Basic Education, Civil Society Participation and the New Aid Architecture:

Lessons from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali and Tanzania

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Chapter 1:   Introduction and Overview

Introduction

Defining and Assessing Civil Society Roles in a New Architecture for Development

For the purposes of this research, the term "civil society" is used to refer to organized groups or associations that "are separate from the state, enjoy some autonomy in relations from the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests, values or identities." This is the definition employed by Manor, Robinson and White in their Ford Foundation study of civil society and governance. It draws on the sociological conceptualization of civil society as a realm situated between the state and other basic building blocks of society (individuals, families and firms) (Manor, Robinson & White 1999; Mercer 2002; Edwards 2004).

A wide range of civil society organizations might be expected to be active in education. In this research we thus focused primarily on formal civil society actors operating within the national educational policy arena: non-governmental organizations, parents' associations, teachers' unions, faith-based organizations, private provider groups, and networks or coalitions. We recognize that by doing so we may have excluded forms of civil society organization that are unique to African cultural contexts, or that are located at the local or community level (Hyden 2006; Mercer 2003; Lewis 2002). One of the recommendations from our study is for further research on the interface between formal civil society organizations in education and the local citizens, members and communities they purport to represent.

Civil society has been described by political theorists as playing a key role within the democratic polity, primarily by representing citizen interests, enhancing civility and trust, acting as a government watchdog, and introducing transformative, oppositional, or innovative ideas and models. Civil society organizations have also long been the direct providers of social services within communities, and especially of education. In keeping with recent work on civil society and aid effectiveness, we can thus typify civil society actors in education as contributing to development in three distinct ways:

- by enhancing educational services for citizens;
- by contributing to the fabric of formal democracy;
- and by empowering citizens to make educational claims– especially those that are poor or marginalized (AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b).

As many others have noted, these three types of contribution draw on different organizational attributes and require different repertoires and skills. Service-related roles, for example, require technical and sector expertise and an ability to work with government. On the other hand, the contributions to democratic practice and citizen voice require autonomy, capacities for mass mobilization and advocacy, and some form of coordination among CSO actors themselves. These roles can also yield conflicting expectations or outcomes (CEF 2005a, 2007a, 2007b; Cornwall & Gaventa 2001; Nelson 2006; Mundy 2007b).

This is especially true in the context of new efforts to achieve basic education, which are increasingly characterized by governmental ownership and control of sector-wide programs, decentralization reforms, and donor harmonization through pooled funding and budget support (OECD/DAC 2003, 2005). In such contexts, civil society actors are expected to act as independent watchdogs and critics, as well as complementary service providers, subcontractors, and partners to government. CSOs also face daunting challenges related to the focus and financing of new sector programs. Education sector plans in all our case countries reflect an emerging international consensus about the importance of primary schooling over other types of educational investment within development processes. Behind them is also the idea that a universal right to education ("Education for All") is essential for democratic development and good governance, embodied in the Millennium Development Goals, international human rights conventions, as well as in the Dakar Framework on Education for All. However, despite two decades of promises, the international community has never come close to funding the gap between the resources our case country governments

can reasonably expect to make available for education, and what would be needed to achieve the right to education (UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, various years; Mundy 2007b). The absence of strong international resource commitments to the universal right to education has led the donor community itself to send mixed messages about the best approach for achieving EFA – for example, whether through gradualist or more rapid approaches to universalization; through public or a mixture of public and private resources; on the basis of budgetary containment (such as cuts in the costs of teachers), reallocation from other sectors, deficit spending, or external commitments (Rose 2005a, 2005b; Sperling 2001).

Over the past decade, education sector plans in many developing countries have recognized a role for partners and stakeholders (Bray 2003). But education sector plans rarely establish a clear framework for civil society engagement at the national level. As our studies and others have shown, there is limited assessment of which actors matter and why in Education Sector plans; no regular or transparent processes for choosing civil society interlocutors in formal policy processes; and a tendency to exclude CSOs that have potentially critical or destabilizing points of view (Kuder 2004; Murphy 2005, Doftori & Takala 2005; Kruse 2003; Lexow 2003; Mia 2004; Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond & Wolf 2002). Instead, governments and international development partners have tended to focus on the service-enhancing functions of civil society, and to assume relative harmony among civil society actors themselves (DFID 2001; Mundy 2007a; Rose 2003, 2005b; Archer 1994; Bray 2003). Furthermore, sector plans include a broad and controversial assumption that decentralization reforms will enhance the potential for democratic deliberation of education policies (Mundy 2007a).

If we accept the proposition that civil society participation should not only enhance educational services, but also contribute to formal democracy and empower the disempowered, we need to look again at sector programs and the aid effectiveness principles CSO participation engenders. Tho r4i0 -1c

2. Insights into the quality and effectiveness of civil society participation in the planning and implementation of sector-wide reform initiatives; and,
3. A framework for exploring mechanisms to enhance the participation of national civil society organizations in the development and implementation of national education sector plans.

reform programmes in their countries.[4] In total, 176 civil society informants were interviewed (30-50 organizations in each country); along with 60 interviews with international technical and donor organizations and government officials. Relevant government policy documents, research reports, annual reports, CSO media advocacy and other related materials were also collected and reviewed to complement the primary data. The interviews were transcribed and coded for emergent themes, by category of respondent, whether CSO, government or donor, using both qualitative data analysis software and manual sorting. The team used an iterative approach – drafting a series of data summaries and then developing a set of common issues, for which the interviews and supplementary data was then re-coded and further triangulated to ensure validity of analysis and interpretation.

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Chapter 2: The Education Policy Context

Introduction

Tanzania enjoys relatively high rates of participation at the primary level and high levels of adult literacy. However, as of 2005 fewer than 60% of Tanzanian children completed the full primary cycle (*Tanzania case study*: Haggerty, Manion & Mundy 2007).

