 2021' proposed by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OIE). Coalitions contacted the coordinating actors in the decision-making process and exerted pressure so that a rights-based perspective was taken up in an integral way. The Secretary General of the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OIE), Álvaro Marchesi also committed to create a specific goal to mainstream gender in education and formally invited CLADE to participate in the Steering Committee of the 'Goals 2021'.

In Africa, a Pan African Regional Policy Forum on 'Effective Monitoring and Advocacy for the Right to Education in Africa' was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in September, 2011. It was organized by ANCEFA in collaboration with Basic Education Network (BEN)-Ethiopia, and The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) in collaboration with the African Union (AU) Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) Department and cooperating partners. Participants included government representatives from ministries of education from six countries, Ethiopia, Botswana, Namibia, Kenya, Guinea Bissau and Swaziland. Also participating were representatives of the African Union Education Division of the HRST Department, and education desks of ECOWAS; NECs and international NGOs, and funding agencies.

The policy forum was officially opened by the Ethiopian State Minister of Higher Education, H.E Dr Kaba Urgessa. It focused on reviewing progress and challenges in implementation of the Dakar framework and the African Union Second Education Decade. The forum also identified broad education policy priority areas for the period beyond 2015 and developed strategies for enhancing monitoring and advocacy.

In the Asia Pacific Region, ASPBAE organised a South Asia Coalition Advocacy Planning Meeting in April 2011 attended by NECs from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The meeting coordinated input into the UNESCO-led End of Decade Notes (EDN) process, and developed plans to follow up advocacy regarding the commitments made in the 2009 South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Education Ministers' Forum, where ASPBAE and NECs actively contributed to the list of the final commitments.

A similar meeting, also in April 2011, was organised by ASPBAE for South East Asian coalitions Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Timor Leste. At this meeting ASPBAE worked with the coalitions to prepare their inputs into the UNESCO-led End of Decade Notes and also planned a campaign to influence the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) processes for the ASEAN Summit in 2011.

d) Feedback from coalitions regarding the added value of capacity support and training from regional and global staff

Feedback to regional and global staff from the staff and board members of coalitions was provided through NEC narrative reports, emails and at face to face meetings. Written evidence can also be found in the evaluations filled out by NEC participants at the end of regional and international events. This feedback indicates a high level of appreciation of the capacity support provided by the regional and global CSEF funded staff.

What is also clear is that coalitions highly value regional and international opportunities to meet, engage in peer learning, share best practice, analyse challenges and plan future strategies, and they have requested more of them. NEC participants also commented on the value of regional and global staff bringing updates on regional and international education platforms and policy dialogue spaces to inform national coalition planning. A frequent comment was that they gained increased knowledge of the broader regional and international dimensions of the education issues they face in their home countries, and the potential there is for civil society to mobilise and engage at multiple levels: national, regional and international.

Regional and global secretariat staff were very conscious of the importance of respecting the priorities of coalitions, while at the same time providing them with information about regional and international campaigns and actions that they could choose to be part of. For some coalitions the regional or international campaigns were already aligned with their priorities, whereas other coalitions faced the challenge of deciding which of the international campaigns they could participate in while still progressing on some of their other priorities.

An additional outcome from sub-regional and regional events was that they facilitated separate coalition-to-coalition collaboration. For example, delegations from NCEN, Nepal and VEPAC, Vanuatu organised visits to CAMPE, Bangladesh to learn about their coalition and programs, since CAMPE is much larger and more established. In other examples, coalition leaders from Zambia and Malawi supported Lesotho to undertake an organisational review and institutional strengthening process focusing on project management and proposal development. Also, a researcher from COESI, Solomon Islands with skills in organising community surveys, travelled to Vanuatu to lead a survey training workshop for VEPAC.

There has also been encouraging collaboration between NECs funded by CSEF and those funded by AECID in Latin America. For example, the coalitions in the Andean region (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela) organised a sub-regional seminar to discuss linkages between the right to education and the 'living well' paradigm, and to create indicators of quality of education based on this paradigm.

e) Training and resource materials provided to coalitions by regional and global staff

Numerous training materials were provided to coalitions to assist with capacity support and advocacy. These were provided either at face-to-face meetings or sent electronically.

