Education for All
Collective Consultation of NGOs (CCNGO/EFA)

"Halfway to 2015 - Civil Society Engagement in Education Policy Dialogue and the EFA Process since Dakar 2000"

Collective Consultation of NGOs
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EN EDUCACIÓN PARA TODOS

United Nations
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la science et la culture

"Halfway to 2015 - Civil Society Engagement in Education Policy Dialogue and the EFA Process since Dakar 2000"

A study

Synthesis prepared by Mr Patrick Watkins, on the basis of the regional reports and country case studies prepared for the Fourth meeting of the
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INTRODUCTION

The Dakar appeal

The appeal launched for the development of a genuine partnership through which civil society would be fully associated with each stage in achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA) has reverberated far beyond the circle of participants present in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar. This call to action was heard by all civil society organizations of emerging countries, which have long been engaged in daily development struggles and, in particular, that of defending the right to lifelong quality education for all.

Nevertheless, because of a structural imbalance linked to the inequality in North-South relations and to programme priorities in the field, the participation of civil society organizations has long been characterized by underrepresentation in international structures and world, and even regional, forums. Indeed, not only are the majority of headquarters of international organizations – whether non-governmental or not – located in the northern hemisphere, but associations in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Arab States have often suffered from logistical and financial constraints that have limited the development of their organizational capacities.

To remedy their relative isolation and to address the need to unite in order to have an influence on governments and partners, civil society organizations have used the Dakar Framework for Action to expedite association in the form of national and thematic coordinating mechanisms. Thus, one or several national non-governmental organization (NGO) coordinating mechanisms, often coupled with thematic networks – gender, education, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and so on – have enabled national and subnational associations in virtually all the countries of the world to make their voices heard in an increasingly globalized and complex world. Such groupings have often helped the voluntary sector not only to reinforce a legitimacy sometimes contested by national authorities, but also to gain the right to participate in regional and international forums closed to local or national associations.

The Collective Consultation of Non-Governmental Organizations on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA) is one such thematic mechanism, created in UNESCO's Education Sector to facilitate, reinforce and intensify the discussion, permanent dialogue and joint action in which civil society organizations engage, not only with UNESCO but also with other partners in the EFA movement. Thus, since the Dakar Forum, a growing number of NGOs and national networks in developing countries have associated themselves with the work of CCNGO/EFA, resulting in an expansion and regionalization process that has developed substantially in recent years. Whether in terms of their representation and location or their capacity to act and engage in effective dialogue in the public and political arena, the regional networks and national coalitions presented here display a vigour and potential indispensable to meeting the current challenges of development.

As can be clearly seen, this study seeks less to assess the progress of and setbacks to the global march towards EFA (assessment that is provided each year in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*) than to offer a specific overview of the crucial role that civil society can, must or should play in that effort. This panorama, taken from regional reports underpinned by numerous national studies, offers the richness of an analytic view of the historical, political and cultural specificities with which civil society organizations involved in the EFA campaign are faced. Behind these national and regional particularities is, above all, an experience of converging viewpoints and common hurdles, the lessons and perspectives of which represent a particularly vital resource for all the development partners as they look with hope towards 2015.

CCNGO/EFA at the international level

At the international level, CCNGO is now closely linked to various EFA monitoring mechanisms that offer a framework for consultation, exchange and redefinition of the strategies necessary for achieving the goals set. Thus, several members of the CCNGO/EFA coordination group participated in meetings of the Working Group on Education for All (2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008) and the High-level Group on Education for All (Beijing, 2005; Cairo, 2006; Dakar, 2007; and Oslo, 2008) and in the Round Table on EFA convened by the NGO Committee of UNESCO's Executive Board at its 175th session. Furthermore, CCNGO collaborates with the Editorial Board of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* and contributed to the analyses published in the 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 reports by sharing the views of civil society on the themes of each edition.
In recent years, there has been greater openness to other global education initiatives led by civil society. For example, Global Action Week (GAW), organized each year by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and actively supported by UNESCO throughout the world, has provided an occasion to work together on joint projects with GCE, many active members of which are involved in the international and regional coordination activities of CCNGO. Even more importantly, CCNGO and UNESCO have taken part in the main international meetings of civil society by holding EFA workshops at the World Social Forums of Bamako (2006) and Nairobi (2007).

The rise in power of the networks of the South

Arab States region

If political and cultural environments are always determining factors in the emergence, development and capacity to act of civil society stakeholders, the context in the Arab States countries is probably the most specific and sometimes even one of the least favourable. The first and most important difficulty lies in the very restrictive legal environment that, in very many countries, simply does not allow civil society organizations to form and act independently of the established power. Regulation is particularly restrictive for any organization that is not strictly charitable, the case, for example, of organizations working on development issues and defending the right to education (not to mention the problems encountered by certain student organizations or unions).

It is therefore no surprise that the analysis presented here devotes particular attention to the various attacks on freedom of association and to the campaign led upstream to change laws to

make them more democratic. In spite of this unfavourable context for participation, the data show that this region has indeed witnessed the emergence and quantitative development of associations and, in particular, of civil society organizations working in EFA-related fields. While it is true that the main field in which associations intervene has traditionally been restricted to providing education services for the groups most marginalized by the formal sector, such as disabled persons or women, the past decade has seen the rise of a new kind of group working on issues of quality and defence of rights, for example, through advocacy strategies and by involving communities.

Several recent government and institutional initiatives that bear witness to a strengthening of relations with civil society should be mentioned here. Noteworthy among these signs of openness is the initiation of a dialogue, in particular in Morocco and Egypt, between civil society organizations and education authorities. Too often, these tentative participative overtures go no further than declarations of intent regarding the great importance that governments accord to the role of civil society organizations, declarations rarely followed up by tangible results and aimed more at international partners than at organizations in the countries concerned.

It is nonetheless true that, aided by the rise in power of regional networks and the increase in the number of national associations, the first Gulf Countries Forum officially invited 25 NGOs involved in the EFA campaign. Another major step forward was the participation of the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education in the Arab League Summit of 2007. The network was raised to the rank of co-author of the first report on education in the Arab States region. On an entirely different front, an electronic NGO network on education, operated by the services of the Alexandria Library, has been set up.

Sub-Saharan Africa region

In a region that faces the greatest obstacles to education development and that has the greatest number of children who do not go to school, the civil society EFA movement in sub-Saharan Africa is moving forwards, as seen by the increase in and strengthening of national EFA coordination mechanisms. Seven newly created national coalitions have now joined the African regional network, bringing to 32 the number of countries in which the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) is represented. The associations are even more representative because the majority of member coalitions now include in their ranks teachers' unions, alongside service and advocacy associations working in the field locally and nationally. The main international partner organizations of EFA programmes have not, furthermore, remained insensible to this progress and ANCEFA is now directly associated with several bodies that are part of international NGOs and multilateral agencies. Thus, the pan-African Education for All Network has, for example, been invited to participate in the meetings of the secretariat of the Fast-Track Initiative and to sit on the steering committees of several large development NGOs.
This momentum should not hide the difficulties faced by African civil society organizations, in terms of human, financial and technical resources. The poverty rife in a large number of African countries is responsible in part for the meagre resources that associations have available to ensure essential management, coordination and communication functions so necessary to any advocacy and networking effort. In the era of new information and communication technologies, it is not always easy for certain associations to make their voices heard when local communication, transport and energy-supply infrastructure are unreliable.

To remedy that, ANCEFA has launched numerous capacity-building programmes for its members through regional and subregional workshops that have often led to the publication of training manuals to ensure that the knowledge and expertise necessary for developing effective advocacy campaigns is shared. Among these, the sub-Saharan Africa region is now banking on two main EFA monitoring and evaluation tools with the launch of the Observatory of Education in Africa and the national campaigns monitoring public spending on education, of which the first case studies entitled on financing education and quality are the most recent achievements.

Several examples drawn from national studies show the decisive impact that campaigns conducted by African civil society can have on the determination of national education policies. In addition to the success of campaigns in several countries in favour of free education, the chance to participate actively in sectoral coordination mechanisms, demonstrated in particular by the networks of Liberia and the Gambia, is particularly noteworthy as it has led to the adoption of fundamental reforms in support of a holistic approach to education.

These best practices are nevertheless far from the norm, as the regional report, which refers on several occasions to the fact that it is often easier to hold a dialogue with development partners in Paris or Washington than in Dakar or Dar es Saalam. The fact is that, in several countries, the failure of EFA plans of action and the coordination mechanisms related to them has not been offset by new education strategies. The study of the obstacles and restrictions at the level of EFA coordination structures – sectoral reviews, Fast-Track Initiative, donor coordination and inter-agency meetings – is particularly instructive in this regard.

Latin America and the Caribbean region

Latin America and the Caribbean have also seen a structuring of their network of organizations working to promote EFA, in particular with the creation and consolidation of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), whose prospects for action and impact become increasingly enhanced with the consolidation of relations with 18 national networks and more than 7 regional networks, including social movements that go beyond the realm of education. CLADE´s potential to have an impact on policy change is also enhanced through partnerships and alliances with other regional bodies, such as the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago). One of the features characterizing the work of civil society institutions in this region is the fact that it is part of a well-established political culture of social participation. The legacy of Paulo Freire's theories in support of a liberating education and the more recent struggles in some countries against attempts to dismantle public services form a backdrop that explains why civil society organizations working to promote EFA are particularly dedicated to the field of defending rights. Moreover, the history of CLADE overlaps with that of the development of social forums that have grown out of the "alterglobalist" movement and that constitute, moreover, important stages in the definition of the network's strategies and objectives.

The main initiatives highlighted for this region are related to the defence of education as a human right. This approach implies, on the one hand, empowering national and regional networks in promoting the right to education and, on the other, putting in place concrete initiatives that seek to overcome rights´ violations. Apart from regional workshops on the promotion of education, some highlights are the articulated work in Colombia, Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru in favour of

free education and the growing work involving different national forums against all forms of discrimination in education. The Latin America and the Caribbean region has also dedicated attention to the financing of education. Studies related to privatizing trends that exist in the region have been carried out as well as the monitoring by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank.

The region is also characterized by a drive to expand the base and diversity of the structures working to defend education and to influence education policies, supporting the establishment of networks and national forums that are open to social movements and actors who go beyond the realm of education. The desire to reach out beyond the traditional stakeholders of the education sector explains not only the importance accorded to developing participation of the widest popular base possible, but also the wish to link the EFA campaign with other related themes, in particular North-South relations, debt relief or cancellation for countries of the South and macro-economic and broader development issues. The overlying premise is that human rights are indivisible and interrelated, and must therefore be tackled through a holistic approach. The dialogue with and between the different social movements is seen as crucial if structural changes are to be seen. Reinforcing shared international objectives and, above all, South-South synergies is an integral part of this strategy of partnerships for action through involvement in the Global Campaign for Education and the Real World Strategy capacity-building project, carried out in cooperation with ANCEFA and the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), among others.

The other salient feature of this region's EFA networks is the importance given to debates on the strategy to adopt so that mobilization actually leads to profound education policy reforms. In a region where political configurations and social projects are as diverse as they are marked, the problem of the harmonization of means and aims is especially difficult because of the very large range of stakeholders involved. In this regard, the campaigns conducted in Brazil, Nicaragua and Peru are indicative of the successful strategies used with executive authorities and legislative bodies in order to obtain reforms of education programmes, or even amendments to budget laws, that are more favourable to achieving the EFA goals.

Asia and the Pacific region

The growth of the association movement has been particularly dynamic in this region, with the emergence of national education coalitions in almost a dozen countries since the Dakar Forum. The founding organizations of the EFA movement in the Asia and the Pacific region have also continued their progression, as is, for example, the case for the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) coalition of Bangladesh, which today has a network of more than 700 civil society organization members. ASPBAE, the regional network that unites all the partners, has played a leading role in this expansion, providing the support, training and experience necessary for consolidating the existing network and promoting the establishment of coalitions in countries that do not yet have them. The ASPBAE members and other EFA civil society organizations have pursued their process of regionalizing the CCNGO/EFA mechanism and, above all, have launched the Education Watch programme, the exemplary nature of which should inspire the networks of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa.

Basing itself on solid research, analysis and evaluation work on education policies, ASPBAE has managed to reinforce the credibility and legitimacy of the EFA network in the region. Furthermore, it is the source of the most positive comments on the evolution of civil society's participation in open dialogue with the government. While a 2003 survey severely criticized the coordination mechanisms put in place to develop and monitor EFA, the answers to questionnaires sent out for this study describe substantial progress in terms both of the development of networks and coalitions, and the quality of exchanges developed with education authorities. This relative improvement should not, however, mask the fact that only a handful of coalitions regard the state of civil society organization/government relations as satisfactory, the majority lamenting their informal nature. It is therefore of interest to note particularly successful examples of partnership, in particular in Cambodia and the Philippines, where the coalitions have managed, through constructive dialogue and above all an institutionalization of channels of communication, to redefine the very concept of basic education within the ministries to make it more inclusive.

Opinions seem to be much more divided and even on the whole negative when the coalitions of this region touch on the subject of financial support from donor organizations. Thus, 82 per cent of the networks surveyed criticize the lack of transparency that dominates the support process and the conditions attached to available funds. Lastly, it should be emphasized that the regional network has instigated a certain number of studies on the trend towards privatization of education, one of the particularly worrying challenges in the region.

Civil society participation in political dialogue and the EFA process

In all the regions, the reports agree in describing a rise in power of civil society organizations, regional networks and national coalitions, backed by an official policy legitimizing the participation of these stakeholders, to the point of making them, in line with the Dakar Framework for Action, the cornerstone of EFA programmes and their success. The call for a genuine partnership, launched at the Dakar Forum, through which civil society would be fully associated with all stages of the realization of the EFA goals, has therefore effectively given momentum to the structuring and consolidation of EFA networks. Thus, more and more countries now have national coalitions, often grouped into regional and international networks.

Another significant element in this move to unite associations is the trend towards bringing unions into the national coalitions. If, from an international point of view, the rapprochement between education associations and teachers' unions may seem just as natural as was, for example, the very large number of parent associations joining in, the encounter promises to be much less evident at the national level. In fact, the differences in structure and political tradition were for a long time particularly difficult to overcome because teachers' unions form a force that has, in the past, cast doubt on the representativeness and the organizational capacities of associations. The launch of the Global Campaign for Education, which contributed to stronger collaboration and dialogue between NGOs and teachers´ unions, has certainly contributed to the rapprochement that has mainly taken place in Africa, but also in the Asia and the Pacific, and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions.

Lastly, the studies and activities undertaken by the members of CCNGO/EFA also bear witness to the trend – growing in the majority of networks – of assembling an ever greater and more

eclectic front of civil society organizations working in the field of education. This includes both "service" associations that implement education programmes and NGOs that defend the right to education through advocacy, mobilization and monitoring activities with regard to the commitments made by the international community and national authorities. Furthermore, the desire to extend participation in EFA mobilizations to the "social movement" and to wider circles of civil society seems to be a promising trend, if the overtures made to that effect by CCNGO/EFA at the international level and by CLADE in Latin America are anything to judge by.

In countries in which the political climate is favourable to it, the participative approach of the EFA mechanisms and programmes set up by governments, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies, donors, and other technical and financial partners constitutes a step forward, that at least gives rise to a new basis for negotiation for civil society. A majority of national EFA plans now make explicit reference to the involvement of NGOs and civil society at various stages of their development, even if it is still much more frequent in the field of informal education or at the local level of decentralization policies.

For the vast majority of technical and financial partners, the participation of communities and associations is not only accepted, but also sometimes regarded as a decisive factor in selecting national programmes and projects. It is true that education strategies developed by civil society, by stressing the reduction of inequalities, sometimes provide an opportunity to integrate the most disadvantaged populations (orphans, AIDS patients, rural and nomadic peoples, and so on), who would otherwise be excluded from formal education systems or sectoral aid programmes. The examples presented bear witness to this fact, including that of the Gambian national network which managed (through revenue generated by marketing gardening and redistributed to cover the indirect fees linked to schooling) to bring about spectacular progress in the rate of parity between girls and boys in the country's primary classes.

Despite its lack of resources and its organizational difficulties, the association sector can pride itself on acting as a stimulus, potentially capable of influencing national education strategies and of revealing problems or successes that reflect the degree of authenticity of the participatory mechanisms established. In fact, civil society is leading the fight against the temptation of a certain number of governments to abandon some EFA goals for others regarded as more pragmatic and attainable. It is in this context that the Education Watch programme launched by ASPBAE and recently taken over by ANCEFA, like the Real World Strategy and African "budget tracking" initiatives, can be fully understood. Through its experience in the field and its closeness to populations (parents, pupils and teachers in particular) most concerned by education projects, civil society likes to remind the authorities, technical and financial partners, and populations themselves how a holistic approach to the Dakar goals is a precondition to their success. Literacy, adult training, secondary education, early childhood and the quality of teaching are all fields in which civil society has already had the occasion to express itself and have an influence on education strategies – whether it is teachers' unions protesting against salary blocks, and the recruitment of underpaid and undertrained contractual workers in Latin America; or Asia and the Pacific region NGOs exerting pressure to stop the privatization of education; or associations of African parents fighting direct and indirect school fees in primary education. The success of the Elimu Yetu Coalition of Kenya in its campaign for a constitutional reform

instituting free primary education is an example that has been seized upon by many NGOs and networks.

This progress does not prevent all the CCNGO/EFA member coalitions from highlighting the continuing difficulties that civil society organizations face in making their voices heard and count during the formulation of education policies. Despite reinforced capacities to act in the field and the call by NGOs themselves, UNESCO and other bodies for mechanisms based on the participation of civil society, the "partnership" invoked by the Dakar Forum has in reality been interpreted in very different ways. It is true that this term covers very different realities that depend, for example, on the nature and quality of the sometimes troubled relations between civil society and governments, or the degree of cohesion and financial weight of donors who can sometimes have a greater influence in the debate than the voices of association "partners", even when grouped into coalitions.

Numerous examples in the regional reports have described situations in which civil society is associated with education policies and programmes only at the end of the drafting process and NGOs are limited to giving consultative opinions to monitoring bodies and mechanisms, situations that are sometimes more akin to false legitimization than a real political will for partnership. In particular, it has been recalled by ANCEFA, ASPBAE and the country rapporteurs for the Arab States region that, at a time when UNESCO is recalling the primacy of the national level for the implementation of EFA programmes, the partnership with NGOs is much more developed in international bodies than at the national level. Another characteristic challenge increasingly faced by civil society is the difficulty in finding a balance between a desire for voluntary participation resulting from a democratization of institutional practices and participation "provoked by default" following the disengagement of the state and the limitation of its powers. This development is evidently particularly problematic for civil society organizations confronted with the gradual privatization of education services for whose management they were partially responsible.

The following reports do not in any way avoid the structural and organizational weaknesses of civil society organizations, which only further reinforce the imbalance in relations both with the authorities and other education stakeholders, and very often characterize the partnership frameworks put in place. Issues of training, advocacy and leadership capacity-building are ample fodder for the criticism aimed at multilateral and bilateral bodies regarding the absence or weakness of specific funding granted to civil society organizations to help them better fulfil their role and participate fully and equally in the open dialogue for the definition of education policies. Coalitions in every region of the world point to the lack of transparency and political will on the part of education authorities and sometimes partner organizations, for example, in the exchange of information relating to EFA programmes and particularly as regards budget.

EFA by 2015: challenges, conclusions and recommendations

Preliminary regional reports and national case studies, drawn up on the basis of contributions from civil society organization members of CCNGO/EFA, have provided an opportunity to take stock of the EFA movement and the strategies employed by various partners to achieve the goals set in Dakar, as well as a platform for drafting recommendations for meeting the challenges that

many countries face in order to meet the 2015 deadline. A general overview of the conclusions set out in the various regional reports enables three main issues to be isolated, around which can be focused the main concerns raised and recommendations made.