Kenya, our final case country, has a GDP per capita (PPP) of $1140, similar to Burkina Faso, but its

Education for All and the New Architecture for Development

Despite some important differences in their economic, political and educational contexts, these four countries share several broad similarities. All four have moved towards greater political freedom in recent

Table 2: Basic Education Sector Reform Programs in the Four Countries

Nor are the relative responsibilities of the central state, subnational authorities, and CSOs in guaranteeing access and quality to basic education services stated with precision. In particular two questions – whether private funding is "unfortunately necessary" or "inherently desirable" for educational improvement; and who has the responsibility and mandate to raise and control finances for basic education – are left vague in all four sector plans. Finally, while all sector plans mention the value of stakeholder consultation, none of the sector plans we reviewed provided clear frameworks or benchmarks for civil society consultation and engagement in national policy settings.

Table 3. Civil Society Partnerships in Official National Sector Plans

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
Goal of partnerships with civil society	Improved administration via coordination among international, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Shared responsibility for access and quality goals. Includes raising resources and providing services.	Civil society to contribute financial resources, capacity-building of local government and school-level actors, mobilizing communities for participation in education, preventing disruptions to the system.	Participate as a joint stakeholder in planning, implementing and monitoring sector program; contribute experience and resources; facilitate community participation; conduct education policy analysis and advocacy (URT PEDP: 22).	Enhanced national ownership and partnerships through teamwork and collaboration. Delivery of services with CSOs playing a complementary role to the government.
Key mechanisms identified for engagement of civil society and citizens	Parents' Associations (with mandate to fundraise). Stakeholder consultations on regional action plans (required for disbursement of sector funds). FONAENF (Non-formal education fund) given 10% of sector funds, managed jointly by government, donors and CSOs.	Consultation structures at national, provincial, and local levels planned. Locally elected governments to work with CSOs in planning. School management committees.	Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC). School management committees (which manage sector funding to schools).	School management committees, (which manage sector funding to schools).
Key civil society partners identified	INGOs, NNGOs, private & faith-based organizations, teachers' unions, research associations, CBOs, parents' associations.	Communities, parents' associations, school management committees, NGOs, teachers' unions, students, the private sector.	NGOs and civil society organizations, teachers' union, communities and school committees. Private sector only in relation to procurement.	NGOs, faith-based organizations, parents, communities, teachers' unions, the private sector.

Decentralization Reforms and their Implications for CSO Participation

A second defining feature of national education sector plans in our four case countries is the emphasis they place on decentralization reforms. Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania and Kenya have each made decentralization a centerpiece of their national basic education sector strategies, and it is these reforms, more than any other factor, that have ushered in a discourse about partnership between civil society actors and the state. Decentralization reforms are heavily supported by international agencies, to provide the local oversight and accountability necessary for improvements in educational access and quality (Gershberg & Winkler 2004; Land & Hauck 2003; De Grauwe 2004; De Grauwe, Lugar, Balde, et al. 2005).[11] Many

As can be seen in Table 4 below, decentralization reforms vary across our case countries. All

Advocates of decentralization generally argue that it has "great potential to stimulate the growth of civil society organizations…prevent widespread disillusionment with new policies from turning into rejection of the entire democratic process…[and] boost legitimacy by making government more responsive to citizen needs" (Diamond 1999, quoted in Hiskey & Seligson 2003: 66). However, in our case countries there is no explicit description of how educational decentralization relates to democratic consolidation in the education sector plans. While structures exist to represent the community within the school, such structures are widely criticized for only weakly representing broad-based parental voice and oversight, and being prone to domination by local elites (De Grauwe et al. 2005). Furthermore, the tendency to use such decentralized structures for parental resource mobilization can lead to both increasing inequalities across districts, and distortions in parental participation itself.

Decentralization reforms thus appear to have contradictory implications for the engagement of citizens and civil society organizations in educational policy and implementation. While formally encouraging greater participation, the reforms create a disjointed and sometimes confusing arena for citizen and CSO engagement.

Table 4. Decentralization Reforms in National Sector Plans

		Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
General character of reform		Deconcentration and devolution slowly implemented due to centralized state. Weak local capacity.	Detailed legislation and directions for transfer of competencies slow. Some organized opposition (especially over teacher hiring and new SMCs).	Central state retains control of hiring and financing while local levels plan and spend. Greater emphasis on direct user committees. No organized opposition.	Central state retains control of hiring and financing while local levels plan and spend. Greater emphasis on direct user committees. No organized opposition.
Main Components					
1.	Deconcentration of Ministry Staff	Yes – administrative, financial and staffing roles at regional and commune levels.	Yes – administrative and staffing roles at region, cercle and commune levels.	Some – Primary school implementation under the Prime Ministers Office – Regional Administration and Local government (PMO-RALG).	Some – however Ministry still most centralized of the four countries.
2.	Devolution of authority to locally elected officials	Basic education planning and administration increasingly devolved to commune levels, including management of transferred funds. However, commune-level teacher hiring is limited for semi-autonomous community schools.	Primary schools transferred to commune level, which manages planning, 882ages		

Conclusions

In this chapter we have explored the political-economic context of our four case countries, pointing out the reinforcing relationship that has appeared between processes of democratic consolidation and access to basic education. We have also outlined the formal goals established for basic education as set out in each country's new education sector program, noting in particular that while Tanzania and Kenya have made a formal commitment to universal free access at the primary level, Burkina Faso and Mali have adopted a more gradualist approach, in part because they start from a much lower rate of access than the two Anglophone case countries.

We have also explored the way that civil society engagement is described in the education sector plans of the four case countries. In all four cases, we found that reference to partnership or stakeholder

Chapter 3: An Audit of Civil Society Actors in Education

Introduction

In this chapter, we answer several questions. First, what legal and political features of our case countries frame the opportunity structure for civil society participation in the education sector? Second, who are the key actors in the national education policy arena, and what are their main activities, values and interests? Third, how would we rank their political strengths – in terms of their independence or autonomy from the state, their organizational capacities, their ability to represent distinct constituencies or values, and their capacity for coordination around a coherent policy agenda? As described below and summarized in Table 5, we find both considerable variation and substantial similarities across our cases.