Materials included:

- Reports on education issues released by GCE and various of its member organisations, for example:
 - *'Make it Right for Girls'*, co-authored by GCE and RESULTS, August 2011;
 - *'World Strategies for Education for All by 2015'*, RWS Global Case Book, GCE 2010
 - *'Education Rights: A Guide for Practitioners and Activists'*, 2007, GCE and ActionAid International
 - *'Writing the Wrongs: International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy'*, (originally 2005 and re-released to follow up on the 2009 GAW on Youth and Adult Literacy) , GCE and ActionAid International.
 - *'The Quality Resource Pack'*, 2010, GCE
- Substantial campaign materials around Global Action Week each year
 - 2011: *'It's a Right! Make it Right! Education for Women and Girls Now!'* – The Big Story
 - 2010: *'1GOAL Education For All: Financing Quality Public Education'* – Big Book
 - 2009: *'The Big Read: Youth and Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning'*

- Reports, toolkits, DVDs and other publications produced or drawn on by regional organisations, for example:

Latin America

- *'Education is a human right – against discrimination in education'*, CLADE, Sept 2010
- *'The funding of public education for all - reflections on the context of Latin America and the Caribbean'*, José Marcelino de Rezende Pinto / CLADE, March 2010
- *'The right to education of persons with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean'*, CLADE and Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), November 2009
- *'The Privatization of Education: Chilean Case Study'* Marco Kremerman / CLADE, May 2008

Africa

- *'Investing in Education: A pathway to development'*, The African Report on Child Wellbeing, The African Child Policy Forum, 2011
- *'Advocacy As An Imperative For CSOs In Education & Development: Some Basics'* Andiwo Obondoh, June 2008
- *'Public Expenditure Monitoring In Education Sector: A Practical Manual For Tracking Education Budgets In Africa'*, Andiwo Obondoh for ANCEFA, 2005
- *'Managing Our Schools Today: A Practical Guide on Participatory School Governance'*, A manual for training and advocacy work by Pamoja: Africa REFLECT Network and ANCEFA, Jan 2005

Asia Pacific

- *'Adventures in Advocacy: Real World Strategies for Education in Asia'*, ASPBAE, 2011
- *'Follow the Budget Trail: A Guide for Civil Society'*, ASPBAE, 2010
- *'Gender Equality and Education: A Report Card on South Asia'*, ASPBAE and UNGEI, 2010
- *'Reversing Education Disadvantage: Time for All to Act'*, Education Watch Series, ASPBAE, 2007

In summary, as detailed throughout this section, there is a great deal of evidence to demonstrate that a high quality and range of capacity support and coordination was undertaken at the regional and global level, through the various CSEF mechanisms, organisations and staff for the benefit of NECs.

2) The strengthening of regional and global civil society advocacy

An important outcome of the CSEF project is that through it, regional and global education civil society advocacy was also strengthened. Regional and global capacities were built by virtue of the roles undertaken through the CSEF mechanisms, and due to the increased connection with NECs that the CSEF program provided.

The three regional secretariats, ASPBAE, CLADE and ANCEFA now have a much deeper, richer set of skills and experience in what it takes to provide capacity support to national coalitions, ranging from basic institutional strengthening abilities to skills development in research, campaigns and advocacy, building networks and raising resources. Additionally, the three regional fund managers, Action Aid in Latin America, Oxfam in Africa, and Education International in the Asia Pacific, have developed enhanced skills in managing the disbursement of funds to a broad range of coalitions, providing them with guidance to improve their financial management, and in assessing their financial reports.

GCE as the CSEF Global Secretariat has also been strengthened in relation to its skills in managing a large and complex global program and its finances. This has involved setting up coordination mechanisms, liaising with all the stakeholders, negotiating contracts, writing global level reports, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, improving the communication of outcomes, and expanding international lobbying on behalf of education CSOs.

The work of the *Extra Capacity Building* projects should be noted here as well (fuller details are available through the interim CSEF reports and the CSEF closing financial report). This was conceived when the Rome FTI Board meeting in November 2009 allocated the second and third years funding to CSEF but instructed the GCE that the time frame to spend this full allocation had been shortened by nine months due to the closure date of the EPDF fund. Despite several requests, it was made clear that no extension could be considered so in January 2010 the GCE Board reallocated part of the final year's funding. This included the establishment of some Extra Capacity Building projects – strengthening financial management capacity, pilot projects on NCSEF, education financing workshops and to support the 1GOAL campaign in low income countries.