The first point concerns an introspective view of the CCNGO/EFA network itself: its strengths and weaknesses, and proposals for building structural and organizational capacities that will enable it to consolidate its foundations, networks and communication structures in order to be able to exert influence and act in a more effective manner on education policies and EFA programmes.

The second point relates to the progress of EFA in the world and the need to continue defending all the Dakar goals in the spirit and the letter of the Dakar Framework for Action, in the face of a global trend that often focuses on the education stakes of primary education with particularly worrying consequences for the most marginalized populations and social groups.

Lastly, all the partners in the CCNGO/EFA network have clearly been examining issues relating to dialogue opportunities, consultation frameworks and coordination mechanisms, in other words, to the partnership claimed so often by all the EFA stakeholders but still so difficult for civil society organizations to define and achieve.

Building the capacities of civil society

Despite progress with regard to the number of countries with national coalitions and civil society organizations actively engaged in the EFA field and to the consolidation of existing regional networks, their structural, organizational and human deficiencies and weaknesses are unanimously considered to constitute a serious handicap that undermines the credibility and effectiveness of civil society organizations as first-rank actors and intermediaries. The needs expressed for building the capacities of civil society institutions are especially extensive because they concern the whole range of competencies and resources necessary to be able to influence national and international partners armed with qualified, informed specialists above all familiar with the complex process of sectoral and budgetary analysis, as well as with the political strategies and stakes underlying the choices made with regard to education policy and its evaluation and monitoring. In addition to the classic, quantifiable needs in terms of financial resources (often an unavoidable precondition) and analytical, research and communication tools (for example, access to databases), many NGOs have also chosen to focus on human resources training – expertise and skills in advocacy, research, report-writing, evaluation, political analysis and programmes.

An interesting idea for future action raised in the report of the Arab States region suggests developing the capacity of EFA networks, especially at the national, provincial and local level, to evaluate the impact of neo-liberal policies on education and the prospects that alternative economic strategies could offer to EFA. It should nevertheless be recalled that building capacities for the monitoring and assessment of policies and programmes implemented by partners requires, in exchange, that civil society organizations, and in particular national coalitions and regional networks, pledge to scrupulously respect the requirement for the transparent and conscientious reporting of their own accounts and activities to their members and supporters. Some

recommendations made by the regional rapporteurs call on those supporters, and more particularly UNESCO with regard to the African region, to help the networks to respect those requirements by providing support for the reinforcement of coordination bodies and the consolidation of regional focal points.

Both the case studies and the regional conclusions highlight the importance of pursuing and expanding the move to open up, unify and create networks of coalitions and NGOs for EFA at the local, provincial, national and regional levels. Besides the calls by the Arab and African networks for the establishment of national coalitions in the countries still lacking them and, if necessary, the integration of parallel structures into a single organization that would be thereby strengthened and more representative, the reports are unanimous in recommending that the process be pursued of bringing together and including diverse sectors of civil society directly concerned by EFA: parent associations, student organizations, universities, social and education science researchers, and independent teachers' unions.

In the specific context of the Arab States region, it is furthermore suggested that greater pressure be placed on governments to adopt and respect laws that guarantee the right of association and organization for civil society organizations and unions, and to ensure that the education authorities recognize them as full partners in developing and implementing EFA programmes. Several networks also stress that NGOs should increase efforts to convince and rally the support of information technology professionals for the EFA cause. On the basis of experiences plentifully illustrated by CAMPE in Bangladesh, weekly debates on education broadcast on Gambian national television with the participation of the EFA Campaign Network, or the campaign for the Basic Education Development Fund (FUNDEB) in Brazil, virtually all the reports effectively demonstrate the decisive role that the media could play in terms of raising awareness and mobilization if they were systematically informed and invited to work alongside NGOs, or even to join them as full members. In pursuing this outreach strategy, many coalitions have come to a conclusion that it is necessary to revitalize their policies and communication tools with regard to education quality, for example, by focusing them more on the notion of the rights of the child, in order to make them more accessible and attractive to broader sections of the population. In this area, too, United Nations system agencies and international NGOs have been called upon to pursue or renew their policy of financial and logistical support for building the capacities of national coalitions, in particular as regards communication, coordination and networking.

The importance of increasing exchanges between networks and NGOs, both at the subnational and interregional level, in order to be better able to share experiences and strategies and contribute thereby to building the capacities of participating structures is also at the heart of the concerns of the majority of regional networks. In the same way that ASPBAE launched the Education Watch programme, Latin America and Africa clearly wish to reinforce cooperation and South-South partnerships through the intermediary of the Real World Strategy, and steadier and closer involvement with intercontinental initiatives relating to education, as well as to debt and conditions for international aid.

Monitoring and promotion of EFA

The diversity of national and regional situations with regard to indicators of the state of advancement of EFA in the world does not prevent a large majority of coalitions from expressing serious concern about the strategic and programmatic orientations that seem to prevail within the international community and, more particularly, among donors. All the regional networks agree that the strategy of financial and political priority accorded to universal primary education, far from providing the expected impetus, has been pushed to the point of redefining the very concept of EFA by depriving it, for example, of goals related to quality and literacy education. This reorientation-devitalization of EFA, in favour of classic sectoral approaches devoted exclusively to formal education, is considered as a particularly worrying shift in terms of the predictable impact on the countries furthest away from the 2015 goals in general and the most marginalized population groups in particular.

Civil society organizations therefore emphasize the importance of a truly holistic approach to the six EFA goals by reminding States and the international community of the commitments made in Dakar and in particular the essential principle that EFA can only become a reality if all the goals are respected and sought. Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean stress that civil society must confront what they call the "false truths" of the international financial institutions by developing precise indicators of progress centred on ideas of quality and access for the most disadvantaged populations. Along the same lines, the networks are uniting in calling for vigorous action and campaigns against the dangers of school privatization, which affects several developing countries, reintroducing the risk of a general trend towards unequal education based on a two-tier school system. CLADE has carried out a case study on privatization in Chile, highlighting the tremendous consequences of the privatization process in the country.

For an open, sustainable, democratic and balanced partnership

Faced with the rather sombre picture painted by a vast majority of coalitions and networks of the current state of their effective participation in the formulation, setting up and monitoring of EFA programmes, the observations and recommendations were necessarily firm and resolute. The essence of the analyses and conclusions drawn from national experience can be summarized by the search for the most effective ways of ensuring that the partnership with civil society turns into the type of relationship defined in the Dakar Framework for Action. Among the conclusions, there are repeated appeals to both technical and financial partners and governments to ensure that the partnership in question is founded on equality and mutual respect, and centred on coordination mechanisms open to all EFA stakeholders. While national forums and the role of national EFA coordinators are sometimes a positive force in Africa, Asia and Latin America, they are unfortunately increasingly sidelined and should be reactivated and revitalized. The other side to this return to basics concerns the role of governments, which, according to several sources and particularly the rapporteurs of the chapter on the Arab States region, must obviously recognize NGOs as legitimate participants in the social and political debate, and facilitate their legal existence and communication interfaces. On the contrary and faced with what they view as another danger of the partnership imbalance, many NGOs, and in particular the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All, insist that donors and development agencies respect the authority

and responsibility of the State in managing education and EFA coordination mechanisms, as was stressed in Dakar in 2000.

The regional reports and the case studies are full of examples illustrating the absence and/or unreliability of dialogue and coordination mechanisms. However, they do not simply remind us to what extent, in numerous countries, the real participation of civil society has failed to conform to the ambitions announced in the Framework for Action. A series of specific measures aimed at institutionalizing participation by associations are presented, the recommendations of which, if taken and adopted by a larger proportion of the partners involved, have the potential to exert influence in favour of a more voluntarist policy geared towards better representation of civil society stakeholders in the definition of current and future education policy. Thus, all the networks recommend that the participation of civil society organizations, at all stages and levels of EFA policies, be confirmed by a form of institutionalization that can define and ensure access to the dialogue and coordination structures in place at the education authority and partnership framework level.

Caused by the progressive expansion of analyses and sectoral plans, the increase in the number of such frameworks, which often essentially concern the management of relations between governments, and technical and financial partners, explains why it is also proposed that such coordination structures and other joint reviews should be expanded to include all EFA-related fields (informal education as well as related sectors, such as health) and the main national EFA coalitions and/or civil society organizations working in the education field. This possibility is all the more easy to envisage as certain civil society organizations (for example, in Liberia or the Philippines) have had a positive experience in that regard, following campaigns by the coalitions in these countries.

On the same subject, several sources recall how important it is for civil society organizations engaged in the EFA campaign to document and circulate specific examples of best practices in the field of partnerships, and to develop urgently a series of indicators and criteria measuring the quality of the partnership and the real level of participation of civil society. The idea of disseminating examples of best practices in the field of tripartite partnerships (government, technical and financial partners, and civil society) is suggested, either in a publication such as the present one or in monitoring reports prepared by international agencies and NGOs, and more broadly through training workshops aimed at all EFA stakeholders. This is, furthermore, one of the fundamental ways of bringing together networks under the Real World Strategy project. What remains, therefore, is to begin the important work of researching and documenting possible correlations between effective participation and progress made in achieving EFA goals, in particular among the most disadvantaged groups.

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION POLICY DIALOGUE

THE ARAB STATES REGION

The preparation of this regional report was coordinated by the
Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education

Map of the Arab States region

(The Arab States region presented here follows the specific UNESCO definition which does not forcibly reflect geography. It refers to the definition with a view to the execution by the Organization of regional activities as endorsed by its governing bodies.)

Countries and networks covered by this regional report

Three country case studies:

- **Egypt**: considered to have a unique experience due to the existence of a structural mechanism between the Ministry of Education and the NGOs, known as "the department of the NGOs in the ministry".

- **Yemen**: the only Arab state that has joined the Fast Track Initiative, a country that suffers from various challenges and problems concerning issues of EFA, especially in the field of illiteracy.

- **Morocco**: the only Arab State with a special Ministry for civil society organizations and home to the biggest concentration of NGOs (around 40,000 organizations).

Five networks/regional coalitions (from the total of eight targeted networks) that influence the Arab civil society responded to the questionnaires. These represent 2,845 Arab non-governmental organizations in 19 countries and territories: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Background

<u>The education context, characteristics and challenges</u>

The education system and EFA achievements in the Arab States are subject to much criticism by the partners in development from the various sectors and organizations of the civil society. The report submitted by the nineteenth Arab League Summit, Riyadh, 2006, highlights the reasons behind the need to reform the education system.

The main problems underlined in the report included the following:

- The development of education in the Arab World has mainly taken a quantitative approach.

- The quality of education is not adequate for preparing the citizen to fulfil the requirements of development.

- The dualities in the education system have led to gaps and cultural inequalities.

- The Arab education system has turned its back on the principle of justice and equal opportunities.

- The weakness in the democratization of education restricts the right of people to acquire knowledge and education.

- The partnership mechanisms and coordination among the education institutions, civil society institutions and the private sector are largely insufficient and weak.

If one takes a closer look at the main education indicators, it is true that there are many causes for concern.

- Although the literacy rates vary within the region, the *2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report* shows that there were almost 58 million illiterate adults in the Arab States in 2006. On current trends, more than 53 million adults in the region will still lack basic literacy skills in 2015.

- In spite of an increase in the rates of pre-primary schooling, which have tripled, early childhood education figures are still extremely low and pre-primary education caters to the most privileged sections of the population.

- Primary level education figures are satisfactory in high-income low-population-density countries but low in others. The Arab States have made a steady progress in the number of children gaining access to primary schools – the Global Monitoring Report reveals that the net enrolment ratio in primary education was 84 per cent in 2006. But this progress is still too slow to enable the region to reach the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

- According to the Global Monitoring Report, more than 22.5 million students were enrolled in secondary education during the school year ending in 1999. In 2006, this figure amounted to more than 28 million children – 59 per cent of the young people in age to attend this level of education. Girls constituted 47 per cent of this.

The urgent need to address the issue of quality

The main factors responsible for poor quality education are related to the education curricula, teachers' qualifications and quality of training, and lack of school equipment, all of which have a negative impact on students' academic achievements. A few selected indicators are sufficient to demonstrate the extent of the challenges facing the Arab States region in this field:

- The education level: results of the education level project conducted by UNESCO and UNICEF underline very poor achievements levels.

- Disparities of school life expectancy: the average expected number of years of formal schooling is rather encouraging at regional level, but figures vary considerably within the region – 15 (at most) and 4 (at least)[1].

- Teachers' qualification and training: the data of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics indicate that most Arab States do not provide the teachers with the right qualification, especially in the stages of early and basic education.

- Pupil-teacher ratios: huge discrepancies exist between different Arab States but most are very far from having enough teachers to reach the advised ratio of 1 teacher for 20 students per class.

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[1] 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report, *Overcoming inequality: why governance matters.*

1. CIVIL SOCIETY: ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

1.1 General Overview

The idea of civil work in the Arab States region reaches back into ancient history. The widely spread culture of solidarity and unofficial cooperative humanitarian work, both on an individual and collective basis, constitutes one of the pillars of the civilization of this region.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the concept of solidarity and cooperation evolved and took structural forms constituted of charity organizations and associations. In some countries, this was congruent with the construction of the modern state. This was the case in Egypt (1805-1845) where the seeds of civil society originated from political parties, civil organizations, modern labour entities and women's movements.

In Yemen, this concept evolved from the simple collective work of building agricultural terraces and dams to defeat the harshness and ruggedness of nature, as well the lack of resources, into the idea of reinforcing the cooperation by bearing a social responsibility for all issues concerning the society.

In Egypt: The middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the formation of important civil organizations that played a major role in the national struggle and in the social and cultural work. A series of big cultural organizations were founded such as the Egypt Institute in 1859, which conducts research about the history of the Egyptian culture. The foundation of Islamic and Coptic organizations continued such as "The Islamic Charity Organization" in 1878 and "The Good Will Coptic Charity Organization" in 1881. This period also gave birth to the foundation of the "Lawyers Union" in 1912, which was inclined from the very beginning to play a political role. Efforts to organize a women's movement started even earlier. The first attempt was in 1904 when Princess Ain el Hayat established a clinic for women. In 1919, "the New Women Organization" was founded and then the "Executive Committee for the Wafd Women members" (affiliated with the Wafd political party).

In the period between 1925-1949, there were 1,141 new organizations registered with activities ranging from services and social welfare, to religious matters and advocacy for women related issues.

The first Labour groups that constituted the ancestors of the modern trade unions emerged with the tobacco union established in 1899.

The twentieth century witnessed the foundation of eight trade unions, the most important of which were the unions of doctors (1940), journalists (1941), engineers (1946) and teachers (1951). By 1932, there were 38 trade unions, but none of them were legalized until 1942 when Law No. 85 was promulgated. The total number of trade union members stands around 5 million, the Teachers' Union being the largest with 1,120,000 registered members.

In Yemen: The number of NGOs has recently increased from 3,175 organizations in 2000 to 4,888 in 2004. The scope of activities covered by NGOs has also evolved to offering welfare and humanitarian services.

In Morocco: during the 1990s, the human rights movement, women's organizations, youth groups and Moroccan cultural organizations gained a considerable amount of autonomy and freedom to undertake their activities. Some 5 to 6 per cent of the 9 million workers in Morocco adhere to trade unions, the three most important of which are: the Moroccan Coalition of Labour, the Democratic Confederacy for Labour and the General Union of Moroccan Workers.

1.2   The growth of the NGO movement and the legal struggle

NGOs, civil institutions and societies in the Arab States region passed through several historical stages, which are important to identify in order to understand the specific characteristics that gave birth to the emerging EFA networks

1. Welfare and direct services.
2. Development programmes and projects.
3. Strategic, sector and sustainable development programmes.
4. Human rights and advocacy issues.

Today, the number of NGOs in the Arab world is approximately 190,000 (2006), all of which are geared towards the fields of human development, defending human rights and liberties, and serving the most marginalized categories of the population. There are around 40,000 NGOs in Morocco, 17,000 in Egypt and 4,888 in Yemen, constituting 32.6 per cent of the total number of NGOs in the Arab world.

The study of the regional networks engaged in the education field provides a good insight into the new realities of the Arab non-governmental organizations and recent trends shaping their activities and constituency.

- Even though the situation among the non-governmental organizations varies from one Arab State to another, the general trend of a very strong increase in size and activities is common to the whole region.

- NGOs in most Arab States are becoming increasingly interested in issues of human development and poverty alleviation. This is demonstrated by the interest shown by the new voluntary initiatives in the fields of local development, education, combating unemployment and programmes to empower the poor, especially women. This is achieved through education and training activities as well as through providing access to micro-credit projects, in line with the Millennium Development Goals and EFA objectives.

- The rights of the marginalized categories of the Arab societies are increasingly covered by the NGO programmes, as well as the defence of civil, political, economic, social and human rights.

- In most Arab States, civil society organizations have engaged in intense campaigning and lobbying activities aiming to change the laws regulating the work of civil organizations. New laws have been promulgated in the past few years in five Arab States and territories: Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Palestinian Autonomous Territories and Yemen. However, this struggle for official recognition and freedom of activity is far from won as the civil society is still fighting against a legal environment that is generally very restrictive.

Since 2002, the controversy surrounding the laws applied to Arab civil organizations has at least managed to open up opportunities for discussion and some negotiations on the relation between civil society and governments. It is interesting to note, however, that these issues were also raised in countries that were not under pressure from the civil society aiming to amend the legislation on civil organizations. The debate has spread to some Arab States that have recently witnessed new regulations such as Egypt (2001) and Yemen (2002). An opposite trend is unfortunately also true. Some countries – Lebanon being the most outstanding case – that enjoyed a very open and stable legislative system, allowing civil society organizations (CSOs) to operate freely, have recently reversed to much more restrictive and conservative laws.

Meanwhile, in some countries experiencing new democratic transformations, such as Bahrain, the legislative environment for civil society is the object of heated discussions, with sharp differences emerging concerning what is being termed as "the political organizations in Bahrain". In fact, the general debate regarding this "legislative battle" is a continuous and common feature in many Arab States.

Since the mid-1990s, the Arab States region has witnessed an increase in mobilization, influenced by international and regional changes that contributed to the awakening of civil society, NGOs becoming increasingly aware of the negative impacts produced by restrictive legislation on the efficiency of their organizations. This subject has been, and still is, a source of tension between civil society, advocating fundamental liberties to practise its voluntary initiatives on one side, and most Arab governments which tend to adopt a patriarchal authority towards NGOs.

One of the most important criteria available to evaluate the level of freedom enjoyed by CSOs lies indeed in the specific country's legislation on the following crucial subjects: Freedom of registration and declaration, the right to dissolve an association, freedom to chose one's own activities and the right to obtain external funding.

The table below shows the state of Arab legislation based on these criteria.