Political Context for Civil Society Actors in Education

Each of the countries we looked at has experienced a rapid expansion in formally-organized civil society – influenced primarily by the introduction of formal multi-party democracy and other forms of political liberalization in the 1990s. A second important factor shaping the current configuration of civil society actors in each country was the extent to which international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) began to channel their funds and funding

1998). Somewhat different tensions have emerged in Tanzania, where the CCM government has threatened or carried out deregistration on several occasions over the past decade, especially where CSOs appeared to criticize the policies promulgated by the ruling national party (Tripp 2000; Iheme 2005).

In all four countries, the introduction of coordinated sector programs and national poverty reduction strategies is changing governmental attitudes towards CSOs. There has been considerable pressure to adopt models for public sector reform promulgated by leading donor agencies: both the World Bank and DFID (in Anglophone Africa), are strong supporters of New Public Sector Management approaches, which among others things call for governments to better manage and engage stakeholders in decisions-making (Morgan & Baser 2007). At the same time, CSOs reported to us that there is a clear desire by governments in all four countries to retain centralized control of planning and implementation. The confluence of the two has led government officials in Mali, Tanzania and Kenya to express new interest in tapping NGO resources for national development plans, or at least to have NGO contributions formally evaluated as part of sector plans. (In the Mali case, CSO respondents informed us of a failed proposal by the *Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et des Collectivités Locales* to have NGOs contribute 1% of their budgets towards governmental monitoring; in Kenya and Tanzania, officials expressed an interest in seeing NGO resources "on plan"). Governments are clearly attempting to flex their leadership in the education sector as a result of donor-government sector coordination and the aid effectiveness agenda.

More generally, PRSP processes across Africa have been criticized for the limited way that civil society organizations have been consulted in their design – for example, a Kenyan analyst describes the process as "consultative" rather than participative, because CSOs were asked to respond to pre-prepared agendas (Owinga 2006), while in Mali, one analyst notes that NGO presence did not equate with influence (Danté et al. 2001). In Tanzania, more radical NGOs were marginalized in the first PRSP process and some claim they were only consulted due to donor insistence (Gould & Ojanen 2003; Kuder 2004). However, funding from the donor community has allowed for far better organized CSO participation in the second round PRSP processes – in turn contributing to national momentum for CSO coordination (Booth 2003; ActionAid/CARE 2006; CEF 2005a).[18]

INGOs and NGOs in Education

All countries in our sample have a very large INGO/NGO sector, with a wide spectrum of activities in education. There are considerable similarities across contexts, with some organizations focusing on the construction of schools and provision of materials, equipment, school meals, and scholarships. Other major organizations focus on curricular and pedagogical innovation, especially in relation to mother tongue literacy and non-formal education (particularly in West Africa); civics education (especially in Kenya), and curriculum for rural or nomadic populations. Gender equity and early childhood education are also a major focus for NGOs in all countries.

Two general trends characterize INGO/NGOs across our case countries. First, even organizations that continue to work on independent projects now see a need to work within a national policy arena. A majority of NGOs see the need to align their programs with the sector plan, and many also wish to adopt stronger evidence-based advocacy roles. Second, many have also recently adopted a "rights-based approach" to their work. Though this takes on quite varied inflections, there is a growing trend towards conceptualizing coan6
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However, not all NGOs have moved at the same pace or in the same direction on these two issues, and there is considerable variation in the shape and character of the INGO/NGO sector across our case countries. In all countries, some organizations take a systems approach, targeting their work to improvements in the reach and effectiveness of the national education system; while others continue to target specific localized issues and problems. The tendency among NGOs, large and small, to work in project mode with local communities in service provision, to the neglect of sustained engagement in the national policy arena and in national CSO coalitions, seemed to be most pronounced in Mali and (to a lesser degree) in Kenya, which have large and diverse but more weakly coordinated NGO sectors in education. Direct provision of primary-level education by NGOs also receives stronger governmental support in Mali and Burkina Faso than in our two Anglophone African cases, likely contributing to their less oppositional stance.[19]

We also noted that in all four case studies a small number of the most powerful international and national NGOs have moved into leadership roles in the context of new sector plans. These NGOs have increasingly recast their work as complementary service providers and policy advocates within the new

Teachers' Unions and Associations

Teachers' organizations are clearly among the most powerful organized actors in any education system. They represent large constituencies and have historically mobilized these constituencies around both educational and political issues. However, across our case countries, we found that teachers' organizations appeared to have relatively limited engagement in the planning and implementation of sector programs, particularly in comparison to major INGOs and NGOs.

For a variety of reasons, the power and capacities of teachers' unions seems to be quite muted across our case countries. Historical factors explain some of this: for example, in Burkina Faso, teachers' unions were disbanded in 1984 under the Sankara government, and never regained their former strengths (Pilon & Wayack 2003); while in Tanzania their incorporation as a body of the ruling socialist party limited autonomy and development (Swai 2004). In all our case countries, the status of teachers has been under threat; their salaries have not kept up with inflation and hiring has been subject to civil service wage caps. In Mali the introduction of contractual teachers has also undermined the traditional basis of the unions' bargaining power vis-à-vis the central government; and bargaining power is diffused across a number of different unions (including a new union representing contractual teachers). Bargaining power has also been eroded by the decentralization of teacher management to local authorities in Mali and Burkina Faso, which unions opposed. However, unions still retain considerable reach and organizational integrity. In the Kenya case, for example, we were told by a governance expert that the national teachers' union (KNUT) is among the largest, most democratically organized and vibrant of existing unions.[22] To some extent, then, teachers' unions continue act as a democratic counterbalance in presidentially-centralized political systems, with implications far beyond the education system itself.