In the first part of 2010 these projects made a significant impact and helped contribute to the results of the CSEF project noted in this report. However later in 2010 it transpired that a no cost extension was now a feasible option as the EPDF closure had been extended for other reasons. This meant that the remaining Extra Capacity Projects were frozen as the funds need to be reallocated back to their original purpose – providing resources for the national coalitions in the later stages of 2011 and at the regional/ global level in the first part of 2012.

Enhanced flow of information

The CSEF project also provided an enhanced flow of information between national, regional and global education CSOs. GCE's global policy positions were enriched by being able to draw more extensively from experiences on the ground. Reciprocally, NECs are now much more informed of the regional and global education architecture, developments, platforms and events. There is also an increased linking of websites between national, regional and global organisations.

As mentioned in section 3.2, GCE and the regional organisations have now developed DVDs, booklets and brochures that tell some of the stories of the work of NECs through the CSEF project period; stories of good practice and lessons learned. This includes:

- A 10 minute DVD produced by GCE entitled '*Right to Education: Making it Happen*'
- A GCE brochure entitled '*Civil Society Advocacy: Good Practice and Case Studies*' showcasing achievements of African coalitions Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique

- A compendium produced by ASPBAE entitled *'Persuading Powers: Stories from Education Coalitions in the Asia Pacific'*, consisting of 24 stories of lessons learned and good practice of national coalitions during the CSEF funded period of 2009-2011.
- A 10 minute DVD also produced by ASPBAE by the same name as the compendium.
- A small compendium of stories from regional and national education advocacy in Latin America, which will be ready for the November 2012 GPE Board meeting.
- In Africa, ANCEFA is in the process of producing a case study compilation, to demonstrate thematic good practice and learning from the CSEF. This publication will also be ready for the GPE Board meeting in November 2012.
- Additionally GCE and the regional organisations carry stories and updates on the experiences of advocacy and NEC institutional strengthening in their newsletters and on their websites.

These materials are now being used for informing stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels, as well as for resource mobilisation.

Linkages with International NGOs (INGOs)

At the regional level, INGOs play the important role of being Fund Managers in two of the regions: Oxfam in Africa, and ActionAid in Latin America. INGO staff are also involved in Regional Funding Committees, by virtue of their individual regional knowledge and expertise. In the Asia Pacific and Africa, staff from each of Oxfam and ActionAid participate on the Funding Committee, while in Latin America ActionAid Americas and Ayuda en Acción are members. In Africa the Open Society Foundation (OSF) was also involved.

At the global level, INGOs are represented on the GCE Board and have been very pro-active in helping secure CSEF funding in the first place and then in helping to steer it over the last 3 years. GCE is looking at ways of increasing the involvement of additional INGOs in a follow-up project to CSEF.

Linkages between NGOs and teacher organisations

The linkages between NGOs and teacher organisations have also been enhanced at national, regional and global levels through the CSEF project. As mentioned earlier, 41 out of 42 reporting coalitions have a teachers' organisation as a member, and at least 9 NECs have organised an advocacy initiative on a teacher related issue such as teacher numbers and training, teachers' conditions, and teachers for children with special needs. At the regional level, Education International's Asia Pacific office has played the role of Regional Fund Manager. Due to ASPBAE's role as the Regional Secretariat, the two organisations are represented on the Regional Funding Committee and the Regional Coordination Committee, and as a result have had a substantially increased level of interaction, needing to collaborate or exchange on CSEF governance matters in the region on an almost weekly basis. There has been a greater appreciation of the respective work cultures and governance structures of the two organisations. This is also the case for Africa, where the Chair of the Funding Committee is from Education International.

Globally, the link between GCE and teacher organisations was already strong, with Education International a key and founding member of GCE and strongly represented on the GCE Board. However, the whole process of lobbying for the CSEF project and deciding on its governance mechanisms and interacting with the GPE Board and Secretariat has strengthened the collaboration.