Table 1: NGO legislation in Arab States

	Country	Law date	Freedom of registration and declaration	Right to dissolve	Open activity	Funding
1.	**Algeria**	1990	Yes	Judiciary system	Yes	Open
2.	**Bahrain**	1959	No	Government	No	Government approval
3.	**Egypt**	2002	Yes	Government	Yes	Government approval
4.	**Jordan**	1966	No	Government	Yes	Government approval
5.	**Kuwait**	1962 and amendments	No	Government	No	Government approval
6.	**Lebanon**	1909 and amendments	Yes	Judiciary system	Yes	Open
7.	**Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**	2001	No	General secretariat of pop. Conference	No	Government approval
8.	**Mauritania**	1964 and amendments	No	Government	No	Open
9.	**Morocco**	2001	Yes	Judiciary system	Yes	Open
10.	**Palestinian Autonomous Territories**	2000	No	Government	No	Government approval
11.	**Qatar**	1998	No	Government	No	-
12.	**Sudan**	1995	No	Government	Yes	Government approval
13.	**Syrian Arab Republic**	1958	No	Government	No	Government approval
14.	**Tunisia**	1992	No	-	No	-
15.	**United Arab Emirates**	1974	No		No	-
16.	**Yemen**	2001	No	Judiciary system	Yes	Government approval

Source: *The Second Annual Report of the Arab NGOs*, 2002

2. INPUTS OF CSOs IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

2.1 Role of CSOs in education

The role of civil society organizations has started to grow in fields that were earlier restricted to the public sector. This was accompanied by an increase in the contribution of the private sector and donors as a third party in the process of development through participation. The qualitative and quantitative growth of the role of civil society organizations in the past five years has had a clear impact on the potential for democracy, participation and mobilization, and has increased the prospects of a development that meets the needs of the people.

An analysis of the questionnaires and case studies shows that the most important service programmes developed by the civil society in the field of EFA focus on the following:

- Combating illiteracy, especially through the formulation and implementation of projects that cater to the needs of marginalized communities generally excluded from the formal schooling programmes.
- Adding non-formal education as a way of reaching the MDGs.
- Educating girls, focusing in particular on the rural and distant areas.
- Adopting new alternative and original education initiatives.
- Paying special attention to the training component at the institutional and technical levels.
- Focusing on quality education issues such as school dropout rates and oversized classrooms.
- Mobilizing the community and local resources in order to develop the local education institutes.
- Advocacy and campaigning in favour of empowering and participatory development strategies.

In Yemen:

In spite of the rapid increase in the number of civil society organizations active in the fields of development and rights, organizations working in humanitarian and charity activities are still the most numerous, representing close to 44 per cent (2,150 organizations) of the total number of NGOs in 2004. These organizations offer financial and in-kind donations to poor families, and were, for example, catering to the well-being of 1,352 orphans in 2004. Human rights organizations flourished in the past 10 years with the highest annual rate of increase (18 per cent), reaching 142 organizations of that type in 2004. Organizations working in the education field focus on the least privileged sections of the population, including those with special needs such as orphans and those with disabilities. They often chose to run activities and plans that might carry long term effects: building schools and illiteracy eradication centres, setting up health units, drinking water and electricity projects, vocational training and the construction of juvenile houses. According to the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs Statistics, 36 per cent of the total NGOs in Yemen (i.e. 1,759 organizations) work in this field. They handle 467 projects, costing 9 billion Rials, and provide jobs for 6,932 workers, among whom 1,647 are women, benefiting some 1.2 million persons.

2.2 **Strengthening of EFA networks**

The civil society networks, and national and regional coalitions have improved their advocacy skills enabling them to have easier access to the media and larger circulation of their publications, forum proceedings and general EFA issues. Issues such as girls' education, the quality of education and school drop-out rates are more widely known, thus creating the potential for a more supportive public opinion.

In the course of their activities, debates and conflicts with governments, the national networks have often had to make their voices heard on the issues of civil education, the development of curricula, the gender gap in teaching, and the inclusion of human and women's rights education programmes in schools. On the state level, networks and coalitions have thus earned a good degree of trust from the local communities by opposing the public sector on issues that had never been discussed openly and publicly before.

The CSO networks have also demonstrated their increased capacity for involving the grass-roots level and some community leaders through participation with the school boards at local and regional levels. In the case of Egypt and Morocco, this has enabled widening the circle of stakeholders and the commitment to the priorities expressed by parents, teachers and other actors.

The successful mobilization of the teachers' unions and their involvement through the advocacy and support of professional issues such as improving the salaries and living conditions (Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen) has not only widened the EFA campaign but also contributed to strengthening the participating CSO networks. In Egypt, Yemen and other countries, these unitary campaigns have contributed to creating a strong and supportive public opinion to help push laws that improve their status through parliaments.

Above these general trends demonstrating an increase of both the size, quality and capacities of the CSOs' impact on the public education field, some more concrete examples of recent progress in the consolidation of NGO networks can also be underlined.

- Several capacity-building workshops have been recently held for actors – in the public sector or in civil society – in charge of eradicating illiteracy on the national level. These have been made possible through a partnership with Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education, UNESCO's Cairo Office and UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) in Beirut.

- The foundation of the "Arab Info Mall" represents the very first initiative towards building an extensive and comprehensive education NGO network. Administered on a regional level by the services of the Alexandria Library, this electronic database contains a specific section on education listing a total of 553 Arab NGOs.

- With the support of UNEDBAS, the Arab team of the EFA initiative established and documented its own NGO data base, and has made it widely available by publishing it on the internet.

2.3 Regional and international integration of EFA networks

The strengthening of NGO coalitions in the Arab States region has also benefited from and contributed to the improvement in communication between the national networks, councils and the international campaigns within specialized councils. For example, the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education acts as the Vice-President of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and has a consultative status with many United Nations agencies as well.

The development of this type of cooperation and coordination has been particularly noted between networks, national and regional coalitions, and UNESCO. This has led to the production of education guides and capacity-building sessions for NGOs, training workshops for government leaders in the field of illiteracy eradication, the publication of newsletters and documentation in capacity-building, and the preparation of several regional studies dealing with illiteracy eradication strategies (cooperation between the Egyptian coalition of the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education and UNESCO Cairo).

In Egypt, Morocco and Yemen, several national education NGOs have also developed their operational relations with bilateral and multilateral agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the European Union (EU), in the framework of the initiative to teach girls and decrease the gender gap, especially in the rural areas.

Some networks/coalitions have also managed to successfully strengthen their international ties with the donor agencies and development partners by signing protocols of cooperation with them for the support and development of education. This is the case of the Yemen coalition and the Japanese institution Jayka, cooperating on a programme aimed at building and rehabilitating schools. A similar joint agreement and programme has also been developed between the "Development by Education" organization and the Egyptian Swiss fund for development in Egypt.

Finally, some albeit slow progress has been achieved through lobbying with the donor countries for debt cancellation. The consolidation of Yemeni networks/coalitions of NGOs allowed the latter to launch a campaign with actions including sending letters, collecting signatures and staging a solidarity day to cancel the debts of Yemen with donor countries.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

3.1 Cooperation between NGOs and the government

Following the international trend that recognizes the importance of civil society's role in development issues, governments in most Arab States (notably Egypt, Morocco and Yemen) have publicly acknowledged the need for CSO participation. In recent years, there has been evidence of strong political statements from the highest authorities asserting the crucial role NGOs and civil society should play in order to tackle the education agenda.

This official position is sometimes translated into concrete measures as witnessed by an increase in the number of civil society organizations invited to conventions, conferences and workshops organized by the public education sector. One recent example that deserves special mention is the first forum for the Arab Gulf Countries (8 countries), held with the participation of 25 NGOs working in the field of EFA, in partnership with the Arab Network for the Eradication of illiteracy and Adult Learning, the Arab team of EFA (CCNGO), the union of teachers in Bahrain and the UNESCO Office in Doha. Another breakthrough in terms of the recognition of EFA networks occurred during the Arab League Summit meeting (March 2007) in Saudi Arabia, when the General Secretariat of the Arab League University presented the first Arabic education report (*The Report of the Secretary General about Developing Education in the Arab World*), which was also the first social issue to be presented in a Summit meeting. On that occasion, the Arab Network for the Eradication of Illiteracy and Adult Learning, attending as the coordinator of CSOs in the field of EFA, was chosen by the General Secretariat as a member in the expert team of writers.

Other initiatives have taken place on a national level, where the public sector and NGOs have engaged in partnerships through the form of writing joint reports. In spite of certain reservations by sectors of the NGO community on the limits and dangers of this method of participation, it does often constitute a participatory step that requires new exchanges and cooperation strategies from both counterparts. This was the case when the National Councils of Motherhood and Childhood launched the reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) involving CSOs in the education team drafting committees.

Some Arab States have demonstrated a relatively high degree of interaction between the government authorities and NGOs in recent years, the latter principally acting as service providers in the education field. Civil society organizations have enjoyed a good deal of success in coordinating and partnership with the Ministry of Communication in both Egypt and Yemen. These partnerships have taken place in the context of technological training for organization leaders on Microsoft programs, strengthening the performance of internet communication among NGOs, training youth within the framework of voluntary programmes and using educational CDs as teaching tools to combat illiteracy and promote basic learning. This level of cooperation is particularly notable in Morocco as described in below.

> **In Morocco:**
>
> - According to the official figures released by the ministry in charge of non-formal education and combating illiteracy, more than 345 partnership agreements were signed with NGOs in 2006.
> - The government says it has signed 193 national partnerships and close to 400 regional or local agreements on the academic and administrative level covering numerous fields such as school support, primary education, and non-formal education development.
> - The funds allocated for projects developed by organizations working in the field of persons with disabilities increased from 2,019,969 Dirham in 1998 to 7,942,800 Dirham in 2002. Since 1998, the number of organizations working in the field of education and illiteracy benefiting from this financial aid rose from 17 to 74. In total, 284 joint education projects have been funded within the framework of the "March to Light" initiative, closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals.

In some rare instances, the cooperation between government and NGO networks concerns and affects direct education policy issues. In Egypt and Yemen, councils specialized in women and childhood convened CSOs for discussions and dialogue regarding laws and legislation related to children, girls' and women's education and, through joint reports, brought forward some of the suggestions made by the NGOs to Parliament. In this way, the Egyptian coalitions participated in amending the law with a view to integrating children with disabilities into basic education (Law No. 12) and the law on citizenship (Law No. 96) opening education rights to the children of Egyptian women married to foreigners.

3.2   Policy dialogue mechanisms

In most Arab States, the opening up of cooperation and dialogue in the field of education development between NGOs and the public sector, mainly through programme implementation and joint projects, rarely leads further, in terms of participation institutionalization, than the development of perfunctory, temporary mechanisms adapted to the programme's specific set goals. The analysis of most structures and tools developed to facilitate cooperation between national coalitions and the public sector shows that project and specific programme execution mechanisms are strictly limited to the duration of the relevant follow-up and facilitation committees. Similarly, consultative and participatory committees, and annual national forums held with the education partners do take place in countries such as Yemen but are very rarely maintained for long-term objectives. In some cases however, new initiatives linked to girls education programmes have led to the tentative development of participatory planning methodologies that have the potential of being formalized and reproduced as more stable participatory mechanisms.

A few governments in the Arab States region have developed specific organizational structures designed to facilitate and foster their communication and cooperation with NGOs in the development field. In Morocco, the National Forum for Organizations Working in Development was formed in 2002 with the aim of establishing an effective partnership not only with the

government agencies, but also with the local groups and the international donors. Egypt established a similar mechanism since to coordinate and cooperate with the NGOs working in the field of education. Set up in the Education Ministry, this "Department of NGOs" has recently been receiving very serious attention from CSOs in an effort to revive and revitalize it after a long stagnant period.

4. A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF EFA DIALOGUE

4.1 Civil society partnership in the Arab context

Development through partnership has become one of the most significant challenges that impose themselves all over the world, and in developing countries in particular, as it calls for participation in all aspects of life and is considered the pillar for any democratic regime.

In the context of the region's legal, social, cultural and economic specific characteristics, one can identify many limiting factors to building partnerships in the Arab World:

- The nature of the legal and legislative frames as a negative factor affecting public participation in both political life and social activities.
- The nature of the social fabric and its connection with the disappearance or shrinkage of the middle class, which is often considered the engine of social activities.
- The predominance of patriarchal authority affecting relations between the state and the individual, with strong negative impacts on the individual's sense of participation. This prevailing societal culture most seriously limits the democratic participation of the women and the young, and limits the role of social education and the value of voluntary work and participation.
- The economic crisis and its negative influence on individuals' efforts to increase their income, obliging them to neglect participation in non-profit social activities.
- The general fall of the human development indicators, especially in the fields of education and health, which has a serious impact on the individual's ability to participate.

4.2 Legal environment

The Arab States region legislative environment on NGOs has far-reaching implications on the work and programmes developed within civil society and its organizations. In a majority of countries, the laws applicable to NGOs give the administrative authority a wide fan of rights that allow for the dissociation of an organization without the need for a clear justification. Administrative interventions are also a very important issue, often taking the form of censorship on all matters related to the organizations. This includes the formal obligation for all associations to obtain prior consent of the concerned administrative department before undertaking any activity, as is the case in Egypt. Yemen NGOs are submitted to an equivalent system with the additional problem of having to deal with a multiplicity of supervising sources and a very tight financial legislation.

Even though funding is of course a main concern and difficulty facing a majority of civil society organizations, some national laws still do not allow non-profit/charity organizations to develop investments allowing them to cover their administrative expenditure.

This restrictive legal environment also has serious implications for alliance building on a national and regional level, as there is still no legislation enabling the establishment of civil society networks and coalitions in most Arab States and especially in the Arab Gulf Area.

4.3   Cooperation with government

In spite of some positive trends noted earlier on the partnership between the government and NGOs, and the wish of both partners to activate and strengthen this cooperation, the situation is far from satisfactory. As often, but perhaps more strikingly than in other regions, there is a huge gap between the strong political discourse supportive of the role of NGOs and the practical bureaucracy dealt by the ministries of education, literacy and non-formal education. The usual exception to this very distant approach to civil society participation is the classical "needs-based approach" which usually entails the use of NGOs to execute pre-determined projects and plans.

The analysis of the questionnaires and case studies have demonstrated in particular that none of the listed participatory mechanisms was planned or organized in a work programme that could guarantee a long-term partnership. Furthermore, these structures are never designed to function as a two-way communication tool to share and discuss the vision and philosophy of either the Ministry of Education or any other concerned public sector institute.

When it comes to decision-making, the ministries of education are committed to basic rules and defined structures that are always subservient to central authorities. This effectively leads to the dominance of a few government actors in the process of decision-making. Moreover, policy- and decision-makers are situated in the capital, thus leading to an imbalance in partnerships inside the country.

The problems undermining the development of an open and balanced partnership between the government and civil society organizations are numerous and include the following stumbling blocks:

- A weak vision of public-sector development affecting different partnerships. NGOs can be asked to attend meetings and forums without any intention of concrete developments at the implementation stage.
- Instead of working to create joint coordinating mechanisms, most partnerships sought by the ministries of education are restricted to bilateral meetings between the ministry and a single stakeholder.
- There are no criteria or work principles governing the work of the public-sector policy concerning NGOs. This relation is subject to the personal standards and personal preferences of the official leaders, and may reach the point of alienating and marginalizing the organizations that declare their stands strongly and effectively.

- Strategies or work plans for implementing policies related to partnerships in the field of education are neglected in favour of a "needs-based approach collaboration" with civil society for urgent education or development issues.
- There is little mutual trust between governments and civil society with obvious negative effects on the development of suitable partnership methods and tools.
- Poor data and information on the regional and public sector levels in the fields of education: governments do not systematically share data and information with the public or CSOs and may even make it inaccessible to interested parties.
- Governments do not make available data on expenditure on education from the national budgets. This does not give civil society networks, coalitions and public opinion the opportunity to analyse government expenditure on education
- Leadership in the public sector at all levels (high/medium/low) lacks training on crucial development-linked issues such as human rights education, civil society and participatory methods of administration.
- In spite of the gradual expansion of the opportunities allowed by governments for the participation of the NGOs, progress is still limited to planning and strategy implementation excluding the fields of policy-making and evaluation.
- The lack of transparency behind the new education initiatives prevents NGOs from playing an active and appropriate role. A good example is given by the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) that has been taken over by the public sector, adding an ambiguity through a confusion of roles between the public and non-public leaderships.

4.4   Weakness of NGO movement

The recent growth of the new advocacy-based NGO movement in many Arab States has not yet brought civil society to a stage of maturity and autonomy. Like all its individual components, civil society has also been faced with the new challenges of economic globalization and the new liberal policies. These developments have often had crippling effects on the capacity of families to participate in voluntary associations, particularly in the field of education.

In the face of this upsurge of individualistic values, the absence of collective institutional entities speaking for large sections or interests of civil society organizations on the national levels makes it very difficult to formulate alternative visions and strategies. The weak institutional and organizational structure due to the absence of support for capacity-building of most Arab networks and coalitions makes it all the more difficult to establish partnerships through networking. This has also been one of the reasons for the alienation of the trade and teachers unions and their exclusion from civil society networks and coalitions. Moreover, the absence of consolidated and wide-ranging thematic alliances considerably weakens the position of the existing CSOs in their quest to make their voices heard with government and other education stakeholders. The weakness of the national coalitions has, for example, seriously undermined communication with members of parliament and the legislative system, and their ability to campaign for new laws. The mixture of consumerism and rising inequalities also has a serious impact by limiting volunteering, especially among the young sectors of the population.

However, many organizational and structural problems affecting the CSOs are internal, for example, weak financial management capacities and poor internal accountability levels. These issues link Arab civil society's fragile internal democracy with difficult issues of transparency and credibility regarding practices and decision-making in the NGO system.

These organizational problems are closely linked to the operational profile of most Arabic networks working on national level, which often suffer from lack of sustainability. Indeed, most of them are involved in projects or campaigns with pre-set durations and thus their work ends with the termination of the projects. For many networks, this results in the inability to ensure continuity on the level of funding and human resources. This project-based approach partly explains why so many NGOs concentrate their work on providing direct services (charity and development) without being able to tackle more serious participation in drawing and following up the implementation of policies and development plans.

Finally, CSOs also lack the necessary resources and skills to carry on the research and documentation that would facilitate both networking and campaigning. Just as there is no accurate national or regional monitoring of the size of the NGOs working in the field of EFA, the civil society did not conduct any studies or research to monitor the added value of its efforts. The absence of a clear vision of the real contribution of civil society in the process of collective change and development threatens to weaken the value of collective work and undermine the strengthening of the networking process.

4.5   Low level of international support

The organizational problems described above are of course compounded by the weak funding received from international donors earmarked for building civil society networks or education coalitions on both national and regional levels. It has actually been widely observed that there is a low level of response from funders and donor institutions in general to financially support programmes planned by networks or civil society coalitions in the framework of EFA. This lack of resources is of course directly responsible for the weak participation on the part of the Arab States region civil society organizations and coalitions in the international campaigns for education as well as the lack of communication means between them.

The low level of support received by CSOs in general, and EFA linked coalitions in particular, extends to the private business sector which prefers to work in the context of supporting national and governmental projects rather than networks and civil society coalitions. The communication channels between the civil society and the private business sector are correspondingly very weak in the field of education sector programmes.

5. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: SETTING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR AN ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP

There is an urgent need to develop a culture of partnership in the field of education as such an environment will constitute the strongest contribution to developing sustainable progress towards the EFA goals. This necessary partnership must be based on the basic principles of making the government, politicians and decision-makers accountable to citizens on the subject of their responsibilities in the field of education.

Effective solutions are probably a mixture of freedom of expression, political will, direct participation, leadership skills and organizational reforms. It is crucial to develop a structure for the education system capable of exerting accountability. It must possess clearly defined objectives, sufficient resources and capable enthusiastic service providers. Focus must therefore be shifted towards institutional reforms rather than purely quantitative programmes such as those geared towards the construction of new schools. It is the institutional reforms resulting from efficient participatory structures that will achieve the expected results in the struggle for quality education for all.

The vision for the future seeks to establish partnerships that are based on trust, transparency, clarity and accountability on the part of the civil society and the government while reinforcing and supporting the values of "social responsibility", especially within the private and business sectors, development organizations and donors. This calls for several developments in the following four fields.

5.1 Capacity-building

- Strengthening the CSOs' and education networks' institutional structures is a condition of their efficiency and success, and contributes to a proactive strategy on development rather than a simple reactive project-funded approach.