In all four countries, teachers' unions have formally endorsed the goals of expanded access and improved quality in national sector plans, despite the fact that governments and donors have tended to exclude or marginalize them in the design and planning of current sector reforms programs. However, unions also continue to make the protection of their members' interests their main focus, addressing not only wage issues but also questions of class size, in-service training, and hiring of contractual teachers. These issues figure centrally within existing national sector plans, placing unions in a confrontational or oppositional position to some aspects of current sector plans.

All the teachers' unions we visited have some in-house capacity for research and policy analysis, and for professional training of their membership. They maintain links to international teachers' unions, often with a focus on professional development and policy issues. However, by and large, teachers' unions seem to be focusing their main energies on direct bargaining rather than on evidence-based advocacy, system oversight, and member professionalism. Their autonomy, political bargaining power, and democratic reach each suggest enormous potential to shape the fate of EFA programs. However, unions have not yet been engaged in a pro-active and positive way in the achievement of EFA goals. Governments and donors alike have tended to neglect their potential contributions to democratic engagement in the sector, instead focusing on the resource implications of teachers' salaries and the need to contain their oppositional roles.

National Parents' Associations (and their Subnational Counterparts)

National parents' associations have a checkered history across our case countries. By and large, these associations are governmentally-mandated constructs, whose origins lie in legal decrees, in which all

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the development of medersas and Franco-Arabic schools, Islamic faith-based organizations appear to have quite a limited seat at the national policy table.

Private School Owners and the Business Community

As mentioned above, an encouraging policy framework for private providers, as well as parental demand for access, has led to a substantial rise in the number of private primary schools across our case countries. While religious organizations account for much of the growth in private provision, school ownership by private entrepreneurs is also on the rise in Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania and Kenya.

Private school owners in Kenya, Tanzania and Mali have formed associations to represent their interests in the national policy arena, and as such now exist as legitimate civil society actors within this arena. In some instances, they receive support from international private sector advocacy organizations.[29] These organizations have different memberships and goals. They often include schools owned by faith groups described above, as well as commercial proprietors. Sometimes (as in Kenya) they are also linked to the business community itself. Again, there is considerable variation by country:

- In Tanzania, TAMONGOSCO was formed at the request of government, to act as an interface between government and the owners and managers of 600 non-governmental secondary, 350 primary and 18 teachers' colleges, several of them run by religious bodies. Although it operates with limited personnel, this organization is growing in strength and becoming a regular participant in policy processes.

- In Kenya, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), a private sector umbrella organization formed in 2003, has an Education Sector Board with membership from the National Council of Churches, the Private Schools Association, private universities, international schools, booksellers and publishers. KEPSA is concerned both with the legal and regulatory framework for school ownership in Kenya and with more general issues of importance to the business sector, such as the job-skills match in the country. A separate association representing the approximately 600 non-formal schools serving informal settlements around Nairobi, is also active in Kenya (Elimu Kwa wananvijiji – ELKW).

- In Mali, the *Association des Ecoles privées Agréées du Mali* (AEPAM) represents 80% of Malian private schools (Diallo 2005). Since 1995, there have been tensions between the Malian government and AEPAM over the state's fluctuating payment of support to private schools, including during the 2006-2007 school year (Fofana 2007); however, private schools have increased in number and now account for about 8.6% of the total students attending the first and second cycles (Public World 2004). The AEPAM has had regular dialogue with the Malian government; and was an active participant and one of the signatories in the 2005 Agreement for Peaceful and Performing Schools [*Accord pour une école apaisée et performante*] (Diallo 2005). However, the role of private schools and their funding seems set to spur further debate, especially in the context of emerging debates about the abolition of school fees.[30]

- In Burkina Faso, where private schooling has expanded haphazardly in response to widespread demand for educational opportunities that the state cannot meet alone, there is no formal association

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[29] For example, in Kenya an association of non-formal schools operators in the Nairobi informal settlement areas has received assistance from academic James Tooley and, through him, is linked to various US and British think-tanks that support privatization of education.

[30] See for example the lively debate documented during the June 2007 International Conference on the Abolition of School Fees, held in Bamako, Mali (Le Mali. Fr. 2007).

of private schools, nor do they participate any significant way in the national education sector plan and its policy processes. This may partly reflect the fact that private schools are highly diverse, ranging from those that cater to the children of urban elites to those that operate clandestinely as examination cram schools for young people striving for a school certificate. However, Burkina Faso does have a Permanent Secretary to Private Education and an accreditation process.

In general, activism around basic educational issues by national business associations and private providers appeared quite limited in all our case studies, with the exception of Kenya. Efforts by the Commonwealth Education Fund to get the national business community engaged in national EFA coalitions in Tanzania and Kenya have had limited success (CEF 2005b; Abagi 2005).

Networks and Coalitions

Advocacy and policy-oriented civil society network coalitions are young but increasingly common phenomena in developing countries (Perkin & Court 2005). In our case countries, such organizations are novel in several ways, particularly in contrast to the NGO umbrella organizations of the past.

- First, most national EFA coalitions attempt to bring together a diverse group of civil society actors – their membership is not confined to INGOs and NGOs, but also includes national parents' associations, teachers' unions and other groups.
- Second, these new coalitions have a different kind of focus than in the past: rather than information sharing and coordination among NGOs, they explicitly take on issues related to the adequacy of government provision of education, advocating for education as a right, and undertaking monitoring and community mobilization activities to support their advocacy roles.

Such organizations have often been created and supported by a small group of international non-governmental organizations (Oxfam, ActionAid, Save the Children and the Commonwealth Education Fund) that have made supporting ey explirhe withoarnd its policy procoo tupp[provitealtca ad icCcte2uon a5(in d7(elomm)22(eng

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abolish school fees.[31] Several regional and thematic education sector coalitions have also developed in Tanzania, often with links to TEN/MET.[32] Our interviews confirmed that TEN/MET is widely seen as the representative voice for education CSOs in Tanzania, even though its reach into poorer, more rural areas of the country is somewhat limited, and its relationship with government is at times oppositional.