GCE strengthened in undertaking global civil society advocacy leadership

While GCE's capacity was evident and growing beforehand, the CSEF project has contributed to an increased capacity, presence and influence. An important part of this leadership is the ability to mobilise action at national, regional and global levels.

One recent campaign that demonstrates this enhanced capacity during the CSEF project period was the 'Fund the Future' campaign, initiated by GCE and other CSOs, and coordinated by GCE. It was launched in the lead up to GPE's funds replenishment conference in Copenhagen in November 2011. The campaign had a 'northern' and 'southern' dimension and was organised in a fairly short time period given the notice of the Copenhagen conference itself. While northern coalitions lobbied donor governments to give generously to the replenishment, the global and regional CSEF staff encouraged national coalitions to urge their governments to increase funding especially in relation to ensuring quality education, girls' education and learning outcomes.

Some of the more active CSEF coalitions were from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi and Mongolia. A number of coalition representatives also attended the replenishment event in Copenhagen where they made presentations and held discussions with their Ministers and development partners. A list of events that GCE has organised or participated in at the global level can be found in Worksheet B25.

To summarise, the CSEF project clearly achieved its fourth specific objective, with indicators showing significant strengthening of support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global levels, in terms of quality, quantity and range. This enhanced capacity has proved to be very beneficial, not only for NECs but also for GCE and its regional partners as a result of the CSEF project.

Concluding comments on achieving the four specific objectives

In reviewing the outcomes in relation to indicators for the four key specific objectives described in detail in Section 4, it is evident that the CSEF project has been very successful. It has succeeded in establishing broad based and democratically run National Education Coalitions (NECs). It has succeeded in strengthening the capacity of NECs to advocate for policy change and institutional reforms at country the level. It has strengthened support and coordination of civil society advocacy at regional and global levels. As such objectives 1, 2 and 4 have been achieved.

In relation to objective 3, as mentioned earlier, if taken literally, the project did not succeed in establishing credible and independent NCSEFs at the end of a multiyear programme of action. However, the broader objective here was to assist coalitions in locating additional resources to augment and continue their work. The indicators show that the CSEF project significantly assisted coalitions in their capacity to mobilise resources outside of the project, with a clear growth in income over the period. This is an important achievement. However, GCE will continue to lobby at the international level for mechanisms to ensure the on-going sustainability of NEC education advocacy work.

5. Lessons Learned

There is much to learn from the three years' experience of the CSEF project in terms of what worked well and what could be adjusted to enable future CSO education advocacy engagement to be more efficient and effective. Some lessons have been mentioned in different points in this report. However, some of the larger lessons are as follows:

1. More timely transfer of funds and a greater certainty of funding

Despite the clear success of the CSEF project in achieving its objectives, the outcomes and impact of the project would have been even more impressive had it not been for the serious delays in the transfer of funds from the start, and the constant uncertainty surrounding funding for each year of the project.

From the outset there were delays in the transfer of funds from the EPDF to GCE due to the delayed signing of the contract by the World Bank. Many months of 2009 passed before the funds were finally sent at the end of September 2009 – 10 months after the Oslo FTI Board decision. This meant that coalitions did not receive their funds until November 2009. This created significant problems for NECs which developed proposals that assumed a much earlier starting time in 2009. The hiring of staff had to be delayed, and some staff already employed had to survive without a salary. Additionally many project events needed to be deferred to 2010. A 12 month program of work now had to fit into 7 months to allow for the time needed to report at the end of June 2010. Coalitions were being asked to submit reports on project activities for a 6 month period when they only had the funds for 2 months.

The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that only 1 year of funding was guaranteed at a time, so coalitions and also regional and global CSEF staff had no security that their jobs would continue, in the first instance beyond the end June 2010. This made it difficult for coalitions to recruit good staff, since prospective employees would understandably not want to risk leaving an existing job for a job lasting less than a year and with no guarantee of further funding.

The delays in the transfer of funds and the uncertainty of further funding continued into the second year of the project. Due to the deadline date for the EPDF fund, GCE was given a firm deadline to complete the CSEF project by June 2011, with no guarantee of funding beyond this point under a new mechanism. However just under a year later (once the plans had been adjusted) it transpired that an extension to the EPDF deadline was possible and indeed was planned. This extension was in limbo for a number of months before formal approval was given in May 2011. This meant the CSEF project had much less time to spend three years of funding, and faced the challenge of substantial under-spending through no fault of the project managers. There was concern that this would unfairly be interpreted as 'coalitions not having the capacity to spend the funds'.