- Preparing effective training programmes on partnership for leaders of the public sector and civil society organizations; it is important to train workers and volunteers of civil society on modern methods of administration, leadership and planning.

- It is important that the international organizations support the NGOs in building and developing networks and coalitions concerned with EFA on both the national and regional levels.

- Confronting the problem of lack of funds with alternatives sources of income relying on personal efforts in every local community requires both specific training programmes and a greater understanding of the local communities' needs.

5.2   Research and communication

- Developing the skills of the coalitions and national networks in reporting and lobbying through national councils, parliaments and media, and helping them to develop their own channels of communication implies a particular effort towards the development of organizational capacities, setting the action priorities of the national and regional networks, and enhancing coordination and communication with the media and public opinion.

- Successful models of partnership with the private and public sector should be presented and highlighted in the media as a means of increasing awareness of the importance of this pattern of interaction.

- A documented study about the added social, economic and cultural value of the impact of the civil society, and national and regional networks' development programmes in the field of EFA is needed.

5.3   Institutionalizing coordination mechanisms and participation

- It is important to work on favouring the institutional rather than the personal dimension in mobilizing the citizens to participate so that the relation will not be restricted to instructions issued from the high political leaderships in the country. A permanent mechanism must be created to organize the ordinary meetings between the local and executive systems on one hand, and the NGOs on the other. Making the people aware of the roles of the local boards or councils in order to expand the grass-roots participation in the decision-making process will not only contribute to a greater public knowledge of the EFA agenda and challenges but will also help government authorities to hear the voice of those they often disregard.

- Developing collective mechanisms for coordination and follow-up with clear, open and balanced sharing of responsibilities between partners is necessary. These mechanisms do not simply imply setting up committees but mean establishing a real structure, dedicated to the achievement of the EFA goals and representing the interests of all stakeholders.
- Regular public and open-forum-type dialogues on EFA policies must be held in order to guarantee active participation.

- Ensuring an adequate representation of civil society organizations and national networks at all levels involves the development and implementation of education strategies and national plans, sectoral reviews and evaluation processes.

5.4   Accountability and transparency

- A legislative and legal environment conducive to the development of freedom of activity of NGOs in the Arab States is needed.

- Developing and adhering to rules of accountability applicable to all stakeholders involved in developing the education system – government, civil society, private sector or international organizations and agencies – are important.

- A system for "national accounts in the field of education and training" should be established, committing the education and training authorities to include in the annual report submitted to the parliament, a statement of account that accurately explains the nature of the expenses and resources, as well as their use, justifications and returns. The comprehensive and systematic rationalization of education expenditures on all levels requires mobilizing enough resources and the ability to follow the principle of resource diversification for funding education and training to ensure the success of all the qualitative and quantitative EFA goals.

- Publicly accepted rules for transparency, accepted by both the international donors and the governments, should be set within the framework of the EFA initiatives and programmes.

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CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION POLICY DIALOGUE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REGION

This regional report was prepared by the
African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA)

Map of the African region

(The African region presented here follows the specific UNESCO definition which does not forcibly reflect geography. It refers to the definition with a view to the execution by the Organization of regional activities as endorsed by its governing bodies.)[1]

Countries covered by this regional report: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania

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[1] The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations or UNESCO.

Background

At the time of independence in the 1960s, the overwhelming majority of African countries had very low enrolment records in their formal education systems. This in essence meant that a lot had to be done by the fledgling sovereign nations in order to boost education enrolments.

The task was so enormous that the African Heads of States came together under the umbrella of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to set up a continental development agenda that would liberate their people from the yoke of poverty, disease and unemployment. Mass delivery of quality education (that was not the aim of the European colonizers) was deemed to be a liberating tool, the key that would unlock the development potential of the newly independent countries.

The first Ministers of Education of Africa (MINEDAF) Conference was held in 1961 in Addis Ababa, with a major objective that of making an inventory of the individual needs of the countries as regards education financing, construction and equipment, training of staff (teaching, planning, and administration) and research on education contents. This education for development conference paid a special attention to some important specific challenges such as the integration of African culture, schooling for girls and literacy teaching for adults.

The Conference also issued the Addis Ababa Education Plan, which aimed to overcome illiteracy and to reach universal primary education as early as 1968. With our knowledge of the present difficulties still facing many African countries today in terms of access to quality education for all, the 1961 Regional Education Plan was very ambitious and somewhat 'unrealistic' in some of its target settings.

Since the World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, 1990, and more particularly the Dakar Forum in 2000, documented efforts have been made by national governments to move towards the achievement of EFA by 2015. However, several sub-Saharan Africa countries are still not on track to meet the EFA goals. With 35 million primary-school age children not in school – the greatest number in the world – and 161 million illiterate adults, it will take important collective efforts at national, regional and international levels to reach universal primary education and stamp out illiteracy in sub-Saharan Africa. On current trends, the region will be home to more than 147 million adults and 34 million young people without basic literacy skills in 2015.

Despite the commitments made in Dakar in 2000 in terms of multilateral assistance and civil society engagement, aid to education remains insufficient and many grass-roots groups have not been involved in EFA processes in the region.

1. THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF EFA NETWORKS

1.1 The Dakar momentum

Ten years after Jomtien, the World Education Forum, in Dakar, 2000, proved to be a turning point for civil society involvement in the push towards education for all children, young people and adults. Although the African Civil Society had always been at the forefront of the EFA movement, the Dakar Framework (and the specific central focus it gave to the role of civil society participation at all levels) strengthened and fuelled a very strong development of the level of activity of CSO's acting in the field of education.

The networking movement[1] has gathered momentum and scope with the turn of the new millennium, which witnessed the launching of the global compact strategies. The most notable characteristic trend of this period was the formation and growth of national education coalitions, grouping large numbers of various NGOs and CSOs active, locally or at the national level, in promoting one or several of the EFA targets for 2015. Diverse civil society groups in Africa[2] have formed an unprecedented number of national coalitions, united through the pan-African network ANCEFA (Africa Network Campaign on Education for All), to jointly advocate for the right to EFA.

A large majority of countries have founded their own nationwide education coalitions, many of which integrated the specific elements of the EFA challenge into their goals, strategies and even denominations. Many have been set up with the sole purpose of monitoring EFA progress, debate education policy, provide innovative learning opportunities, and raise new and alternative perspectives on education and development. According to ANCEFA, more than 27 national EFA campaigns have been launched by national coalitions in Africa over the past six years. These year-round campaigns are centred on abolishing school fees and overcoming issues related to the quality of education such as poor learning materials and environments, high pupil/teacher ratios, lack of qualified teachers and unequal opportunities for girls.[3]

According to the data processed from the questionnaires, there are 172 civil society networks existing in the 14 responding countries (Table 1).[4] Sierra Leone alone boasts 60 civil society networks established on its soil, while Angola and Ghana host 21 and 20 civil society networks respectively.

Altogether, the anglophone countries seem to have been more affected by this networking trend. Indeed, 105 civil society networks are located in this linguistic zone, as shown in Table 1.

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[1] Which united NGOs active around many different subjects e.g. HIV/AIDS, women, children, etc.
[2] NGOs, teachers' unions, women's and parents' associations, faith-based organizations, etc.
[3] The 2005 gender parity goal has already been missed.
[4] Mali did not respond to that question.

Table 2: Civil society networks in some sub-Saharan African countries

Country	Number of civil society networks/coalitions	Number of CSOs composing networks/coalitions
Angola	21	364
Benin	10	12
Burkina Faso	10	7
Burundi	1	9
Ethiopia	10	44
Gambia	10	15
Ghana	20	64
Kenya	1	125
Liberia	3	13
Mali	_	136
Mozambique	1	70
Niger	4	41
Sierra Leone	60	100
Togo	20	12
United Republic of Tanzania	1	120
Total	172	1,132

Source: ANCEFA, 2007 CCNGO Survey.

As can be seen, there are a total of 1,132 civil society organizations composing the African national networks and coalitions, with Angola (364), Mali (136) and Kenya (125) having the greatest numbers.

One interesting finding of this research is the striking number and variety of organizations belonging to these coalitions as well as the very diverse activities undertaken in the field of education. The research shows that most networks include all the following type of organizations:
- o Self-help
- o Trade unions
- o Parents' associations

Self-help organizations are more present in the two Portuguese-speaking countries where they represent 71.4 per cent of civil society organizations involved in education. This is probably due to the fact that these were former war-torn countries that have known social strife and unrest with their terrible socio-economic consequences for many years. The data indicate that teachers' unions are more present in the Portuguese-speaking country networks (100 per cent) while parents' associations are much more common in the anglophone country coalitions.

One of the achievements of these networks has in fact been the capacity to assemble organizations of a very different nature. A case in point is coalitions comprised of NGOs that are

more active in the field of advocacy with community-based structures and those that are traditionally more engaged in service-delivery-related activities, two distinct segments of the CSOs in education landscape that were not always in contact with each other before. The other example is the inclusion of the teachers' (trade) unions, in many cases now active members of the national EFA coalitions. This development has greatly reinforced the legitimacy and campaigning power of the coalitions by managing to unite some of the main civil society actors in the education field, namely, the teachers and the parents.

Another post-Dakar development has been the education CSO networking on a regional level. This is mainly through ANCEFA,[5] a network of national education coalitions drawing membership from over 32 national education coalitions in Africa. ANCEFA continues to design and implement capacity-strengthening initiatives for all its members across Africa. ANCEFA is member of the Global Campaign for Education and occupies a strategic position at continental level. It acts as a link between the national education coalitions and international platforms. In the past seven years, ANCEFA has generated strong synergies that can add value to the education advocacy campaign initiatives in Africa.

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[5] A registered Not for Profit Organization.

ROSEN: "An effective coalition for EFA"

ROSEN: A dynamic education coalition in Niger
The Réseau des Organisations du Secteur de l'Education du Niger (ROSEN) was formed two years after the Dakar Forum. With 14 founder members at its creation in 2002, ROSEN now unites 41 non-governmental organizations. It is a member of the Consultation Chamber of Development Organizations and Associations (CCOAD) and ANCEFA

ROSEN's strengths:
- o   The strong determination of the civil society for advocacy in favour of quality education
- o   Consolidation of the synergy between the civil society active in education and Members of Parliament (MPs), members of the government, technical and financial partners, businessmen
- o   The existence of a dialogue between education ministries and the civil society
- o   Access to the highest personalities of the country in global action weeks

The contribution of ROSEN to the establishment of a coalition of NGOs and unions
From its creation in 2002, ROSEN quickly understood that to change things in terms of EFA, to influence the government in changing approach methods and to meet the commitments of Dakar 2000, there was the need to build a strong coalition, comprising actors from NGOs and teachers' unions. The initial meetings enabled ROSEN to realize that the two organizations target the same goals, namely:
- To repeal the law relating to early retirement after 30 years of service or 55 years of age, which makes the education system lose a good deal of its qualified teachers,
- To harshly criticize the contracting of education, with its consequences such as the recruitment of contractual teachers often without initial training, the decline in the knowledge level of school pupils, etc.

ROSEN's objective:
Beyond the global objectives assigned to all the coalitions throughout the world, those of advocacy for the attainment of MDGs, the specific objective of the coalition of Niger is to develop a critical look at the management of funds allocated to education.
The organizing committee gathers all the representatives of member bodies of the coalition. Its missions are as follow:
- o   The material preparation of all the advocacy activities;
- o   The development of an action plan for advocacy spaces;
- o   The targeting of activities to be conducted and implementation strategies.

For that purpose, it is divided into three sub-commissions:
- The **organization** sub-committee, responsible for the material organization (booking, advocacy materials, etc…)
- The **communication** sub-committee, in charge of contacts with radio stations and newspapers, of the flow of information between member bodies and regional bodies of the coalitions
- The **mobilization** sub-committee, in charge of mobilizing the authorities, financial and technical partners, MP's, members of government, friends of education and member bodies of the coalition.

Starting from 2007, ROSEN also established a Group called 'the Friends of School'. Its missions are as follow:
- Support the policy dialogue between the different actors of the education sector (civil society, government, development partners, population, local governments, etc.) for the emergence of a strong social movement in favour of Education for All; and ensure a rise in the funds allocated to education;
- Support the partnership and consultation between non–formal actors and actors of the formal system in order to strengthen the relevance and ownership of public education policies, and the capacities for actions and interventions of the members;
- Participate in the enrichment of the education system through the promotion of alternative models, the capitalization of learning processes in alternative and popular education, and the introduction of pedagogical innovations giving the initiative to children in education spaces.

1.2   The nature of CSOs' work

One characteristic of the civil society organizations sampled is that most of the time they are much more flexible than national governments which are sometime overburdened by their heavy bureaucratic routines. Also, CSOs are much closer to grass-roots people and local culture, which makes them more easily accepted and integrated by the people at grass roots. This factor allows them to better serve the people they work with when undertaking their various activities: service delivery, training, research and policy activities.

Table 2 shows that, while most African civil society organizations are involved in research and training, less than half of them undertake service delivery activities and a majority deal with questions of policy.

Table 3: The nature of sub-Saharan African CSOs' work

Service delivery		Research		Training		Policy	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
46.7 %	53.3 %	86.7 %	13.3 %	86.7 %	13.3 %	53.3 %	46.7 %

Source: ANCEFA 2007 CCNGO Survey.

A. Capacity-building

African CSOs have put a great emphasis on staff training. This comes with a realization that without the strengthening of their capacities and that of their members, they cannot fully engage in a fruitful and constructive dialogue with their partners. This is why many of the coalitions have developed capacity-building programmes in the following key areas: *advocacy, negotiations, policy analysis, data collection and analysis, and monitoring.* According to the research data, advocacy ranks first (at 100 per cent) as the area where the CSOs have been trained most. Monitoring is second with 86 per cent. The data show, however, that the CSOs have been trained at a lesser degree in policy analysis and negotiations, which account respectively for 73 per cent and 60 per cent.

B. Research

Up to 86.7 per cent of the CSOs claim that their daily work is research related. As such, they use research as a strategy that helps them to reach their objectives. In this respect, we can quote the example of Tanzanian and Burundian CSOs that used research in order to find ways and means to influence education policies in their respective countries.

Last year, the Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu (TEN/MET) from the United Republic of Tanzania undertook a socio-economic survey. The main finding of the survey was that school fees constitute a real burden for the population. TEN/MET proposed and obtained the abolition of school fees in primary education in the United Republic of Tanzania. In another specific case in Burundi, government officials participated in the presentation of the Burundian coalitions research findings.

C. Budget-tracking

Despite the commitment made in Dakar, the financing of education continues to fall far short of the sums needed to achieve the full EFA agenda. Some sub-Saharan African governments are unable to keep their commitment to allot the indicative standards of approximately 6 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI), or 15 per cent to 20 per cent of government budget, to education. [6]

Many national coalitions, as in the case of Burkina Faso and Mozambique, denounce the inability of their education ministries to adequately use the limited financial resources that are at their own disposal. The Mozambican coalition for example, criticizes the unequal distribution of the limited funds throughout the different regions of the country.

These concerns form the main basis of the new budget-tracking initiatives, although unsurprisingly, many interviewees reported that governments were even less enthusiastic about this area of potential civil society participation. Globally, budget-tracking programmes have been gathering momentum. This is one area of recent involvement by civil society that entails the collective surveillance of the way the education budgets are allocated and spent. A growing number of CSOs/national education coalitions have taken up this role, following the first experiences led by NGOs in Uganda. In some countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania, the process of tracking financial resources in the education sector is called the Public Expenditure Review (PER). PER is conducted through Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys[7] (PETS), which involve social audits and value-for-money audits to assess the spending and the impact of implementation. CSOs have taken a leading watchdog role on government spending as proven by TEN/MET who conducted a PETS process bringing together 10 Tanzanian NGOs (Sundet, 2004).[8]

Certainly the financial use and misuse of education funds by African administrations is a very touchy subject and many authorities are quite wary of opening up this sector of public management to civil society scrutiny. This is particularly true in countries where the lack of transparency in the management of education funds has been severely criticized. The recent example of Niger Coalition's successful campaign against government officials' management of

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[6] Communiqué of the Seventh High-Level Group meeting on Education for All, December 2007, Dakar, Senegal.
[7] More information about Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) is available on the World Bank website: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/EXTPUBL ICFINANCE/EXTPEAM/0,,contentMDK:20235447~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:384393,00.html
[8] More information about PETS in the United Republic of Tanzania can be found in "Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys: Lessons from Tanzania", U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, U4 Brief No. 14, November 2007. http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/?2812=public-expenditure-tracking-surveys

EFA/FTI funds has probably sent mixed messages to a certain number of countries that might feel threatened by the possibility of suffering what they might perceive as negative publicity. Whatever the motivations, national coalitions of Burundi and Mali criticize the fact that they are not associated with the management of these funds.

D. Advocacy and mobilization

Probably the most spectacular impact of the CSO education coalitions, both in terms of visibility and of wide-ranging consequences, has been the result of the many campaigns led to advocate for the abolition of primary school fees. The success story of the Kenya Elimu Yetu coalition's campaign, which ended up in a constitutional amendment guaranteeing free primary education, has been a source of inspiration for many other networks[9] who have effectively taken up the issue in their own countries.

Advocacy campaigning has also been efficient in the Niger, through the concerted mobilization by the Réseau des ONG du Secteur de l'Education du Niger (ROSEN), including the newly integrated trade unions. This mobilization managed to bring the highest authorities to undertake a change in policy concerning the issues of teacher employment and non-formal education. In 2005, ROSEN managed to succeed in a selection of political leaders signing concrete promises to:
  o Abolish the anticipated retirement plan.
  o Recruit 1,000 teachers per year.
  o Raise the basic education budget from 8.6 per cent to 12 per cent in 2006.
  o Open 1,000 new literacy centres each year.

ROSENS' political lobbying has been sufficiently powerful to trigger the formation of an anti-poverty group among the members of parliament that has been advocating the EFA objectives inside the National Assembly, specifically pressing the government to undertake the necessary measures to allow the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy to work towards the 2015 goals.

This political pressure seems to be paying off as the law on anticipated retirement is said to be on the point of being scrapped, and that plans have also been made to amend the civil servant's status. Through this vigorous campaigning, ROSEN has also managed to convince the President himself to use some of the HIPC funds for the construction of schools and other education budgets.

The Global Action Week (GAW), originally initiated by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), has now become a yearly highlight for coordinated activities and popular mobilization on education issues throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In the framework of the GAW, African civil society networks active in education undertake different activities that advocate for quality education for all by 2015.

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[9] The Gambia, Ghana and Uganda among others

Beside this big event, CSOs have used all sorts of media in order to inform and educate the general public on EFA goals and MDGs. These media include television and radio talk-shows, phone-in-interviews and regular radio programmes, press releases, articles and advertisements in the print and electronic media, etc. They also use traditional media such as Tom-Toms, traditional communicators, etc. The aim of all this is to create public awareness and public education about EFA goals and MDGs.

E. Information sharing

The sharing of information is vital for civil society organizations and the basis of a sound partnership. This covers receiving information from their partners, the national government, Unites Nations agencies, etc., and producing independent information which can then be disseminated via their own new media networks through internet.

The use of internet has tremendously influenced swift sharing of information between CSOs in Africa. As formulated by Elimu Yetu Coalition – the Kenyan National Network Coordinator – 'Internet has enabled civil society organizations to share information speedily'. Speed is in fact the most important aspect of information sharing with the new information and communication technologies (ICTs). Research data confirm that countries such as Benin, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Liberia and Togo have no communication problems as they have easy access to internet

facilities.[10] As such, they are able to network and link with their members and partners for information sharing, but also they can get current information from many sources globally.