Kenya has the second oldest national EFA civil society coalition, Elimu Yetu (EYC). Formed in 1999 under the auspices of ActionAid, EYC initially targeted the challenges of universal primary access in the lead up to the Dakar World Education Forum, carrying out a number of important policy studies on fees, as well as budget tracking exercises. However, despite an estimated membership of 120, and regional

For its part, Mali has only begun to form an effective umbrella group that speaks on behalf of civil society organizations in the education sector. Several earlier umbrella bodies lost their former influence and capacity in the sector, though for differing reasons. The *Groupe Pivot Education de Base* (which at its apex in the late 1990s represented more than 2,000 schools, and over 31% of operating primary schools in the country) declined in part due to a loss of international funding, as donors shifted attention to the sector program (CLIC n.d.; Cissé, Diarra, Marchand & Traoré 2000). The *Conseil de Concertation et d'Appui aux ONGs* (CCA/ONG), which has a longstanding education thematic group, has faced ongoing tensions between national and international NGOs over leadership and North-South subcontracting relationships (Glenzer 2005). Although often invited to national consultations, the CCA/ONG has a wide sectoral mandate, and does not play the role of focusing education NGOs around a common platform. A more recently formed coalition for EFA (2005-2006), bringing together international NGOs committed to Education for All with teachers' unions, parents' associations and other NGOs, is still working to establish itself, despite widespread acknowledgement across our Malian interviews of the need for an effective body to represent civil society actors in the national educational policy arena. As in Kenya, the creation of an effective civil society coalition in the education sector in Mali seems to suffer from a highly competitive and diverse CSO sector, though in Mali's case the problem seems to stem from tensions and lack of coordination within the NGO sector, as well as from the oppositional views some major CSOs hold on specific components of the national sector program (e.g., decentralization and contract teachers).

Conclusions: Assessing the Structure and Capacity of Civil Society

As we have seen in this chapter, enormous variation exists across our case countries, both in terms of the capacities and interests of different types of CSO actors, and in terms of intra-CSO relationships and CSO capacity to mobilize around a common agenda or policy platform for education. Such variation has important policy implications: it suggests that efforts to support civil society engagement in the education policy arena will need to be carefully tailored to specific country contexts; and must not assume harmonized interests or abilities among CSOs.

our research suggests that they remain somewhat marginalized players within sector programs, primarily because of their focus on terms of service. In Mali in particular, government efforts have focused more on containing the disruptive capacity of unions. However, even in countries like Mali, where teachers' unions have opposed major aspects of the sector program, unions are now committed to working towards the expansion of basic education with government. Our research suggests that the time has come to reconsider the role of teachers' unions in sector programs – focusing both on their capacities for professional socialization and mobilization, and their broader contribution to the fabric of democracy.

- Faith-based organizations again bring considerable resources and capacities to the policy table. They represent large constituencies in each of our case countries, as well as running their own schools. However, the engagement of faith-based organizations in national sector plans is quite varied. In Tanzania and Kenya, Christian and Muslim organizations are routinely consulted by government and work effectively with national CSO education coalitions. In Mali and Burkina Faso, faith-based organizations are more marginalized in the policy process. We also noted, drawing on the Kenya case, that inherent tensions can arise between secular national education systems and faith-based bodies, around control of schools and school curriculum. Like teachers' unions, faith-based groups represent both general citizen interests and the particular interests and values of their members.

- Private providers and the business community. There have been a rising number of private educational providers in all four of our case countries over the past decade, supported in part by the new openness to private provision in new education sector plans. Mali, Kenya and Tanzania each have an active civil society organization that represents the interests of private providers within the educational policy arena. In addition, Kenya has a coalition of private providers from informal urban settlements. While governments tend to consult with these new provider groups, tensions sometimes emerge over their demands for increased government subsidies for private schools.

It is also interesting to note that despite efforts by at least some civil society coalitions and their supporters to engage national business communities in advocacy and engagement with basic educational issues, Kenya was the only case country in which a national business association appeared to be active in the education sector program (and this was primarily focused on secondary, technical and vocational

in the context of the new sector program, and has remained highly dependent on its hosting organization, the INGO ActionAid. Competition and varied views within education civil society seem to explain its deterioration. The threat of government reprisals for critical CSO activism may also have played a part.

o   Similarly, in Mali education CSOs have only begun to develop an effective coordinating body or common platform on basic education. Although a number of coordinating groups have emerged in Mali over the last 10 years, CSOs tend to bargain individually rather than collectively.

o   Burkina Faso, with the youngest of the national education CSO coalitions, appears to be developing a somewhat more cohesive and effective coalition, the *Cadre de Concertation en Education de Base* (CCEB). In contrast to TEN/MET, however this organization has not made the achievement of universal, equitable access to basic education its central platform; with the support of both INGOs and domestic NGOs, it embraces the government's more gradualist approach and focuses its efforts on specific issues, such as gender, curricular reform, and regional planning processes.

In the next chapter, we look again at these civil society actors through a somewhat more dynamic lens, exploring their experiences in the policy processes that have unfolded around each country's new education sector plan. Here our concern has been to identify main civil society actors, their capacities, interests, values, and inter-relationships.