These delays and uncertainties added to the volume of work at every level. Extra and urgent meetings and Skype calls needed to be organised and interim decisions needed to be made until further advice was received from the EPDF/GPE Board. It created challenges in managing funds disbursement in a way that minimised disruption to coalitions, while at the same time ensuring good accountability of funds already disbursed. Coalition reporting timelines needed to be changed and changed again. Some coalitions lost good capable staff due to the lack of job security and delays in receiving salaries. This meant that a whole program of capacity support needed to begin again with their replacements. This was time and effort that could have been spent on more advanced capacity support and training if previous staff had been able to stay on.

A substantial lesson to be learned is that in order to enable CSOs to function even more effectively and efficiently at each level, funding needs to be guaranteed for multiple years, and needs to be released in a predictable, timely manner.

2. NEC capacity development is an on-going process and is greatly enhanced by regional and global support

Another key lesson learned through the CSEF project is that capacity development is an on-going process, not just something that is required at the front end of a project, to get coalitions up and running. As with most organisations, maintaining and advancing a national coalition is more difficult than establishing one. The nature of the capacity support required adjusts to match each coalition's evolving needs according to its stage of development and as it responds to changing circumstances. Section 4.2.4 analysed in some detail the type and extent of capacity support provided from the regional and global organisations, and section 4.2.2 describes the strengthened NEC capacity as a result of that support.

As NECs gain in credibility and capacity, even more demands will be placed upon them, such as invitations to participate in an increasing number of government technical working groups and to provide inputs into a wider range of education policy areas. This means more members or staff need to be trained to become sufficiently knowledgeable to participate effectively. Here coalitions need to hone their skills of discernment to assess which committees are strategically the most important.

Sometimes success can bring further challenges. For example, as NEC staff skills and knowledge increase, staff become more sought after by other organisations. There have been instances where staff have been 'head-hunted' by donors that can pay higher salaries (for example Timor Leste) or governments that can offer greater job security (for example, Vanuatu). The loss of skills, knowledge, institutional memory and experience is perhaps more keenly felt in the smaller coalitions, which are more in need of external capacity support to rebuild. We have also seen that even with established coalitions, there can be a significant turnover of key personnel or a crisis of governance or a conflict at the staff-board level that may require external support or mediation. These are examples of where a regional and global capacity support infrastructure has been such a valuable asset. This was foreseen in the design of the CSEF project and has been vindicated by the results that have been achieved.

3. Civil society education advocacy is more effective when there is collaboration between the national, regional and global levels.

A lesson that has been reinforced by the CSEF experience is that civil society education advocacy is more effective when there is collaboration between the national, regional and global levels. In an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing world, this is becoming even more apparent. Decisions made at global and regional levels can have a substantial impact at the national level. The policy environment at both national and international levels can change very quickly, for example due to factors such as a global financial crisis, a disaster or conflict, a change of government, or changes in personnel of key stakeholders at the different levels. New technologies are changing the way campaigns can be conducted.

These changes require a constant recalibration of advocacy strategies. Increasing collaboration is required that links in-country efforts with regional and global action. In this way up-to-date information about what is happening in-country can feed into regional and global CSO policy analysis and advocacy, and reciprocally, knowledge of global and regional developments can be made available to coalitions to strengthen their in-country advocacy. For civil society to maximise its contribution to education policy change, it needs to secure the resources and develop the capacities to engage at all three levels.

4. Sound project management and governance is essential

In terms of scale of funds and breadth of coverage for civil society education advocacy, the CSEF project has been the largest to date, so its management and governance mechanisms required careful consideration. While GCE drew on the experience of the previous largest international multi-level projects such as the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) and the Real World Strategies (RWS) project, some aspects were newly developed for CSEF, such as the three-fold regional mechanism of a regional funding committee, a regional secretariat and a regional fund managing agency. GCE established these management and governance mechanisms with the intention of ensuring effective accountability, transparency in decision making, and to avoid conflicts of interest at the national, regional and global levels.