The overwhelming majority (93.3 per cent) of the coalitions[11] claim that they receive key information on EFA from their partners. The research data also reveal that 33.3 per cent of CSOs claim that UNESCO is the first international organization that makes available relevant information on EFA in a timely manner. National governments are identified by 26.7 per cent of the CSOs as the second partner for sharing key EFA information, followed[12] by UNICEF with 15.4 per cent and the World Bank coming last with only 9.1 per cent identifying this agency as a reliable source of information.

2. THE PARTNERSHIP POLICY

2.1 The general context

With the exception of Benin and Mali, civil society networks in all the remaining countries[13] stated that they have witnessed significant progress since the Dakar Forum in terms of their participation in the EFA process in their respective countries. Even the fledgling Burundian national network has admitted some slight progress in their participation in the EFA process. CSOs in countries where this progress has occurred were involved in the making and/or development of fundamental education laws such as: master plans on education, education acts, etc. However, this general positive trend is much less obvious once one take a closer look at the concrete level of involvement of African CSOs in the EFA process, especially within the framework of the various policy dialogue and participation mechanisms existing today in the education field. Although the case studies and analysis from the questionnaires have demonstrated that there has been some degree of positive developments regarding the CSOs' level of participation in EFA strategies and activities, the global situation is still far from satisfactory. Indeed, effective, open and balanced partnerships in the spirit of the Dakar Framework recommendations are still quite exceptional compared with the most dominant forms of CSO relationships with governments as well as with development and donor agencies. Of course, there are different levels of difficulties, the most severe being probably those relating to countries where there is an almost total absence of significant policy dialogue opportunities or mechanisms even partially open to the CSOs. The environments prevailing in countries such as Burundi, Liberia and Togo seem to be particularly unfavourable to CSO participation. Whereas in Liberia, the adopted national policies on education and the EFA national plan are not yet properly implemented, the situation in Burundi and Togo seems to be even more preoccupying with the absence of any national policy dialogue framework on education.

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[10] This is partly due to the proliferation of internet facilities as an income-generating venture.
[11] Coalitions from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana and Kenya.
[12] The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.
[13] In total, 85.7 per cent of total CSOs sampled.

> **The partnership theory in action as viewed by the Tanzanian National Coalition:**
>
> Policy dialogue requires partners to come together in a manner that allows the meaningful sharing of information, ideas and experiences between the different stakeholders (CSOs, development partners and government). However there have been concerns that the government has not always included CSOs in dialogue as equal partners. As a result, information in relation to policy dialogue often flows faster and more predictably towards development partners while CSOs have to wait for last-minute access to information about policy processes or consultations. Many CSOs feel that policy discussions are overly dominated by development partners, that CSOs are too vulnerable to exclusion from these processes and that information on policy and performance is not easily accessible by ordinary people.
>
> On its part, the government had numerous concerns regarding the role of the development partners: firstly, that there is insufficient trust between development partners and the Ministry of Education, and secondly that the development partners' role in dialogue is excessive as it goes to a micro-management level as opposed to national (macro) level where they could assist better. Also, it was mentioned that the policy dialogue is very much affected by development partners not fulfilling their promises/pledges on funding the programmes and on placing too many conditions on funding. The government does not mention CSOs as contributing towards education, which could imply that CSOs are not very visible in the process as far as the government is concerned.

2.2 Engagement in EFA development frameworks

A. The EFA forums

Although the Dakar Framework for Action had proposed the strengthening or the creation of national EFA forums as one approach to allow civil society to be part of the mainstream EFA policy-related processes, the implementation of these mechanisms did not actually take place in all the countries or took much longer than initially planned (in some cases such as the Congo, the national EFA action plans were only officially validated in 2006).

In some other countries, national EFA action plans have not been officially validated yet, even though the finalized version was technically approved. It goes without saying that in these countries where EFA national action plans do not officially exist, the relevant institutional framework and policy mechanisms that would bring civil society and other critical stakeholders into this specific EFA process are considerably weakened or impaired. With the exception of Burundi, all ANCEFA member countries targeted in this study have claimed participation in the elaboration of their national EFA action plans.

However, the national EFA plans that were drawn from the EFA forums have often become less active as the international community shifted their agendas from the inclusive Dakar Framework to a more selected group of targets based on new action plans and coordinating mechanisms. In some cases the EFA forums were limited to one-off workshops with a selected group of CSO

representatives among the many donors and government officials present. Currently, in many countries, the forums are not held on a regular basis and in a timely manner.

Although the overwhelming proportion (93.3 per cent) of African CSO coalitions active in education have claimed that education forums still exist in their respective countries, it is very difficult to gauge the extent to which national EFA forums are at present operational and established.[14]

In order to determine more precisely African CSOs involvement in EFA initiatives, their level of participation to the development of national EFA action plans that were launched throughout Africa after the Dakar Forum was examined. In the process, their level of participation during the conception, elaboration, validation, implementation and evaluation phases of these programmes was analysed.

What is evident from the research data is that African CSOs are less involved in the elaboration and validation phases, with a participation rate of only 33 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, whereas their contribution rate to the implementation and evaluation phases reached 58 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. This is a very common trend for CSO participation beyond the specific case of EFA action plans. Still too often, the authorities adopt an extractive or instrumental view of CSOs' involvement, limiting their participation to relaying government policies on a decentralized level apart from the occasional token presence at meetings, serving solely as a legitimizing factor.

B. The EFA Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI)

Between 2002 and 2007, 11 out of the 15 countries sampled in this survey were endorsed by the EFA/FTI[15] and the four others were expected to join the global initiative in the following years.[16]

The feeling of being excluded from meaningful policy dialogue is shared by many CSOs relating to the EFA/FTI and other international initiatives and mechanisms as proven by the fact that 92.3 per cent of CSOs claim that they are dissatisfied with these programmes.

Indeed, apart from the rather exceptional case of the Gambia, where the CSOs' positive view of the way the funds are managed and FTI Programme is handled are closely related to the coalitions' direct involvement in the strategy's elaboration process, the great majority of civil society organizations in all other FTI selected countries complain about their non-implication in the management and release of the international funds allotted to their country's education sector.

C. Sector reviews

Since 2006, the Ghanaian National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) has been invited by the government to sit on the Education Sector Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) and the

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[14] In the ANCEFA member countries that are our main focus in this study.

[15] The 11 endorsed countries are Benin, Bukina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Sierra Leone.

[16] Burundi was expected in 2008; Angola, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania were expected in 2009. *Source*: Catalytic Fund Annual Status Report, December 2008.

National Thematic Group Committee (TGC), the national structures dealing with education sector reforms, to help review progress of the 13 years education strategic plan.

Sierra Leonean and Kenyan national networks also report participating in sector review consultations and even report several instances where proposals made during such meetings with their governments were finally accepted and included in their respective 10-year education sector plans or education acts.

The Tanzanian national coalition (TEN/MET) claims to have actively participated in the 2006 and 2007 education sector reviews convened by the government. TEN/MET is also a full member of the technical teams and a current member of the education and training policy review. Through these mechanisms, positive impacts have been made at the policy level, as when TEN/MET published a position paper on civil society contribution to the education review in 2006. This paper, entitled S*trengthening Education in Tanzania,* has had a particularly strong influence on education development. Most of its recommendations were approved by the education authorities who included them in the review *Aide Memoire* before having some of the proposals implemented in their education development strategy. According to the coalition, these positive outcomes were certainly facilitated by the existence of a legal framework that acknowledges the contribution of CSOs as partners in development and the fact that CSOs had been rigorously consulted in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA)[17] set up as well as in establishing its monitoring tools. This positive development is a welcome change from the initial experiences of TEN/MET with sector reviews.

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[17] The United Republic of Tanzania's version of the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP).

Difficulties of CSOs' engagement in sector reviews:
the case of the Tanzanian national coalition

The United Republic of Tanzania coalition certainly presents a very good example of CSOs' difficulties of engaging and influencing the policy process inside the sector approach mechanisms. Pursuing its efforts to have the voice of the civil society taken into account, TEN/MET joined the education sector review process that started in 2005 as an opportunity for CSOs to become active participants of the evaluation process.

"During the review process, CSOs, under the auspices of TEN/MET, developed a wide consultation process between CSOs in different sub-sectors and a joint gathering in which policy issues were rigorously discussed and consolidated. The consensus in this review process led to the preparation of a single document submitted to the final review meeting organized by the Prime Minister's Office."

At the time however, that is as far as this process would go for the CSOs. Indeed, in a scenario that reveals many of the partnership flaws, including the unbalanced and sometimes indifferent attitudes towards CSO involvement, the final meeting witnessed the breakdown of the fragile participatory mechanism. This was triggered by the decision taken by the government to ban Haki Elimu, one of the CSO members of the TEN/MET coalition. Against the strong protests of the civil society, Haki Elimu was prohibited from publishing anything regarding education in the United Republic of Tanzania, from airing education-related television slots, as well as attending the final meeting of the education sector review. While all participating CSOs withdrew from the meeting in solidarity with the outcast NGO, the 15 in-country donors decided to go ahead with the review as planned.

In addition to TEN/MET, several other education NGOs speak of more traditional difficulties for civil society participation in sector reviews. In Benin, for example, the coalition denounces the lack of sufficient information being shared and the traditional one-off validation meetings, which signal the end of the CSO participation.

D. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

In some cases, the poverty reduction strategies put in place have led to a certain level of exchange with the civil society. This is for example the case in Mozambique, where the national education coalition, the Mozambique Education for All Movement (MEPT), participated with the Ministry of Education and Culture, and donors, in the elaboration of the Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA). This participation constituted a great step towards the government's acceptance of civil society participation to the national Policy dialogue on education; it was also the beginning of a close cooperation and collaboration between the national government and the Mozambican civil society as a whole.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, participation in the MKUKUTA was institutionalized through consultative meetings organized for different groups of stakeholders. Coalitions and individual CSOs working in education were invited to contribute in formulating, implementing

and monitoring the MKUKUTA plans through participation in workshops and conferences that were jointly led by both CSOs and government. These meeting served as a platform for influencing policy.

2.3 <u>Relationship with government, the political environment and dialogue mechanisms</u>

In several ANCEFA member countries, CSOs have put on the table various proposals that have been valued by their respective governments and sometimes even taken into account. In many cases, however, the impact of CSO collaborating with government has often been more successful when supporting implementation more than actually influencing the education policy, for example, through the provision of school learning materials and the improvement of school infrastructures.

> **<u>More affordable school infrastructures in Mozambique</u>**
>
> During a national conference, the Mozambican national network shared its experience relating to the construction of classrooms that were more affordable than the government's costly structures. On this very practical and pragmatic level, the Ministry was sufficiently convinced to adopt such type of low-cost classes for future construction sites throughout the entire country.

The quality of relationships between CSOs and government are of course dependent on the specific degree of political openness. It is also influenced by the fact that in some countries under consideration, education debates are a tradition that has been going on for a long period of time.
Ghana and Kenya, for example, have been considered to be democratic countries for several decades now, since they are both multi-party system regimes and elections are regularly held. This democratic status at the political level has generally some positive impacts on the society as a whole but particularly on the education sector where dialogue tends to become the ground base of all relations. The Liberian national network is a good example of this trend through its participation in the national discussions that resulted in the passage into law of the revised 2001 Education Act. The national network also actively participated in the elaboration of the national EFA plan.

The United Republic of Tanzania, on the other hand, has always been considered as a country open to debate in the field of education, even during the single party system era. Participatory education policies have been going on in the country since the dawn of independence to date, simply because education has always been seen as a tool for liberation and development for the individual citizen and for the nation as a whole.

Open environment and policy dialogue: the case of the United Republic of Tanzania

Breakfast Talks. These policy-based debate sessions are organized on the last Friday of every month with the participation of CSOs, development partners and government agencies. Presentations on topical policy issues are made followed by a counter-response, discussion and debate. Though these debates do not have a direct connection to the decision- or policy-making system, the good media coverage provides an excellent venue for fostering understanding of the subject matter and the policy context.

Ministerial Working Sessions. TEN/MET is also specifically involved in the preparation of working sessions organized by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT). The meeting intends to provide a venue for sharing and exchanging experience in education issues and for raising awareness of the roles and responsibilities of CSOs and MoEVT, hence improving the working relationship between the two. The working sessions are an opportunity for CSOs to present their grass-roots experience and ensure they are kept abreast of what MoEVT is doing to achieve national and international education strategies. MoEVT uses the sessions to highlight the role of each key player in education provision with strong emphasis on the role of non-state actors such as CSOs in implementing education programmes and projects.

District Education Boards. The dialogue and policy input mechanisms in the United Republic of Tanzania with government also take place at a decentralized level through the District Education Boards whose activities differ from one district to another. In the Kilimanjaro region, for instance, these structures are fairly strong and the Kilimanjaro Education Network (KEN/MEK) has been successfully involved in its activities to ensure locally contextualized implementation of national policy. CSO engagement in such local level policy spaces is seen as vital, in particular to ensure that local people are engaged and represented in policy processes.

This decentralized approach towards government has also been successfully used by education coalitions that possess a countrywide network of provincial and local representatives, as in the case of Burkina Faso. Tin Tua, a member organization of the national coalition CCAEB (Cadre de Concertation des ONG et Associations en Education de Base), has for example managed to involve the regional, provincial and local agencies of the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy in the country's Eastern region in all their activities, although some problems did arise in terms of communicating the information to the higher echelons of government. Both formal and informal partnership agreements exist between Tin Tua and the education authorities as demonstrated by the fact that the association's education methods have been adopted at the national level without being validated by any specific official procedure. The Burkina Faso government has also committed itself in the creation of a framework of exchange with the national CCAEB network in order to discuss current education issues such as access and quality education.

Conversely, the absence of civil society participation in some other countries seems to be closely linked to the *low democratic level* in political life in general. Burundi and Togo, for example, were until very recently unstable countries with very new democratic experiences, making it difficult for them to develop a participatory environment in the education sector. The Togolese national coalition for EFA recognizes that real partnership with national government authorities is difficult to achieve because recent political events have given birth to an atmosphere of suspicion between authorities and CSOs.

Of course, everything cannot be explained by cultural or political history as demonstrated by the low participation of Benin and Malian civil societies in the EFA process. Indeed, although these two countries have been engaged in a democratic process for several decades now, the civil society participation is not yet effective. The Malian national network claims that they are very rarely associated to their national government's activities while the Benin national network criticizes the perfunctory nature of their participation.

Best practices

Two outstanding examples of civil society participation in policy-making

The Gambia: Participatory workshops, organized around several crucial education issues which fuelled the development of an Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), were certainly one of the mechanisms that facilitated this level of participation. What makes the case of the Gambia particularly interesting is that the coordinating mechanisms put in place between government and the civil society even managed to reform the Fast Track Initiative framework by integrating the aims and strategies advocated by community-based education groups. Reports show that on this occasion, even the World Bank was surprised by the speed and quality of the collective decisions taken which allowed significant progress to be made in terms of girls' access to primary education. This was helped by the active involvement of the Mothers Clubs (a group member of the national coalition), which undertake income generating activities through market gardening, the produce of which is then redistributed to cover the direct and indirect costs of sending their girls to school.

Liberia: The EFA Campaign Network of Liberia provides a particularly striking example of the potential for full and active participation of civil society in education sector strategies. Indeed, through its structures and organs this network has successfully participated in this process from assessment, design and development of education at the highest levels, ranging from Department of State (ministry) to the regional and national levels. The national network participated in the drafting committee of the 2004-2015 Education Policy Act and it is also actively involved in the preparation of the Master Plan of Action on Education for the period 2006-2015.

3. KEY CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Respecting the Dakar Framework for Action

Midway to 2015, there's a pressing need to act to protect the African citizens' right to quality and relevant education, within the context of the whole Dakar agenda, in order to accelerate progress towards achieving EFA in 2015.

A. Financial engagements

International donors and international agencies must honour their promises. Many CSOs sampled complain not only about the insufficiency of the allocated funds, but also remarked that sometimes the promised funds are not disbursed, compromising country initiatives to implement their EFA programmes.

The EFA resource gap should be addressed by donors in relation to their commitments made in different EFA forums. New commitments of funds have been made by international development banks and donor countries such as the United Kingdom, which recently pledged to spend US$15 billion over the next decade to support the achievement of EFA by 2015. In 2006, aid commitments earmarked for basic education in low-income countries totalled US$3.8 billion, leaving an external financing gap of more than US$7 billion to reach the US$11 billion required annually for basic education goals in low-income countries.

Coalitions have a moral obligation to mount reasonable pressure on Ministers of Education and Finance and on parliamentarians in order to increase and sustain education spending. Backed with credible evidence, coalitions must address these ministers, governments and national parliaments to ensure that legislative and financial bottlenecks that hinder access to quality education for all are dealt with so that fair budgets are made and money is properly disbursed.

Lack of financial resources is really hampering all efforts to reach EFA goals in a timely manner. Unless significant efforts are made by the international community and a constant pressure put on some African governments to commit themselves to better and transparent management systems of the funds that are under their own responsibility, chances of meeting targeted EFA goals are slim in sub-Saharan Africa.

B. Education policies inclusive of all six goals

All EFA goals are equal and deserve equal political attention. The neglected EFA goals should be brought back on the political agenda of nations

International development partners must respect the promises made at Dakar without further delay and without shifting the goalpost back and forth. They must support the implementation of EFA in a decentralized but coordinated manner and not on a piecemeal basis.

One of the other major concerns of education coalitions is the new trend to gradually neglect the quality imperative of EFA in favour of purely statistical or economy-oriented approaches to education with an emphasis on access. Civil society networks in Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and the United Republic of Tanzania have expressed their concern about the poor quality level of their education systems. To that end, many of these CSOs complain about the great focus on expanding enrolment at the expense of quality. Everywhere in these countries civil society organizations are denouncing what they term as 'school congestion' due to high enrolment figures and the lack of space.

> The national coordinator in **Burkina Faso** claims for example that the lack of built classes creates an unprecedented situation in his country, since more than **1,000 primary school classes** are now being hosted in temporary shelters throughout the country, with all the negative consequence that this may entail for the education environment.

No country has developed without a well-educated human resource pool. Privatization of education services and the use of para-teachers are no answer to implementation problems. This trend is liable to have a negative impact on current efforts being made by national governments and civil society to ensure quality and equity.

3.2 Participation of CSOs

A. An enabling political and legislative environment

It is obvious that international commitments are important to the EFA process. But real changes take place only at the national level where it is possible to build up a public, political and professional coalition around EFA. To that end, constitutional and legislative provisions can constitute the main backbone for education policies and reforms. Thus, a good number of African states have now enshrined the right to education in their fundamental laws. As many countries still lack adequate legislation on education (see Annex 1), African civil society coalitions must continue to pressure African governments to ratify international instruments to advance the right to education.

B. Development of well-budgeted national EFA plans

ANCEFA firmly believes that progress towards EFA in Africa will stem from the development and/or funding of well-budgeted national EFA plans. While its is true that most of the African Education Coalitions have participated in the elaboration and validation phases of their respective EFA national action plans, the most urgent task to date remains the follow-up and the benchmarking role that the coalitions must play in the EFA process as a whole. To that end, it is imperative that *their continued involvement and participation* in the process remains an issue that needs not only to be raised but also to be thoroughly gauged and assessed.

In Benin, Ethiopia and the Niger, civil society organizations are calling their respective governments to officially support their national coalition networks and their activities. This is the only viable way for them to participate in the policy dialogue processes taking place in their own respective countries.

Modalities for implementing the full EFA agenda with the active participation of national education coalitions should be elaborated in African countries lacking long-term and fully budgeted EFA plans. Governments should facilitate coalition's participation to optimize available political space and to exercise political rights and civil liberties that will highlight pressing EFA concerns.