Table 5: Key Civil Society Actors in Education

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
National Coalitions	<u>Cadre de Concertation en Education de Base (CCEB)</u> • f. 1995 • 123 members • Expanded into policy advocacy after 2000 • Has seat at the policy table	Several coalitions: • <u>Groupe Pivot Education de base</u> - originally NGOs advocating for community schools • <u>CCA/ONG</u> -f. 1983 by INGOs, 165 members; ed. subgroup • <u>EFA coalition</u> - f. 2005, with Aide et Action unions, parents, INGOs &NGOs • <u>CAFO</u> - f. 1991, women's NGOs and associations	<u>TEN/MET</u> • f. 1999. Initial focus on access and school fee, now on quality/equality • 171 members • Engaged in research, budget tracking and advocacy • Has seat at policy table	<u>Elimu Yetu</u> • f. 1999, hosted by Action Aid and CEF • 120 members in the coalition (approx.) • Original focus on abolition of fees and budget tracking, but has seen a decline in effectiveness and loss of focus since 2004
INGOs/NGOs	**150** [estimated]	**123** [registered]	**148** [documented]	**307** [registered]
Key Actors	<u>INGO</u>s = Plan Intl, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide (OSEO), Care Int'l, Aide et Action, Oxfam UK, World Vision, World Education, Save (UK and USA) <u>NGO</u>s = FAWE, Tin Tua, Association Espace Koamba, Association Mwangaza, CIEFFA–B-F, Six-S, and many others	<u>INGO</u>s = Care Int'l, World Vision, World Education, Plan Intl, Save (UK and US), Aide et Action, Oxfam UK, *Fondation Stromme*, Africare, German Agro Action, BORNEfonden, *Eau Vive*, Sahel 21, SIL <u>NGO</u>s = FAWE, IEP, OMAES, AMAPROS, AADeC, AID-MALI and many others	<u>INGO</u>s = World Vision, Save, Care Int'l, Oxfam, Aga Khan, ActionAid, Plan Int'l <u>NGO</u>s = FAWE, HakiElimu, Maarifa ni Ufunguo, Hakikazi Catalyst, Maadili Centre, Amani Child, Kuleana, Mkombozi, and many smaller groups	<u>INGO</u>s = World Vision, Save, Care Int'l, Oxfam, Aga Khan, ActionAid; Christian Children's Fund; VSO; Concern World Wide <u>NGO</u>s = FAWE; GCN; WERK; ANPPCAN; KAARC; Cobades and many smaller groups
Major activities	Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials)	• Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials) • Literacy training & curriculum development • Other forms of non-formal education (extension work, health education) • Capacity development in the formal system – training for teachers and local educational administrators	• Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials) • NGOs in the areas of mother tongue literacy and non-formal education, gender equity • More recently, cJ0 -1.15 Td[(formal syste)3(cy and non-)] TJ0 -1.1496 = areas of mother •	

Chapter 4: CSO Engagement in Education Sector Programs

Introduction

In this chapter we explore how the civil society actors described in Chapter 3 have been engaged in and affected by the introduction of new education sector plans and donor-funded sector-wide programs focused on the achievement of basic education. We look briefly at four dimensions of civil society engagement:

- the patterns of CSO engagement in the design, planning and management of the current national education sector programs;
- changes in government-civil society relationships;
- changes in donor-civil society relationships; and,
- the challenges and opportunities posed by the new sector programs.

Many analysts have argued that broad changes in the architecture of aid – especially the movement into sector programs and budget support – are diminishing the space available for civil society actors in national development processes by creating a tight, centralized relationship between donors and governments (Tomlinson & Foster 2004; Brock et al. 2002; McGee et al. 2002; Gould & Ojanen 2003). However, as this chapter suggests, when we look specifically at the engagement of civil society actors in the design and management of sector programs, a much more nuanced story of both improvements and challenges emerges.

CSO Engagement in the Design and Management of Sector Programs

The level and shape of CSO engagement in the design and management of education sector programs (and in particular their basic education components) varies considerably across our case studies. For the most part, national sector plans seem to have created a context within which civil society actors are "invited to the table" for consultation in a more regular and routine way by governments than had been the case historically. However, roles and expectations for CSO-government engagement vary considerably across the countries, as do levels of CSO autonomy, coordination and mobilization. Both sides of the CSO-government equation shape the degree to which CSOs participate in the national education policy arena. In the terms suggested by Lister and Nyamugasira (2003), it matters both whether CSOs are "**invited**" to the policy table by government, and whether CSOs have the autonomy and resources to "**create**" and define their own policy roles and spaces.

Below, we look in more detail at the CSO experience of engagement in the design and subsequent management of sector programs in each of our case countries. We begin with what we might describe as the two more successful cases of CSO engagement in sector plans, in Tanzania and Burkina Faso (acknowledging that these experiences are nonetheless mixed). We then turn to two cases in which the experiences of CSO engagement in the policy processes surrounding new sector programs seems to have diminished (Kenya and Mali).

Tanzania

In Tanzania, the character of CSO engagement in the country's education sector plan (PEDP) revolves much more unequivocally around watchdog and advocacy functions than in any of our other countries. Tanzania boasts the longest standing and most robust CSO coordinating body in the education sector of any of our four case countries, TEN/MET. TEN/MET predates the sector program, and has the

most well-developed organizational structure in terms of membership, communications, and regularized processes for interaction with government.

TEN/MET had already established itself as an independent and critical voice in the education policy arena before the negotiations began on the PEDP in 2001, through the research and advocacy work around abolishing primary-level user-fees undertaken by some of its leading members. By the time the PEDP was in the design stage, TEN/MET had already helped to "create" a new kind of policy space for CSOs in the education sector, and it was able to use its past experiences get new roles for CSOs written into the PEDP. Some of these roles echoed approaches supported by the international community in other country programs (e.g., creation of the school capitation grant for management by SMCs). But other aspects were quite unique. Thus, for example, Tanzania's sector plan gives a relatively high level of attention to the policy, research, advocacy and accountability roles to be played by CSOs. PEDP is the only sector plan that specifically mentions "advocacy" as a legitimate role for civil society organizations in the sector.

Subsequent to the launch of the PEDP, civil society actors in Tanzania appear to have retained both an independent capacity to critique government through evidence-based policy research, and a regular presence within the formal (and largely centralized) mechanisms established for consultation under the PEDP, including the annual joint evaluation missions and a variety of thematic groups.[36] CSOs have also developed impressive ability to leverage moral and material support from external partners, both bilateral donors and non-governmental actors.