At the national level, NECs were strongly encouraged to develop a broad-based membership and participatory, democratic and transparent decision making processes. As we have seen from the analysis in section 4.2.1, coalitions for the most part were very successful in achieving this. In relation to regional level capacity to effectively monitor NECs governance, a lesson for the future is that it is important to ensure regional organisations are sufficiently resourced to play this role, along with their broader capacity support role. The African region faced the biggest challenge in this regard given the number of coalitions in relation to the number of regional staff.

At the regional level, the three-fold mechanism took some time for all stakeholders to get used to, but once it was up and running and protocols were established regarding the boundaries of the respective roles, there was a collective sense that it worked quite well. In the African and Asia Pacific regions, the Regional Coordination Committee was an additional or fourth mechanism, and served as a valuable management mechanism for the more day-to-day decisions.

The Independent Evaluation Report (p.14) raised the question of the comparative advantage of including regional partners in the management of CSEF. There was concern that some coalitions began to view the regional organisations as donors rather than as capacity support CSOs, since they were participating in decisions on the allocation of funds to NECs, by being on the regional funding committees.

While there may have been some confusion, much of this was a broader confusion due to the fact that the CSEF management structure was complex and new, and it needed to be explained on multiple occasions to the coalitions. However, the main feedback from the coalitions was that they were pleased that the regional organisations were involved on the regional funding committees because they trusted that the regional organisations would be better informed than other stakeholders about the situation of each particular coalition, by virtue of their close capacity support role, and that they would take the coalitions' best interests into the funding committee deliberations.

NECs were cognisant that in the CSEF structure, there were a number of other stakeholders on the regional funding committees and that these different stakeholders acted as a counter-balance to each other when decisions were made. Because most NECs were also members of regional organisations such as ANCEFA, CLADE and ASPBAE, there was an even greater sense of confidence that these organisations would not favour one coalition over another, and would make decisions based on fairness and an agreed set of criteria.

To leave the regional organisations out of the governance of the CSEF project raises the question of who would be better placed to play this role. There are few with the appropriate skills and knowledge that are more 'independent'. In the Asia Pacific region for example, it was a challenge to

find competent individuals willing and able to volunteer their time to participate on regional funding committees; individuals with sufficiently broad regional knowledge, a good grounding in education policy issues, as well as specific knowledge of education coalitions. In each region a number of those that were willing and competent to serve were employed by INGOs, some of whose organisations funded NECs separately from CSEF funds. So it is difficult to locate parties that are completely independent, and care would need to be taken in any future project to ensure that the regional funding committees consisted of the right mix of knowledge, wisdom, skills and representation.

At the global level, as has been mentioned earlier, the CSEF Global Coordinator led the Global Secretariat and reported to the GCE Global Coordinator, who in turn reported to the GCE Board. The CSEF Global Coordinator was able to monitor first-hand the performance of respective regional mechanisms since he and other global staff attended regional funding committee meetings and met separately with regional secretariat and fund managing agency staff to review progress and any issues arising at the regional level.

A question for further reflection is whether the global CSEF staff complement was sufficient and sufficiently matched to the complexities of the CSEF global management and governance roles. Additionally, the Independent Evaluator has made some recommendations in relation to improving the global level governance mechanisms, in any future project. Several changes have been proposed in the CSEF proposal for 2013/2014 including an International Advisory Committee and significant adjustments to the responsibilities for managing the funds as measures to strengthen future global level governance.

5. Good governance needs to be sufficiently resourced

It is clear through the analysis in this report that regional and global governance mechanisms are essential in a project of this scale and breadth. It is also evident that there is a cost to ensuring high standards of transparency and accountability are achieved, and that too great a reduction in this cost base could jeopardise the whole project.

The economy of scale is involved here since there is a 'critical mass' of global and regional level resourcing required to undertake the governance and capacity support roles effectively.

6. Further dialogue needed to clarify the role of INGOs vis-à-vis NECs

We have seen that linkages with INGOs at the various levels have also been strengthened through the CSEF project. At the national level, 35 national coalitions include INGOs as members (Worksheet B6) and INGOs contribute 32% of funds to NECs outside of the CSEF project (Worksheet B16).