Overall participation of coalitions in national budget cycles is poor, as stated above. There too, conditions of effective changes must be created. International agencies must put pressure on some African governments in order to force them to improve their fiscal management procedures for greater transparency both regarding the release of funds at their disposal as well as their management.

3.3   **Strengthening of CSO networks**

Challenges facing CSOs in Africa vary from one national coalition network to another, but the main challenges facing African civil society organization can be summed in the following main points:

- Recognition of CSO networks by national governments.
- Civil society unity.
- Limited capacity of CSOs.

The main challenges to the Tanzanian national network, TEN/MET, for example, reside in members' lack of unity and in their inability to be present in all parts of their vast national territory. According to the coordinator, the national network is mostly present in urban areas rather than in rural areas where many of the challenges are.

As to the Angolan and Ghanaian national networks, the main challenge resides in the low capacity of their coalition members in policy analysis and civic engagement. This is certainly the reason why some civil society networks (Benin and the Niger), conscious of their low level in capacity-building, are now asking their national governments to strongly support their national coalitions and activities so that they will be able to fully participate in the policy dialogue processes taking place.

In order to consolidate and extend its network, and reinforce its advocacy and mobilization capacities, ANCEFA recommends:

- Building and further consolidating national education coalitions to push for enduring change. Strong, vibrant and inclusive national coalitions engaged in year-round campaigns would accelerate progress on EFA. ANCEFA has conducted several capacity-strengthening trainings for coalitions to this end. This is part of the Real World Strategies (RWS) programme.

- Scaling up support to citizen-based research and data collection processes to prepare and present effective policy alternatives.

- Scaling up current initiatives by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and its regional partners, namely ANCEFA, ASPBAE and CLADE, for assessing governments' progress towards EFA through the global school report card.

- Use of the GAW for massive social mobilization to mount pressure on governments and donors to honour their commitments towards EFA. Beyond mass demonstrations, coalitions should endeavour to hold meaningful/targeted policy engagements during the GAW and report on progress made on the previous year's commitments by public figures.

The law and practice in sub-Saharan Africa

Country	Legal guarantee of free education			Charges levied	
	Yes	No	Progress	Yes	No
Angola		✗		✓	
Benin			✓	✓	
Botswana	✓				✗
Burkina Faso			✓	✓	↗
Burundi		✗			
Cameroon		✗			↗
Cape Verde		✗		✓	
Central African Republic		✗		✓	
Chad	✓	✗		✓	
Comoros				✓	
Côte d'Ivoire		✗		✓	
Congo	✓			✓	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	✓			✓	
Equatorial Guinea	✓			✓	
Eritrea			✓	✓	
Ethiopia	✗		✓		
Gabon	✓			✓	
Gambia	✓			✓	
Ghana	✓			✓	
Guinea		✗		✓	
Guinea-Bissau	✓			✓	
Kenya	✓				↗
Lesotho			✓		↗
Liberia			✓	✓	
Madagascar	✓				↗
Malawi	✓				↗
Mali	✓			✓	
Mauritania	✓			✓	
Mauritius	✓				✗
Mozambique		✗		✓	
Namibia	✓			✓	
Niger	✓			✓	
Nigeria	✓				↗
Rwanda	✓				↗
Senegal	✓				↗
Seychelles	✓				✗
Sierra Leone		✗		✓	

Somalia		✘		✔	
South Africa		✘		✔	
Swaziland		✘		✔	
Togo			✔	✔	
Uganda		✘			➚
United Republic of Tanzania		✘			➚
Zambia		✘			➚
Zimbabwe		✘		✔	

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CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION POLICY DIALOGUE

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

This regional report was prepared by the
Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL) and
the Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE)

Map of the Latin America and the Caribbean region

(The Latin America and the Caribbean region presented here follows the specific UNESCO definition which does not forcibly reflect geography. It refers to the definition with a view to the execution by the Organization of regional activities as endorsed by its governing bodies.)

1. THE GROWTH OF THE EFA NETWORK

Latin America has demonstrated a sustained growth of civil society coordination groups on issues concerning the right to Education for All (EFA). Since 2003, a wide variety of actors and organizations (academics, NGOs, unions, social organizations, etc.) has assembled to create national coalitions and national forums on education.[1] In this context, the development and consolidation of national networks in Latin America have contributed to setting a regional agenda capable of further strengthening the scope and coordination work of civil society. To forward this aim, recent efforts have been geared towards the foundation of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), a union of the 18 national structures around a regional strategy to achieve the EFA goals.

CLADE grew from the development of different processes, which took place over a long period. The debates, the strategies and goals, the ongoing efforts to build unified forums and networks, and the foundation of institutional partnerships are part of this important development process. What follows is but a summary of the main developments involving CLADE over the past few years:

- November 2001: Education for All (EFA) Forum, UNESCO, Chile. Several institutions organize a follow-up to the Dakar World Conference. Some of these EFA Forum associations went on to become CLADE members.

- May 2002: an agreement is signed to formalize the process of regional joint work on EFA between Ayuda en Acción, Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD) and Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL). In July of that year, Action Aid took part in this partnership.

- September 2002, Mexico: The first Latin American meeting of civil society takes place.

- January 2003, Porto Alegre: Definition of a joint plan of action[2] to strengthen the regional campaign of EFA.

- June 2003: partnership with IBIS-Denmark, Intercultural Bilingual Education.

- 2003, Santa Cruz, Bolivia: The second Latin American Meeting of Civil Society dedicates a session to share results of research concerning the quality of education. This meeting gives birth to the Education Manifesto and the launching of the regional EFA campaign.

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[1] National coalitions adopt different names according to their own national realities. For example, Contrato Social (Social Contract) in Ecuador, Incidencia Civil en Educación (Civil Impact on Education) in Mexico, Foro Educativo (Education Forum) in Bolivia, Foro Nacional de Educación para Todos (National Forum of Education for All) in Chile, etc.

[2] The plan was adopted by the four members of the coordination that later became the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education. These organizations are: Action Aid, Ayuda en Acción, Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL) and Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD).

- 2004: Actions are undertaken to strengthen civil society forums and national committees and help the foundation of new EFA-related CSO groups in countries where these structures do not yet exist.

- January 2005, Porto Alegre: Several meetings are organized inside the World Social Forum. One of these sessions leads to the adoption of a regional Agenda.

- 2005, 2006: Joint national and regional actions take place in the framework of the Global Action Weeks and the Global Campaign for Education programmes.

- 2005-2006: Workshops on economic literacy take place in the Andean sub-region, Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

- 2006: The Latin American Campaign becomes a regional focal point of the UNESCO's CCNGO/EFA network and is integrated as a member of the Global Campaign for Education's Steering Committee.

- 2006: Save the Children and the German Association of Adult Education increase their participation.

- November 2006: CLADE recruits a coordinator that allows the network to develop its base, administration, communication (web page, folder, logo) and work plan.

- 2006: Along with the African and Asian networks, CLADE joins the Real World Strategy programme sponsored by the Global Campaign for Education.

- March 2007: CLADE's Steering Committee is enlarged to include the Global March against Child Labor, Ayuda en Acción, CEAAL, PIDHDD, Action Aid and Save the Children.

- March 2007: CLADE organizes its Fourth General Assembly, which adopts a new Chart of Principles and strengthens its regional action plan.

Even though each national coalition has different and specific processes and characteristics, it is still possible to identify two common traits linking the formation and development of all these EFA groups:

- The will to involve a diversity of social actors driven by a large spectrum of interests and approaches concerning the Right to Education. This diversity goes from international agencies' country and field offices, to NGOs, academic centres, universities, parents' organizations and teachers' unions. Most coalitions gather an average of 30 institutional members.

- The effort to decentralize the activities of the national coalitions so that they cover large sections of the countries. Even when the central administration is focused on the capital

2. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THE NATIONAL COALITIONS

The field of activities covered by the national coalitions is very diverse due to the large spectrum of agendas developed by the different members. The specific aims addressed in the Latin American region are:

- To strengthen and broaden the work of existing coalitions.

- To support the constitution of coalitions in countries where they do not exist.

- To bring legitimacy to the coalitions' role in EFA policy dialogue.

- To develop a global-local approach to advocacy work.

- To build partnerships with other relevant groups related to education and other issues such as public services, international cooperation, childhood rights, etc.

Though these various programmes are a good indication of the specific national challenges and environments each coalition has to face, it is also possible to establish four transversal themes on a regional level.

2.1 Social participation and mobilization

This line of work is mainly geared towards gathering public support and mobilization in support of education as a fundamental right. In this context, the annual Global Action Week organized by the GCE has become an excellent opportunity for the coalitions to gain public recognition (while acknowledging that progress can still be made to strengthen this event in terms of mobilization and impact). Efforts are currently underway to develop new proposals and communication strategies to foster even larger public participation in order to achieve a stronger and more sustainable impact on education policies. The recent social events in the region – teacher mobilization in Peru, growing demonstrations in Oaxaca, the secondary school students movement in Santiago – underline the rising calls for civil society participation in education policy setting.

Information and communication work is at the heart of this strategy, aimed not only at raising awareness on the EFA issues at stake but also at the development of more broad-based participation in the coalitions' activities and policy debates. In concrete terms, this theme also involves paying greater attention to communication tools such as the media, internet, newsletters and printed material that are liable to generate large public support during specific wide-reaching campaigns.

2.2   The financing of education systems

The financing of education systems is a central component to ensuring the right to quality education. In this field during 2006, the CLADE successfully organized a series of subregional workshops where this issue was prioritized and then expanded to a regional level.

The civil society perspective on this issue is built on a strong criticism of the current trend of international cooperation and development aid and the call for the adoption of a mechanism whereby national debt could be converted towards education programmes. In that context, it is particularly interesting to highlight the work being done by the Latin American Network on Debt, Development and Rights (LATINDADD), with the notable and active presence of Spain, to further this type of initiative in the region. According to LATINDADD, however, this project is undermined by the lack of shared information and the absence of clear guidelines determining civil society participation. Consequently, it has until now been very difficult to complete evaluations on any aspects of debt exchange and there are has been no noteworthy progress coming from multilateral initiatives.[3]

2.3   Capacity-building, networking and international support

Mention must be made to the organizations that contribute to CLADE capacity-building and outreach process. The work and funds put towards the EFA networks in Latin America by Ayuda en Acción, Save the Children UK, Aid International and Fe y Alegría have contributed to consolidating and expanding the coordination of members at regional level. The questions of the

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[3] UNESCO Commission Meeting. Buenos Aires, July 2007.

means to advance towards a more sustainable process for developments of the national coalitions and regional networks need, however, to be addressed in order to go beyond short-term scenarios and planning.

It is equally important to stress the budgetary constraints undermining most national coalitions and their impact capacities. A regional panorama shows that most of the participant organizations must finance their representative's activities for coalition campaign promoting from their own resources; some have developed cooperative funds and others rely on access to public resources in their countries.

Considering these financial difficulties, the efforts and contributions made in the context of the Global Campaign for Education are particularly praiseworthy: the "Strategies of Public Impact" Project (Real Word Strategy II)[4] is the result of a partnership between GCE, ASPBAE (Asia), ANCEFA (Africa) and CEAAL/CLADE (Latin America and the Caribbean). It began its second phase with Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Haiti (for the Caribbean), Mexico and Peru, and Central America (as a subregion).

The main strength of this initiative is its transversal character, which develops a regional coordination role for CLADE based on the emergence and expression of national dynamics. The aim is to contribute to the transformation of policies at global, regional and national levels and to monitor and push for progress of the EFA goals over the next five years.

2.4   Research and analysis

Research and analysis is another important area of work for the Latin American coalitions. The main reason for this is that the coalitions' capacity to intervene and make positive contributions in policy debate is based on the quality of their research and production skills through participatory processes. In the past two years, great efforts have been put towards research, studies and evaluations capable of providing authoritative backing to the proposals presented on a national and regional level. In this specific context, Education Watch is a special programme designed to gather information and to generate indicators on the status and dynamics of education, science and technology in a national, regional and international perspective.

3. THE NATIONAL EFA COALITIONS AND POLICY IMPACT

Civil society organizations generally agree on the need to direct their efforts, strategies and action plans towards the perspective of generating impact on the design and execution of public policies in every country in the region. The questions to be solved are therefore to understand what is meant by impact and to learn how to best achieve it.

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[4] Financed by the SALIN (Strategic Alliances with International NGOs) grant programme promoted by the Government of the Netherlands, 2007.

To quote a definition taken from analysis developed in the Central American region, "political impact" is understood as "the effort from organized citizens to influence the formulation and implementation of public policies and programmes, through persuasion and pressure of state authorities, international financial institutions, etc… Political impact is a tool for real citizen participation..."[5]

The issue of impact is one of the main debates taking place in national coalitions today. In spite of some differences of approach between the Latin American coalitions regarding the goals fixed by their campaign strategies, on the basis of the specific political situation and education environment in each country, all national CSOs place the mission of generating political impact high on their agendas. As pointed out by some national EFA coalition plans developed to foster participation and accountability, the general aim is "to strengthen civil society's capacity to undertake the design, management, development and evaluation of education policies in order to guarantee and translate in concrete terms the right to quality education for all".

Bearing this definition in mind, one can say that progress in the region is still fragmentary and weak, mainly because the national coalitions have only just finished their consolidation phase, a period centred on the development of their national capacities, and the definition and promotion of their goals, activities and visibility. This consolidation phase is important before any meaningful influence can be exerted. National coalitions need to construct a clear and sustainable base as well as an institutional development strategy to face the complexity of this goal. The reality of Latin America shows that the region has only recently reached the stage where the conditions exist to implement this strategic goal.

Even when political impact is advocated as the main strategic goal of national coalitions, it is still too early to undertake a serious evaluation of their degree of success as most coalitions have just only finished their initial phase of outreach, membership, capacity-building and activity development. This intermediary stage is all the more complex that the diversity of actors inside the coalitions demands thorough internal discussions before strategies and activities can be endorsed on a national level.

These limitations aside, the following examples of civil society impact are worthy of mention:

- In 2004, the newly appointed Minister of Education adopted the public education policy advocated by **Contrato Social** in **Ecuador** to ensure universal first grade primary education, as a first step towards the 2015 goal of universal primary education (UPE). At a later stage, this policy was approved by the National Council of Education, teachers' unions, social leaders and public opinion. In 2006, almost 60,000 children gained access to the first grade of primary school. In 2007, some 40,000 children still await access to primary school before this process can be complete.

- Legislative reforms for the development of the Basic Education Maintenance and Development Fund (FUNDEB) and the student-cost-quality amendments in **Brazil**.

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[5] WOLA, Programa Centroamericano de Capacitación en Incidencia (www.wola.org) June 2005.

- **Global Campaign for Education in Peru**. Towards the end of 2005, the partnership with the National Association of Centres for the campaign "In the public budget children first", managed to impose a change in the Public Sector Budget Financial Balance Law for 2006 so that at least 30 per cent of the budget increase would go in priority to childhood care, specifically health, education and nutrition.

- **Bolivia Forum**. In 2003, the Foro Educativo Boliviano (FEB) exerted huge pressure to successfully trigger a public debate in favor of the elaboration of a new "Strategy for Bolivian Education". The National Congress of Education finally approved FEB's major demands and proposals, and its alternative education strategy proposal for 2004-2015 was presented to the Ministry of Education. The Forum has been recognized as one of the most important networks in the education field for its technical competency and advocacy skills.

> **The national campaigns in Brazil**
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> The social movement organized by the National Campaign for the Right to Education in Brazil grew from the intention to establish a single, national value of the cost per student for a quality education. The Campaign successfully promoted debates around the notion that the amount of money budgeted for education should be directly related to the costs necessary to guarantee quality public education, based on the historic diversities in the country, not just on economic policy. To tackle the inefficiencies in the public education system, the Brazilian National Campaign for the Right to Education has led several campaigns aimed at improving the quality of education. The Campaign monitors the Government's education budget and aims at restoring the concept of education as a "right" as stated in the Constitution. The four issues approached through the Campaign (quality, financial resources, valuing of teachers and the democratic involvement of social actors) are rooted and reflected in the Brazilian Constitution, thus giving them added legitimacy.

4. THE ELABORATION OF IMPACT INDICATORS: A PENDING TOPIC

Although policy impact appears as the most important strategic objective of the national coalitions in Latin America, they often lack the methodologies and indicators allowing them to measure their specific degree of influence on the education field. In order to improve their capacity to measure the impact of their national campaigns, the coalitions have started to evaluate their actions on the basis of the concrete efficiency of their strategies and targets.

It is a complex challenge, as it entails the establishment of common goals and policies in national coalitions representing a wide variety of social actors expressing very different interests. The impact indicators should be developed to embody two main dimensions: the aspects that are adapted to a regional framework and criteria that can be specifically suited to each national

context. This effort should take into account the activities and initiatives that are undertaken in each country and establish relevant indicators formulated to evaluate generated impact towards achievement of the EFA goals. This is not always the case.

- The Campaign in Peru has not developed its own set of indicators to measure progress of the EFA Plan. The Ombudsman restricted the progress criteria to the field of the country's general level of compliance with the right to the education.

- In Honduras, there are no indicators to measure the impact of the 2007 EFA Plan, but rather a series of programme activity fields: childhood, primary education, literacy, diversity, institutional development, social audit, etc.

- In the absence of a short- or medium-term action plan, the Bolivian coalition was finding it very difficult to chart progress or measure impacts of their activity. An evaluation tool including a set of impact indicators is currently being developed.

5. PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The Latin American strategy aims to strengthen the national coalitions and give more prominence to their actions in coordination with the CLADE's Campaign for the Right to Education. This entails the following developments:

- To strengthen the coalitions and the regional network's role which implies the development of the Latin America Campaign for the Right to Education as a regional platform of policy dialogue, mobilization and advocacy towards the EFA goals.

- To expand the public opportunities open for dialogue and experience-sharing among similar initiatives in order to develop a Latin American approach towards quality education rights for all.

- To increase the participation of the Latin American Network on an international level, in order to foster wider circulation of the proposals and activities undertaken at national and regional level through CLADE.

- To build a coherent alternative vision for education in Latin America, based on grass-roots level demonstrated experience and impacts

- To involve a much wider variety of organizations as members and partners with a view to building a larger consensus and stronger coordination process around the EFA goals.

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION POLICY DIALOGUE

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

This regional report was prepared by the
Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)

Map of Asia and the Pacific

(The Asia and the Pacific region presented here follows the specific UNESCO definition which does not forcibly reflect geography. It refers to the definition with a view to the execution by the Organization of regional activities as endorsed by its governing bodies.)

Background

The Asia and the Pacific region has made significant progress since the Dakar Forum. The *2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report* shows that enrolment in primary education, gender parity index and adult literacy rates increased dramatically between 1999 and 2006. However, progress is too slow and uneven if all six EFA goals are to be achieved by 2015. This region constitutes more than 65 per cent of the world's 776 million illiterate adult population. Despite strong increases in enrolment, progress in achieving UPE is not sufficient as 28 million children are still out of school. However, even these estimates understate the extent of the challenges facing the region, as they do not take into account the large number of children who do not complete the primary cycle. Data from household surveys also show that many children enrolled in school do not attend regularly. In addition, these regional figures do not reflect the reality of all countries and population groups in the region. Strong disparities and inequalities persist between and across countries. The major challenges are in the East, South and West Asia subregions where, on current trends, some countries are at serious risk of not achieving EFA. The children most likely to be out of school or drop out live in rural areas and come from the poorest households.

Domestic spending on education as a share of gross national product (GNP) decreased between 1999 and 2006 in 40 of the 105 countries with available data. The countries in the region are among the world's lowest education spenders. Several countries with recent data such as Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and the Philippines are not spending more than 3 per cent of GNP on education. The majority of countries with data in the region fall short of the international benchmark of 6 per cent of GNP.