However, the enlarged and autonomous space for civil society in relation to Tanzania's basic education sector program established in the design phase of the PEDP, has faced significant challenge in the implementation stage of the program. Overall, while CSO participation in national policy deliberations has become an expected feature of national policy processes, the Tanzanian government still sets the terms for CSO engagement, and has not established transparent mechanisms for selecting its partners and interlocutors. Some organizations – especially well-established complementary service providers, FAWE and Aga Khan Foundation, have developed a special relationship with the government. Furthermore, when CSOs have taken a critical stance towards PEDP's implementation, the Tanzanian government has made considerable effort to contain CSO voice by limiting CSO engagement in PEDP, banning publications, amplifying the threat of deregistration that is broadly perceived by CSOs in all sectors in Tanzania (Haggerty et al. 2007). Thus in 2005, the government threatened to ban HakiElimu and prevented it from participating as a CSO representative in various sector meetings, after it published a report critical of the government's efforts to reach PEDP goals.

Many other CSOs in our Tanzanian field study reported that government seems to limit or delay

system, they may face a new round of challenges from government over the legitimacy of their advocacy and monitoring roles.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, CSO involvement with the national education sector program (PDDEB) has moved from very limited engagement to much more active participation. However, in contrast to the Tanzania case, CSOs in Burkina Faso have adopted a far more collaborative and supportive approach, and are still only at the early stages in defining a common platform or agenda for CSO engagement in the sector program.

In the country field study prepared for this report, Maclure et al. (2007), found that CSOs were very much marginalized in the design stage of the PDDEB. Although individual experts from CSOs were invited to participate as consultants, and national dialogue and consultations were held before the finalization of the plan, many Burkinabe CSOs told us that the central focus of the PDDEB – on decentralization reforms and budget support – was primarily the result of a compact between government and three main donor organizations. Teachers' unions in Burkina Faso were excluded from the design of the PDDEB, primarily because the government recognized the unions' opposition to policies that might contain the costs of teachers' salaries. Yet other actors too felt left out. Ironically, as Maclure et al. note, "CSOs were largely excluded from the formulation of a plan that was specifically designed to increase their involvement." The net result was that when the PDDEB was launched in 2002, most CSO stakeholders regarded it as a well-funded, donor-initiated project.

Despite the top-down orientation of the design phase of the PDDEB, many CSOs subsequently

late, unavailable government documents and too few seats available for CSOs. They also strongly disagreed with aspects of PRODEC's decentralization reforms. The overall impression we gained was that civil society engagement in the design of Mali's sector program, while quite high in comparison to Burkina Faso, was nonetheless quite fragmented.

This fragmentation of CSO engagement in Mali continued into the implementation phase of the PRODEC. Our research (and that of others), found that Malian CSOs lack basic understanding of the decision-making spaces established under PRODEC (Aide et Action 2005), with few participating in the consultative structures, joint evaluation missions or joint thematic groups (other than in the area of non-formal education). Furthermore, despite a unique recent effort by the government to engage unions, parents' associations and students' associations in the adoption of a common platform for peaceful and performing

Changing Government-Civil Society Relationships at the National Level

Changes in CSO-government and CSO-donor relationships are a given feature of the new aid architecture that supports education sector programs in our four case countries. One of the central principles of aid effectiveness is the placement of development funds directly under government leadership, to be used in agreed-upon sector plans. Across all our case countries, there has been a drop in direct funding from bilateral donors to NGOs, a heightened level of policy dialogue between donors and government, and a new (but relatively untested) framework calling for the engagement of CSOs. We were thus not surprised to find many similar trends in CSO-government relationships across our case countries, differing more in degree than in kind.

For example, while an increased level of consultation between government and CSOs was apparent in all of our cases, tensions in the relationships between governments and CSOs were often mentioned. The main root of this tension seems to rest in the different views about appropriate CSO roles and autonomy in relation to government and to the new education sector plans. Governments in all cases seemed to see the greatest role for CSOs in complementary service provision, resource mobilization and especially in the development of capacity at local levels of the system. However, many government officials also worried that CSOs lack capacity, are poorly organized, lack accountability, and are not respectful of government's leadership roles. The officials wanted to see more transparency and direct reporting to government of their activities – in some cases even mentioning the fact that NGO resources should be integrated and reported on as part of the sector plan. Clearly there were winners and losers in the evolution of CSO-government relationships, with internationally-connected NGOs, retooled to deliver complementary services in a decentralized system, awarded a special place at the policy table.

CSOs, for their part, widely acknowledged that they had been given a new place at the national policy table and are benefiting from political liberalization. However, they were still fearful of efforts by government to regulate their activities, particularly in Tanzania and Kenya. Some CSOs also feared government corruption and were skeptical of proposals that might see them operate as direct subcontractors to the government. For example, one respondent, who had managed a direct subcontract with government using World Bank resources, described direct subcontracting as an abject failure, further noting:

> *Government having a pool of money to give out to CSOs is dangerous for Kenya. It will never be. That money will never reach us. Anything that goes to Government is a long process, first to treasury and the different departments…there will be too much money missing* (NGO Representative, Kenya).

Even in Burkina Faso, which appeared to have the most consistently collaborative and cooperative of CSO-government relationships, CSOs raised questions about the degree to which CSOs should be expected to substitute for the state in the delivery of key components of the education system (for example, teacher training), and the extent to which new government-CSO relationships were characterized by cooptation by government and donors.

Finally, we noted across our case countries that civil society actors rarely have direct or sustained relationships with parliamentarians or parliamentary committees, although in both Tanzania and Kenya CSOs indicated some limited recent contact with parliamentary groups. Instead CSO relationships with government revolve almost entirely around the Ministry of Education, with some attention (mainly for fundraising) to local elected officials. Our Tanzanian informants were particularly worried about the CSO

case countries (ActionAid/CARE 2006; AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b). The centralization of authority and control within the executive branch is a predominant feature in all our case countries. At the moment, the concentration of CSO engagement on within-Ministry government relations neglects formal political and parliamentary channels for representing citizens and guaranteeing that their rights are protected and

Mali, donors expressed willingness to advocate for decision-making space for CSOs (but gave no example of new spaces that have been created as a result of such efforts).