The dynamics between INGOs and national coalitions vary enormously from one country to another, however there are aspects of the INGO-NEC relationship which merit further discussion in order to maximise the potential of collaboration. These issues include in-country positioning for seats on important education committees such as Local Education Groups (LEGs), the degree of cooperation vis-à-vis competition for resources from donors, issues of conflict of interest if an INGO is a donor as well as a coalition member, and the extent to which INGOs see part of their in-country role as supporting NECs and acting in solidarity with them. As part of its reflection on the CSEF experience, GCE has recently begun discussions about formulating a set of principles of national level engagement between INGOs and NECs.

6. Concluding Comments

As the various interim reports and this closing report show, the CSEF project has been a unique experience for civil society and indeed for all stakeholders committed to CSO education advocacy at multiple levels. The scale of funds in the CSEF project has enabled GCE and its partners to strengthen the capacities of 45 national coalitions, an extraordinary achievement in just 3 years, despite serious external constraints regarding the flow of funds.

This conclusion is supported by the CSEF Independent Evaluation report (p. 9 draft report) which commented that *'the CSEF project, despite the short time it has been in place and the complex institutional multi-level architecture it has needed to settle to operate in such a short period, has been able to articulate, capacitate and empower a range of civil society networks advocating quality education all around the world. The evaluation also shows that the project has not always achieved all its objectives at the same level and everywhere.'*

In a capacity support project involving 45 NECs in vastly different contexts and at different stages of development it is not surprising that there was not uniform achievement of objectives 'at the same level and everywhere'. However, as has been amply demonstrated in detail in this closing report, in the face of substantial external constraints, this complex, multi-faceted and highly ambitious project achieved its objectives.

GCE and its partners express their thanks to GPE for its support for the CSEF project, and appreciate GPE's growing recognition of the value of strong civil society engagement in education policy at national, regional and global levels. The CSEF project has opened up some exciting possibilities that GCE and its partners are keen to build on.

It is clear that the work must not stop here. With much already achieved, it is crucial that momentum is maintained over the coming years. Ongoing resources are needed to enable civil society engagement to effectively play its role. GCE looks forward to a continued partnership with GPE, and is submitting an application to cover support for 2013-14. GCE will also be proposing ideas for institutionalising longer term support to ensure the vital contribution of civil society to education policy reform can continue and grow.

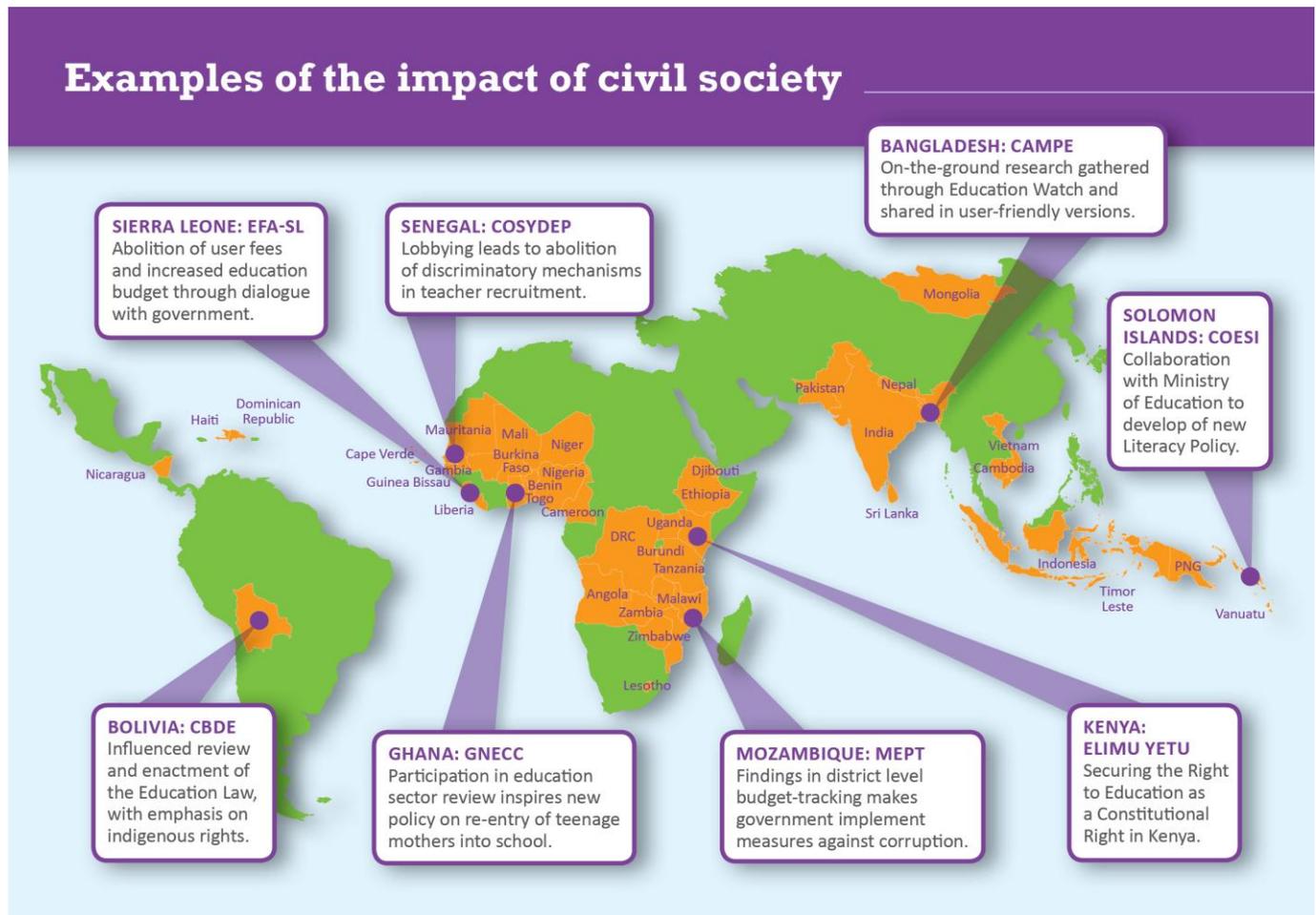
Appendix 1 – A Summary of CSEF Closing Report Worksheets