The neglect is all pervading and essentially stems from the historical legacy of successive governments placing a low priority on their responsibility to provide free education of good quality to its people. It is therefore imperative that civil society in the region play a crucial role as a 'watchdog' to monitor government commitment to education and demand that the right to education for all is fulfilled.

1. CIVIL SOCIETY AND EFA

1.1 Growing civil society coalitions for EFA

Civil society organizations in the Asia and the Pacific region have been playing an active role in the EFA movement for quite some time now. The efforts gained momentum with the Jomtien conference and even more so after the Dakar Forum and the call for civil society organizations to unite their initiatives so as to achieve EFA goals worldwide. In a very positive development from Dakar, when only three national education coalitions existed in the region (in Bangladesh, India and the Philippines), the survey results have shown a clear growth in numbers and spread of education coalition work in Asia and the Pacific.

Since 2000, new education campaign coalitions have been established in Japan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Older coalitions such as CAMPE in Bangladesh and E-Net in the Philippines have continued to grow both in size and strength since the 2000 Dakar Forum.

Table 4: Civil society networks/coalitions in ten Asian and Pacific countries

Country	Number of civil society networks/coalitions
Bangladesh	1 (700 CSOs as members)
Cambodia	7
India	10
Indonesia	3
Japan	1
Nepal	1 (27 CSOs as members)
Pakistan	10
Philippines	1
Solomon Islands	1 (about 10 CSOs as members)
Papua New Guinea	1 (about 50 CSOs as members)
Sri Lanka	1
Total	37

The longest standing coalition, CAMPE Bangladesh, has the largest number of member organizations and can arguably be listed as the biggest coalition in the region. Indonesia and the Philippines coalitions' membership are geographically well spread with members and chapters in all the main islands in these countries. This is particularly noteworthy for the Indonesian coalition which has only been in existence for three years. While the coalitions in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea seem smaller in comparison, they of course operate in much smaller countries than the rest and bring together a very broad range of EFA actors and constituencies.

CAMPE: A pioneer network in the region

CAMPE is the main, in fact, the only operating education CSO/coalition in Bangladesh. The need for such an organization was realized quite early. Some literacy activists who participated in the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) at Jomtien, Thailand, early in the 1990 International Literacy Year (ILY) mooted the possibility of starting a popular education movement in Bangladesh to help achieve the EFA goals just enunciated by WCEFA. The Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) was established the following year with 15 major NGOs and an individual as founding members. Today it has over 700 NGOs as coalition partners.

The major objectives of CAMPE are to:

i. Increase awareness of people of all classes about the importance of popular education in terms of literacy, democracy, human rights, gender and the environment.
ii. Establish and promote a nationwide network and coalition of NGOs and civil society to achieve Education for All (EFA).
iii. Facilitate the process of achieving the MDGs.
iv. Advocate and lobby to enhance NGO participation in education policy–making and other national and international education activities/issues.
v. Promote and support education programmes focusing on early childhood care and development, formal and non-formal primary education, adolescent education, adult literacy, continuing education and inclusive education.
vi. Strengthen, supplement and complement the primary and mass education programmes (both formal and non-formal) of government providing networking, liaison, coordination and facilitation services, and technical assistance.
vii. Strengthen capacity of partner NGOs through providing technical assistance and other support services.

CAMPE considers its first and foremost role is to serve as an umbrella organization for its coalition partners. It facilitates and coordinates the work of NGOs engaged in implementing education programmes.

1.2   Network members

ASPBAE[1] has played a key role in bringing together national networks in the different countries to strengthen and deepen the work of existing education civil society coalitions to help them mobilize public demand and concern for free quality Education For All. In the past several years, ASPBAE has helped to build national education coalitions in countries where none existed and worked towards gaining recognition for national education coalitions as key partners for national policy dialogue

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[1] www.aspbae.org

The members united through the regional network vary considerably in size and type across the region, with bigger networks existing in South Asia, followed by East Asia and the Pacific. Most of the civil society networks have members that are grass-roots-based organizations and have done a considerable amount of work in the field of education in the past few decades.

Type of organizations within coalitions

- Others 38%
- Self-help 24%
- Teachers' unions 24%
- Parents' associations 14%
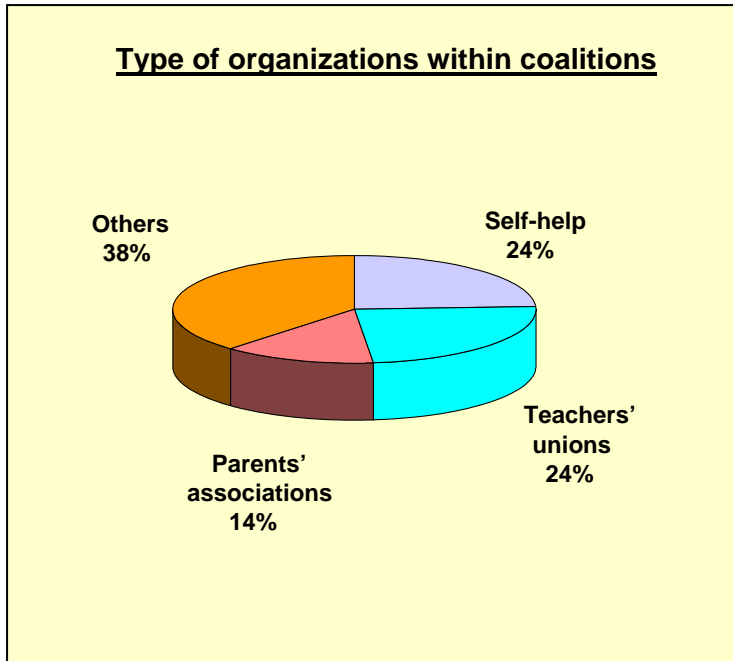
A substantial number of teachers' unions are involved in these coalitions (7 of the 11 coalitions in this survey have teachers' unions as members), which implies a very large and well-organized type of membership. India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines have also begun to bring the organizations of another group of primary EFA stakeholders – parents – into their coalitions. The Japanese NGO Network for Education has a very specific constituency profile: as a coalition dedicated to advocacy with the Japanese government on aid for EFA, its membership is mainly composed of NGOs working on international development.
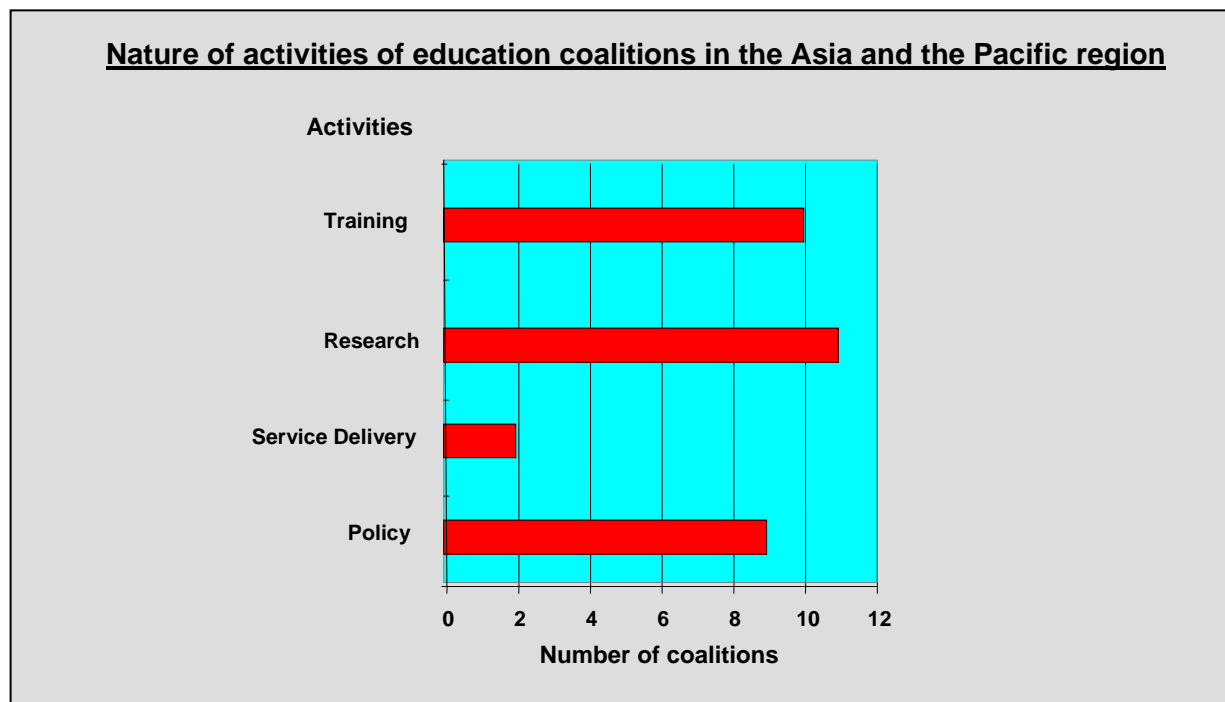
A sizeable part of coalition membership ("Others" category) includes a wide variety of groups: development NGOs, women's organizations, international NGOs, non-teaching trade unions, media groups, day care centres, training centres, university departments (for example, the Language and Literacy Department in the University of Papua New Guinea), human rights groups and community-based organizations (CBOs). This may indicate how 'education' has increasingly become part of the agenda of NGOs, movements and other interest groups over the past three to four years and how a broader consensus has been built around the notion of education as a right for ALL**.**

1.3   Scope of activities

The research shows that all the coalitions spread across South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific are involved in research and policy work. This growing emphasis on research and policy work has emerged very strongly in the past decade or so with organizations realizing the importance of having background data and information to support their campaign initiatives. Similarly, most of the coalitions (90.91 per cent) are also involved in training activities.

Most members have developed initiatives and programmes closely involving the communities and therefore enjoy a privileged position as regards understanding and critique of various policies and programmes implemented by the local governments. Their vast experience has helped them to make recommendations to governments and other agencies on policy changes, advocacy initiatives and capacity-building programmes.

Training, research and policy work dominate the areas of work of coalitions, with service delivery being the least prevalent.

Nature of activities of education coalitions in the Asia and the Pacific region

Activities

	Number of coalitions

Training — approximately 10

Research — approximately 11

Service Delivery — approximately 2

Policy — approximately 9

(x-axis: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 — Number of coalitions)

Capacity-building has also become a critical project component of several networks in the region. Equal emphasis is given to capacity-building for effective lobbying, negotiation and policy analysis.

The questionnaires have shown that coalition members mainly work around the following EFA areas: ECCE, quality UPE, adult education and literacy, gender parity, education for young adults, education finance and education as a right.

1.4   Communication

The Asia and the Pacific region reports extensive use of internet (emails and e-groups) for sharing information and updates, issuing notices for meetings and advertising events. The Cambodian National coalition has launched a NGO Education Partnership (NEP) website, while the coalition in the Philippines is relying on an E-group to circulate documentation and hold discussions. Similarly, Indonesia has an email listing sharing information on EFA that is open to non-members. However, some Pacific countries such as Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands still lag behind in terms of electronic networking due to unreliable services and the fact that several member organizations lack access to internet. Large networks such as those in Bangladesh and the Philippines tend to show concrete trends of internet usage for communicating

events and sharing materials and research findings. The increase in membership may also be attributed to the extensive use of internet as an outreach and networking tool.

It is interesting to note that print is more widely used by coalitions in the region than audiovisual media. This can be probably be attributed to the prohibitive cost factors involved with audiovisual media for certain coalitions. While some South-East Asian countries report frequent use of television, radio and print media, some coalitions in South Asia have developed strong ties with specific journalist groups in order to facilitate information circulation. Bangladesh provides a particularly interesting example, through the organization of information sessions for media professionals on issues such as poverty and education, gender and education, MDGs and the EFA goals.
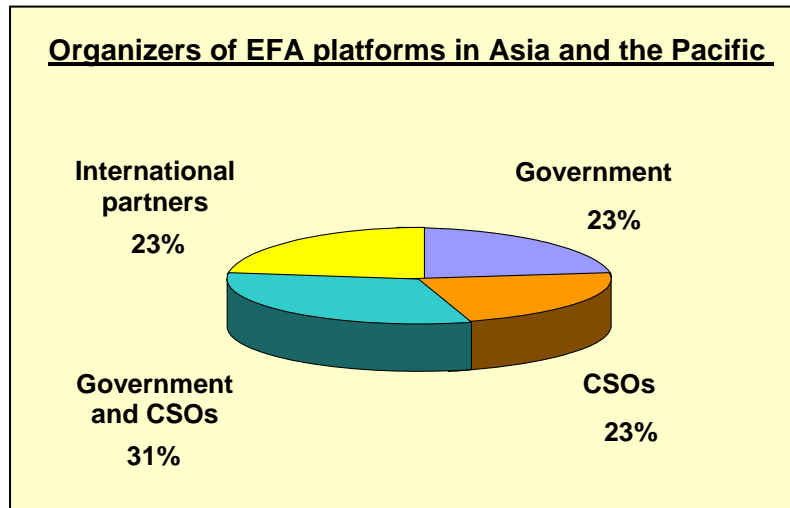
Cambodia and the Philippines are the most advanced with regards to producing periodic newsletters in print and electronic form. In South Asia, only Bangladesh appears to be producing regular newsletters, while Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Pacific coalitions have stated their intention of launching their own information letters in the near future.

All the respondents except Pakistan have testified that they receive periodic updates from EFA partners, although the views concerning the quality and flow of information vary greatly throughout the region. Information from UNICEF seemed the most accessible to the respondents, followed by that from UNESCO and government. The World Bank seemed the least accessible to the coalitions in terms of communication and information sharing.

2. SPACES / MECHANSISMS FOR NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE

In 2003, ASPBAE developed a set of case studies in six countries, documenting CSO participation in the development of national action plans (NAPs) on EFA. The NAPs were targeted for completion by 2002 through a broad-based process involving all EFA stakeholders including CSOs. The study concluded that CSO participation was by and large sporadic and patchy. Except in countries with a developed coalition such as in Bangladesh and the Philippines, government handpicked NGO representatives in EFA-related meetings. Where CSO participation was more substantial, it was largely limited to one-off technical meetings. In most cases, the discussions were predominantly focused on information sharing.

The responses to this survey indicate that the post-Dakar follow-up and CSO participation in official EFA processes has progressed substantially since 2003. All coalitions affirm this with a positive response to the survey question asking whether there was progress in CSO participation in the preparation and implementation of education policy.

Organizers of EFA platforms in Asia and the Pacific

International partners
23%

Government
23%

Government and CSOs
31%

CSOs
23%

Coalitions unanimously indicated the presence of policy forums and dialogues on EFA in their respective countries. All coalitions also reported having participated in these forums, organized in most instances jointly by government and CSO groups. CSOs, government and international EFA partners have also individually initiated spaces for EFA debate and dialogue in the country. South Asia has been able to bring in international partners effectively, while South-East Asia and the Pacific depend more on state and CSO actors to organize these forums.[2]

The coalitions commonly identified critical lessons derived from these forums as including:

- The importance of multi-stakeholder platforms to discuss policy issues.
- The need for CSOs to demonstrate competency and leadership skills in their respective fields.
- The importance of accurate statistics/updated data to initiate meaningful discussions.
- The importance of introducing alternative education systems and non-formal education in policy discussions.
- Highlighting good practice related to CSO participation in policy formulation, review and implementation.[3]
- Setting clear benchmarks for achieving goals for education and ensuring periodic monitoring and review.

All coalitions indicated that they maintain partnership with government in various levels and areas of education provision and policy work:

Five coalitions – Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan and Nepal – reported being involved with government in policy formulation, policy/programme implementation and evaluation. All

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[2] This can be attributed to the number of international funding organizations present in South Asia as compared with Pacific and South-East Asian countries.

[3] In Bangladesh, the findings of Education Watch studies have projected crucial issues such as completion rate, quality concerns, etc., most of which have been addressed in the Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II).

coalitions reported involvement in 'policy conception' with varied levels of participation in 'policy implementation', 'training' and 'assessment/evaluation'. Instances of influencing education policies in the region appear in Bangladesh and India. It is important to note that coalitions in Indonesia have also been able to produce recommendations to education policies that have been accepted and endorsed by the government.[4]

While all coalitions indicate engagement with government at the central level, a substantial number – 7 of the 11 coalitions – engage with government more comprehensively at three levels: national, local and school.

Levels of CSO policy involvement

School 31%

Central/national 42%

Local/district 27%
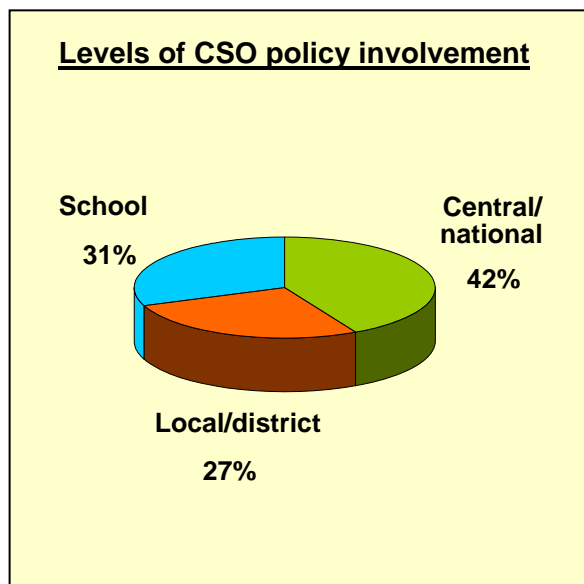
These positive developments unsurprisingly perhaps coincide with the growth and strengthening of education campaign coalitions in the region. On the whole, the survey responses seem to indicate that increasingly, coalitions are able to negotiate a substantial presence in policy-making in their countries. Coalitions are present in various areas of EFA development and policy work – as advocates, trainers, evaluators and researchers, to name but a few roles. The level of their engagement has also deepened with a majority of the coalitions able to operate simultaneously at national, local and school levels – indicating a greater capacity to follow through on policy reforms and commitments at the school level where the commitments to EFA can really be put to test.

However, a substantial number – 9 out of 11 coalitions – characterized the nature of their partnership with government as remaining largely informal. Only 4 coalitions – Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines – reported instances of concerted and well-established partnerships with government.

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[4] Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) coalition in Indonesia was involved in a recent workshop and was able to produce a report with recommendations endorsed by the Heads of the Education Department and the Department of Community Development

> **Sustained pressure makes a difference: a case study of India**
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> Decades of popular mobilization to make primary education free and for all in India yielded results after the turn of the millennium. The Ministry of Education reported that school enrolment reached 100 per cent in 2005 for the first time in the country's history. Sixty years after India attained political independence, universal primary education is gradually becoming a reality. The original constitutional pledge, at independence, was to ensure free and compulsory education for all children within ten years. In 1966 the Education Commission (known as 'the Kothari Commission') had already recommended that India should pursue that specific objective. However, it is estimated that 6 per cent of GNP for education would be necessary to attain that goal. Even though neither budgetary allocations to education nor its universalization have yet been attained, recent developments show that this EFA goal could be within reach. One of the signposts was the 93rd Constitutional Amendment, which transformed the right to education from a directive for state policy into an individual right. This legal measure was passed unanimously in the Lok Sabha in 2001 and by the Rajya Sabha in 2002 although it took five years to get a short and simple amendment adopted by parliament. The background to the constitutional change in 2001-2002 was accumulated social pressure against a series of governments that failed to universalize primary education. The sustained mobilization from various civil society organizations to make amendments in the constitution finally paid off.

The coalitions further underscored the following constraints and challenges in these partnerships and engagements:

- Dependency on government statistics and processes.
- Lack of stakeholder ownership for implementing joint plans.
- Lack of political will to reform education.
- Power relations and dynamics within networks/coalitions.
- In many instances, governments still dictate who to invite from among the coalitions and what policy spaces will be accessible to CSOs.
- CSOs are generally not yet recognized as full partners in policy formulation and decision-making. The formal mechanisms to secure their sustained participation have by and large remained undefined.
- CSOs still face problems of limited access to information related to education policies. These restrictions are most severe in matters related to external financing for education.

CAMPE Bangladesh is the only coalition to have participated in processes involving negotiating and assessing external aid to education. They have also been able to launch independent reviews of externally funded education programmes to inform and lobby government and donors.

The experience of Bangladesh is an example cited by CAMPE to underscore the critical role donors play in the achievement of EFA: "in terms of access and gender parity in schools, Bangladesh achieved the target in 2005 because of certain interventions where development partners played a supportive role." However, the country still faces severe resource constraints in other EFA areas such as education quality, literacy, etc.

Most coalitions were highly critical of education aid and the way it was delivered in their countries:

- E-Net Philippines was once invited to participate in a multi-year budget simulation to be submitted to the World Bank, which dealt with the investments needed to meet EFA goals. But E-Net was not invited to the Philippine Development Forum (PDF)[5] or any other similar venues and was not given any prior knowledge of negotiations and the basis of official development assistance (ODA) agreements. Only a handful of NGOs are invited to attend the annual PDF where they play a token role.

- Cambodia is one of the three FTI recipient countries in Asia and the Pacific, with Timor Leste and Mongolia, between 2002 and 2009. While NGO Education Partnership (NEP) Cambodia welcomes the financial support offered through the FTI, which makes delivery of education services possible in Cambodia, it has been difficult to do any independent monitoring of the spending of these funds. Civil society organisations (CSOs) do not have access to anything but government-produced financial records that are inconsistent and often unreliable. International donors who oversee this process generally accept the government figures and do not appear to strongly question the government's poor performance on disbursement of funds and other quite blatant administrative shortcomings (for example, funds for the provision of textbooks, which have apparently been printed, but not distributed for two years). It also notes widespread misuse and misappropriation of government funds in many sectors, including education. However, the lack of official figures makes it difficult for NEP to estimate the exact degree of misappropriation and to track progress.

- E-Net noted that civil society organizations are not involved in debt policy processes in Indonesia and that the government holds back the relevant information from the public on these issues.

- PEAN stated that not enough funds were allocated by the government and the donors to achieve the EFA goals. The Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program (AusAID) is described as being a very unenthusiastic supporter of the EFA goals.

- GCE-Nepal underscored the need to increase education aid in order to ensure adequate per pupil expenditure. It also expressed the need for strategic consultations between CSOs and the donor agencies on the fund allocation process where proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are lacking.

The engagements of coalitions with government and donors need to grow further and be sustained. As observed by the Coalition on Education Solomon Islands (COESI), "CSOs need the capacities to offer a long-term commitment to keep being involved as stakeholders and this in turn requires secure resources".

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[5] An annual consultation, the PDF, is convened to serve as a venue where donors deliberate ODA projects for the Philippines (education as one sector among many).

All coalitions in the survey except in Japan receive external support almost equally in all areas identified: advocacy, training and research. The noteworthy parallel funding available to many coalitions has been through the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) and the Real World Strategies (RWS) programme of GCE, coordinated by ASPBAE in the Asia Pacific region. CEF is supported by the United Kingdom Treasury and assists coalitions in South Asia. RWS is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation through its SALIN and currently supports nine coalitions in the region. Other donors include the New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID),[6] GCE, ASPBAE, Christian Children's Fund, the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE), Aide Et Action, UNESCO, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Oxfam Novib, the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC), Oxfam Great Britain, Royal Netherlands embassy, etc. For most of the coalitions, the aid comes through the form of medium-term support ranging from two to six years. However, Bangladesh remains an exception with committed funding for ten years.

3. MONITORING EFA POLICIES

3.1   Strengthening of EFA process

The EFA process offers both challenges and opportunities to advance the right of all to education. The strengths of the EFA process, as shared by the coalitions, may be summarized as follows:

- Long-term, strategic plans to achieve EFA targets have been defined by countries with some donors committing support for education policy reforms.

- Enhanced CSO participation in various aspects of education policy with increased recognition of NGO/CSO knowledge to influence and formulate alternative education policies.

- Growth and consolidation of education campaign networks.

- Greater attention to marginalized sections of the population. Incentives have been introduced to reach marginalized groups (stipends, mid-day meal schemes, scholarships for girls, etc.).

- Education is more widely accepted as a right, with this recognition expressed in constitutional and legal frameworks.

- In a few countries, such as in Bangladesh, specific government departments dealing with EFA have been strengthened.

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[6] For Asia and the Pacific.

3.2   Contributions of EFA coalitions to national education policy

The enhanced capacities of civil society in policy debate and formulation have already had positive impact on education strategies and programmes in many countries of the region. A large majority of coalitions responding to this survey (91 per cent) were able to identify concrete examples and "success stories" of their positive influence in education policy, plans and reports.

Policy contributions include advocating inclusion of concepts such as child-friendly schools in Cambodia and indigenous peoples schools in the Philippines. Similarly, Bangladesh has been able to pressure governments to define a non-formal education policy and a convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. India highlighted their success in promoting education as a fundamental right, banning child labour in domestic services and hotels, and working towards consensus on the right to education. The Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) was able to influence policies that led to revisions of the curriculum, timely provision of textbooks and improvements in school infrastructure. In Indonesia, CSO proposals advocating an alternative education programme for women resulted in government starting a learning module for gender-equality in education.

One of the most interesting examples of success stories on policy influencing is to be found in Cambodia, which has developed a new basic education curriculum in cooperation with educators, NGOs and local communities. Through its constant efforts, the coalition has been able to influence the Cambodia Basic Education (CBE) Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and RTI International (Research Triangle Institute) to adopt this new basic education curriculum.

Several coalitions have reported examples of positive discussions with government on education issues leading to the organization of joint forums and other participatory public debates. In Papua New Guinea, PEAN organized a focus on literacy campaign that led to a statement from the Minister for an increased allocation to literacy and access to the Ministry of Education's literacy desk resources. However, this has not yet translated into action. In the Solomon Islands, Development Services Exchange, the national umbrella network for NGOs, organized with COESI a forum to discuss the Government's "Bottom Up Approach" to development. This forum, attended by all Government permanent secretaries, was a great success and a promising prospect for future interaction with civil society.

In Bangladesh, a roundtable on Education and Human Rights was jointly organized by CAMPE, *The Daily Star*, UNESCO and BRAC University. The participants represented multi-stakeholder groups including former education ministers, representatives of major political parties, scholars, NGO members and distinguished citizens. The forum was oriented towards ensuring the right to education and initiating necessary action to meet the commitment towards education. One of the main issues raised was the need to amend the Constitution[7] so that it complies with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Millennium Declaration, both of which have been ratified by the State.

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[7] The present Constitution states that, 'education is a fundamental principle' and not a 'fundamental right'.

Positive policy dialogue with government has also been particularly fruitful in the Philippines, where the collaboration led to the institutionalization of a partnership and dialogues mechanism, a sufficiently rare occurrence for it to be underlined in this report. After six years of active and sustained lobbying by the Philippine national coalition E-Net, the National EFA Committee (NEC) was finally launched in July 2006 with E-Net serving as Co-Chair. NEC's mandate includes the planning, monitoring and evaluation of EFA-related programmes and activities to ensure that key targets are met. In this framework, E-Net has taken specific responsibility in mobilizing local stakeholders to ensure broad social support and participation in the country's EFA processes. E-Net has also been able to ensure that NEC's mission includes not only the formal basic education but also other EFA goals such as early childhood care and education (ECCE) and alternative learning systems covering adult education.

3.3   Advocacy, lobbying and mobilization for policy reform and compliance with EFA targets

Whereas there are some instances of direct and voluntary measures taken by governments to facilitate civil society contributions to policy formulation, the positive developments contributing to the achievement of the EFA goals are much more often the result of intense lobbying, mobilization and struggle against government inertia or conservative non-inclusive education plans. The following are but some successful examples taken from a selection of countries from the region.

- In **Bangladesh**, an independent non-profit private sector mechanism called Education Watch has been set up by a civil society group[8] to ensure adequate emphasis on EFA. The broad objective of Education Watch is to inform the people, government and other stakeholders on the progress made towards EFA, with specific indicators to monitor developments in primary and secondary education, and to monitor on a regular basis the internal efficiency of education plans on issues such as access, quality, gender equality and financing. Education Watch Bangladesh has been acclaimed by many civil society groups across Asia and Africa, to the point of inspiring the formation of similar groups in 9 countries in the Asia and the Pacific region and another 11 countries in Africa.

- In **India,** the coalition members have been extensively engaged in a countrywide campaign towards ensuring education rights. Though the introduction of a model bill in 2006 was a setback,[9] NCE has worked towards circulating a critical manual on a Model Right to Education Bill 2006 and conducting campaigns all over India involving CSOs and teachers' unions. This movement has led to the turning down of the Bill by the governments in several states.

- In **Sri Lanka,** the Coalition for Educational Development (CED) has been functioning as a pressure group to positively intervene in two important education issues. The lack of

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[8] Members include representatives/individuals from academic institutions, research organizations, human rights groups, think tanks and NGOs having demonstrated interest, concern and expertise on the issue of education and its monitoring.

[9] It proposes to reduce the role of central government and make states contribute more, with the increased risk of creating inequalities in education spending.

teachers appointed in remote rural schools has been a long-standing problem in Sri Lanka, but this situation was further aggravated by a government policy on teacher transfers even more detrimental to the already understaffed rural schools. However, after constant pressure from the parents and civil society, the Ministry of Education finally agreed to modify its policy of recruitment of teachers to the government schools. Sri Lankan coalition members have also objected effectively against the closure of schools ordered by the government on the basis of their commercial viability. The authorities were threatening to react to the decrease in the number of pupils attending certain remote rural schools by simply closing them down but were prevented from taking such radical measures by the CED's well-orchestrated national campaigning.

- **In Cambodia,** the problem of access to education services for children with disabilities was receiving little attention in national education policy development and in national policy dialogue with the Cambodian government. NGOs were the main actors filling the gap in the provision of education for children with disabilities and otherwise disadvantaged for many years. Through lobbying and public pressure networking, organizations such as the Disability Action Council (DAC) and NEP have pushed for a national policy on inclusion for those with disabilities and appear hopeful that the draft policy will be adopted by the Ministry of Special Education Department and implemented in the near future.

Lessons learned from a Budget Advocacy Campaign: the case of E-Net Philippines

In the Philippines, E-Net has achieved a significant milestone in the budget advocacy campaign that was carried out together with a group of NGOs and coordinated by Social Watch Philippines. The specific budgetary issues and proposals raised by E-Net eventually became the subject of a deadlock in the Senate and House bicameral deliberation. Among the most significant gains finally obtained was an increase in budget for basic education and provisions for the hiring of additional teachers, as well as special extra allowances for those teachers exposed to hardship or difficult environments. Another important victory was the adoption of a provision that requires government agencies to make all budgetary documents and data available for copying, scrutiny and reproduction. The ingredients of E-Net's success can be found in the following factors

- A concrete, feasible and reasonable alternative budget proposal with all the supporting documentation, computation, research and references
- Active supporters in both the Senate and House of Representatives
- Active engagement/support during key moments in the budget process including timely briefings; reference materials and briefing kits; and statements and research support. The specific questions and enquiries distributed to the legislators immediately before the hearings were very effective in raising key budgetary issues.
- The cooperation among NGOs and their unified stand strengthened their position and legitimacy during the legislative hearings
- Familiarity with the budget process helped in planning and anticipating issues that cropped up along the way.
- Importance of long-term and sustained campaigns – it took over seven months of research, planning, developing strategies, networking and lobbying to achieve significant inroads in the budget process.

In spite of these positive developments, there are still many widely shared concerns and criticisms expressed by the coalitions on the EFA process. In a general regional environment where many countries are still far off the 2015 EFA goals and have little hope of reaching them without such basic ingredients as strong political will, adequate resources and civil society participation, the coalitions are eager to point out the following most striking weaknesses of the EFA processes:

- Non-transparency and lack of accountability in the education sector.
- EFA institutional mechanisms still underdeveloped at country level.
- Persistent financing gap: not only is donor and government funding inadequate to meet the EFA goals in the given time-frame but also the non-transparent education aid process undermines, where it is most vital, efficient distribution of funds.

The Asia and the Pacific respondents are particularly unanimous in their dissatisfaction with regards to donor financial assistance in their respective countries. In fact, 82 per cent or 9 out of 11 coalitions[10] registered dissatisfaction with donor assistance due to:

- Non-transparent policies and processes.
- Low priority given to 'soft' areas such as education and health as compared with infrastructure.
- Overlapping programmes.
- Conditions attached to donor funding.

4. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Since the Dakar Forum in 2000, the CCNGO/EFA focal point has been able to induce sufficient inputs to give birth to a wide array of networks/coalitions in countries of the Asia and the Pacific region. In most cases these networks have the advantage of being unique agencies responsible for EFA. Wherever there are parallel initiatives, the Asia-Pacific coalitions have the advantage of interfaces with these organizations. This presents a good opportunity to collaborate and work towards the common EFA goals.

Irrespective of the networks' size, the regional coalitions have been able to maintain the diversity of member composition. This is also reflected in the wider coverage of the EFA areas in the Asia and the Pacific region. The successful development of training programmes is also an important indicator to gauge the concrete outputs of the coalitions. However, it appears necessary to provide ongoing guidance and support for the Pacific countries given the limited available human and financial resources. Inputs provided by ASPBAE for Pacific training sessions are a positive step in this direction.

The partnerships with the government, international agencies and the private sector have created a favourable environment for national policy dialogue. However, at this stage, it appears to be constrained by budget limitations and human resource allocations. This contributes to undermining the CSOs' capacity to participate in policy dialogue initiatives, as demonstrated by the discussions taking place in the emerging joint forums organized by networks. It is essential to train network members to analyse gaps in the national education sector programmes and document them effectively. Progress of civil society participation in education made by smaller networks such as that of Papua New Guinea illustrates that efficient participation is not necessarily directly related to network size. However it is often also a direct result of the development of formal relationships between CSOs and the Government.[11] Thus, it does appear worthwhile for coalitions to push for the institutionalization of these relationships as a proactive measure.

It is also important to understand the impact that funding by international partners can have in the region. South Asia (particularly Bangladesh) is a good example of the trigger effect that these actors can have. Overall trends in the Asia and the Pacific region also hint towards rapidly

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[10] Only Cambodia and Bangladesh found donor assistance in their countries satisfactory.
[11] As evident in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

evolving structures of communication between network partners, with extensive use of internet as a networking tool. Communication difficulties still occur, however, as demonstrated by the low level of access to the audiovisual media and the irregularity of publication of the coalitions' newsletters. This needs to be taken into account when elaborating the forthcoming regional coalitions' annual advocacy and action plans. The survey findings also show the need to convince international partners, government agencies and especially the World Bank of the importance of upgrading their communication with CSOs and sharing with them relevant strategy and policy information in print as well as electronic form.

The Asia and the Pacific region provides ample examples of successful interfaces between the government and CSOs in the education sector. However, evidence also shows ample room for progress and the need to develop formal partnerships assembling all stakeholders around clear policy mandates and guidelines. Some of the coalitions have already initiated efforts in this direction by signing memoranda of understanding providing a clear framework for coordination mechanisms. However, these specific examples need to be extended and further elaborated to be the most inclusive possible in terms of objectives and stakeholders involved.

The survey results show that the growth and expansion of education campaign coalitions in Asia and the Pacific has contributed strongly to a greater role and participation of civil society in EFA policy processes nationally – with evidence of positive policy and programme reforms.

In spite of this, CSOs have yet to be recognized as full EFA policy partners. More often than not, CSOs are barred from local processes related to donor financing for education, or are offered token roles as their participation in policy processes remains largely informal. CSOs are therefore unanimously advocating for a greater institutionalization of CSO participation in policy-making. Good examples of such developments – such as in Bangladesh and the Philippines – do exist in the region and other governments could learn and draw lessons from them.

Donor processes in most countries should be reformed to ensure greater transparency and broader-based participation. Aid to education should not only be urgently increased but also applied to areas where it could be most efficient in order to reach the EFA targets. CSOs can provide independent, alternative feedback and assessment of fund use and fund requirements so that scarce resources are better applied and fresh resources allocated more efficiently.

Greater participation and institutionalization of CSO in policy processes will no doubt give rise to new dynamics and growing challenges that CSOs and education coalitions will need to deal with.

- Coalitions will need to be mindful of maintaining their independence and the 'critical edge' while participating effectively in official policy processes.

- CSOs should be able to effectively translate the technical competencies they develop (e.g. Education Watch, budget tracking) into concrete political gains and policy changes conducive to a rights-based and inclusive EFA strategy.

- Coalitions will have to work even more effectively on their outreach programmes to bring in and organize the active participation of the primary stakeholders in EFA (the rights

holders): children, parents, students, adult learners and adult illiterates, teachers, etc. As they begin to play stronger roles in the coalitions and its governance processes, coalitions will need to be prepared to manage the complexity of merging the united but often diverse interests and ideologies of their broad constituencies more sensitively and competently.

- Scaled up demands on coalitions will require greater resources, administrative competency, and more rational internal organization and functioning. Coalitions will need to be careful that their own institutionalization does not distract them from their mainstream campaigns, advocacy work or relevant political tasks.

List of acronyms

AIDS: Acquired immune deficiency syndrome

ANCEFA: Africa Network Campaign on Education for All

ASPBAE: Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education

AusAID: Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program

CAMPE: Campaign for Popular Education

CARE: Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc.

CBO: Community-based organization

CCNGO/EFA: Collective Consultation of Non-Governmental Organizations on Education for All

CCOAD: Consultation Chamber of Development Organizations and Associations

CEAAL: Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina

CED: Coalition for Educational Development

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEF: Commonwealth Education Fund

CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency

CLADE: Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education

CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child

DAC: Disability Action Council

EFA: Education for All

EU: European Union

FEB: Foro Educativo Boliviano

FUNDEB: Basic Education Maintenance and Development Fund

GAW: Global Action Week

GCE: Global Campaign for Education

GNECC: Ghanaian National Education Campaign Coalition

GNI: Gross national income

GNP: Gross national product

GRTS: Gambia Radio Television Services

HIV: Human immunodeficiency virus

ICAE: International Council for Adult Education

IDB: Inter-American Development Bank

ILY: International Literacy Year

KEN/MEK: Kilimanjaro Education Network

LATINDADD: Latin American Network on Debt, Development and Rights

LIFE: Literacy Initiative for Empowerment

MEPT: Mozambican Movement for Education for All

MERCOSUR: Mercado Común del Sur

MINEDAF: Ministers of Education of Africa

MKUKUTA: United Republic of Tanzania's National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty

NAPs: National Action Plans

NEC: National EFA Committee

NEP: NGO Education Partnership

NGO: Non-governmental organization

NZAID: New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency

OAU: Organization of African Unity

ODA: Official development assistance

OREALC/UNESCO: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

PARPA: Mozambican Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty

PEAN: Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network

PCE: Pakistan Coalition for Education

PDF: Philippine Development Forum

PEDP II: Second Primary Education Development Program

PIDHDD: Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo

ROSEN: Réseau des Opérateurs du Secteur Educatif du Niger

RTI International: Trade name of Research Triangle Institute

RWS: Real World Strategies

SALIN: Strategic Alliances with International NGOs

SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

UNMC: United Nations Millennium Campaign

USAID: United States Agency for International Development