* Note: the following Worksheets are numbered so that they align with the numbering of the Worksheets of the Independent Evaluation team.

- B1 List of NECs with Key Documents Unavailable
- B2 Basic NEC Contact Information and Project Start and Completion Dates
- B3 Funds Disbursed and Expended Per Country
- B6 Formation and Growth of NECs
- B7 Charts on NEC Foundation and Registration Process
- B8 Composition of NEC Member Organisations
- B9 Development of NEC Governance
- B10 Charts on Development of NEC Governance
- B11 NEC Provincial and District Networks and Alliances
- B12 Engagement with the Education Sector Planning Process
- B13 Coalition Staff Numbers & Regional and Global CSEF Staff Capacity Support Visits
- B14 Charts on NEC Staff Numbers and CSEF Regional and Global Capacity Support
- B15 Total NEC Funds Generated Outside the CSEF Grant
- B16 Summary of NEC Funds Generated Outside of CSEF
- B17 Sources of Funding Outside CSEF
- B19 Summary of NEC Activities
- B24 List of NEC Key Policy Change Initiatives
- B25 Regional and Global Capacity Support Events

NEC Profiles – A Consolidated Summary of Data

Appendix 4 – Infographic of the Impact of NECs



More examples of the impact of civil society

- **Benin:** Launched Learn Without Fear campaign promoting safe learning environments, which led to improved teacher training mechanisms and transparent use of funds
- **Burkina Faso:** Ministry of Education approves formal participation of civil society in Education Action Planning and budget processes
- **Cambodia:** Participated in development of Child Friendly school policy with MOE
- **Cape Verde:** Increased state budget to basic education
- **Djibouti:** Progressive teacher training and in-service policy formulated and in application
- **Dominican Republic:** Established education budget watch, uncovering underspending on education
- **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
- **Guinea-Bissau:** Policies on access to Free Primary Education
- **Liberia:** Revision and input to key policy documents, the national curriculum and the Education Act; influenced increased teacher salaries and increased education budget from 9 to 13%
- **Malawi:** More than 20% of government budget allocated to education through coalition lobbying work
- **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
- **Vanuatu:** Signed an MoU with government to institutionalise relationship
- **Zambia:** Improved accountability and transparency in public expenditure