However, the more surprising finding from our case studies was the degree to which donor organizations lack a well-informed and coordinated strategy for supporting CSO involvement in the education sector. Some donors (a clear minority in our field studies) told us: "it's government's responsibility to build relationships with its own civil society" (Donor Interview, Mali). However, the far wider impression we received was that donors want to support enhanced roles for civil society but aren't sure how to do so in the new policy context unfolding under sector-wide programs. We were surprised how little donors seemed to know about local CSOs and their capacities – or even about the funding given by various branches of their own organizations to education sector CSOs.[42] Even where donor knowledge of CSOs appeared to be quite extensive, there seemed to be no strategic plan guiding their relationships with CSOs. Examples from interviews with donors in Mali and in Kenya illustrate the point:

> *We're very concerned by the weak capacities of civil society, by the fact that civil society doesn't seem to have a platform for action; we are trying to think of projects or programs to support civil society, but civil society is so diffuse and changeable, we don't know what to focus on first [...] in education, with budget support, donors will have less and less contact with civil society, this concerns us because we know that civil society has a big role to play in implementing PRODEC; this is a puzzle – how to reinforce civil society to play its role? We haven't figured out a concrete way to do this, so for the moment, we just play an advocacy role [...] if you have answers, we'd be interested to know, we and other donors have been juggling with this for years [...] the challenge is to bring structure to this disorganized context – we just react to individual proposals [...] what is needed is a more holistic, macro-approach* (Donor Interview, Mali).

> *... In reviewing the partnership agreement we are asking, what is it that we wanted from the NGOs? And particularly what should be the role of the coordinating NGOs? Is it advocacy or provision? Are they working to the government plans or are they working to fill in gaps? [...] The system we have is not meeting the needs of NGOs themselves. In fact, probably, there is a downplaying, in a way, of the role NGOs can play in their advocacy role and lobbying role* (Donor Interview, Kenya).

In all the countries we studied, (with the exception of Tanzania), donors have generally shown limited interest in providing the kind of core funding that might enable national CSOs to engage in sustained programs of research or advocacy. Many donors prefer to channel funds through their own national NGOs, for reasons of familiarity and trust, and have only begun to experiment with direct funding of Southern organizations. Nor do donors have clear rules or transparent processes for selecting which CSOs they interact with and support. However, despite this general lack of a common framework for supporting CSOs, most donors have begun to experiment with project or (less frequently) programmatic support for CSO engagement with the sector plan. Notably:

- In Burkina Faso, this can be seen in the agreement to establish a fund for CBO-led non-formal education initiatives (FONAENF). Managed jointly by donors, government and CSOs, this effort focuses on expanding CSO service delivery roles. As a side effect, it also seems to have empowered the CSOs that sit on its board.
- In Tanzania, a number of donors provide pooled funding for TEN/MET and a few strong national CSOs. They also provide support to the Foundation for Civil Society, an independent body that makes grants to support civil society organizations in policy and governance roles. These initiatives

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[42] For example, in Kenya DFID staff did not seem to know that the Elimu Yetu Coalition received funding from the Commonwealth

have embraced the gradualist approach to EFA that the government and donors have adopted in the sector plan.

- Both Kenya and Mali have seen a decrease in effective CSO engagement in the national education policy arena. In Kenya, this is partly due to the loss of a common CSO mobilizing frame after the declaration of free primary education; but it also reflects larger tensions between governments and autonomous CSO actors.

- Finally, in Mali, CSOs have not yet been able to develop a common platform for engaging government on educational issues – their efforts here are just emerging. The Mali case can perhaps best be understood by contrast to the Burkina and Tanzania cases. In contrast to Burkina Faso, Mali has a number of well-endowed CSOs who have objected to key features of the sector program (especially decentralization reforms), thus limiting the potential for a broad-based, collaborative CSO response to the sector program embracing a gradualist approach to EFA. On the other hand, until recently there has been no movement in Mali to develop a coalition around the issue of governmentally provided free primary education (as has occurred in Tanzania).

Together, these cases highlight the fact that there are challenges to both more contentious and more collaborative forms of CSO engagement in sector programs. They also suggest just how fragile and hard-won effective civil society coordination can be. Civil society coordination depends crucially on the development of a common mobilizing frame or agenda. Perhaps because of the strong international support for rights-based approaches, the use of "universal free primary education" as a mobilizing frame has proven particularly powerful as a starting point for CSO coordination. However, such frames have to be negotiated and owned at the national level; and renegotiated (and re-owned) when specific goals are achieved.

We have also described some common patterns in CSO-government relationships in the context of new sector programs. Across all our cases, CSOs are now accepted participants in sector programs. However, government-CSO relations are also fraught with tension and confusion about appropriate CSO roles and mandates; and governments still have the ultimate say over who gets invited to the policy table, and

- enhancing educational services for citizens;
- contributing to the fabric of formal democracy;
- empowering citizens to make educational claims– especially those that are poor or marginalized (AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b).

The focus of sector programs in all four of our countries is firmly on the first rationale for civil society participation: enhancing the provision of services. In all our case countries, sector programs and the government officials and donor organizations that have designed them, recognize that civil society organizations need to play a direct and instrumental role in the achievement of system expansion and quality improvements, acknowledging that CSOs bring flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness and the ability to raise resources to the sector table.

But sector programs are far less clear about the contributions that civil society actors make to the fabric of formal democracy, and to the empowerment of the poor or marginalized. Only in Tanzania is direct reference made to "advocacy" as a legitimate role for civil society actors (other sector programs focus on "partnership" or "participation"). There is also no explicit mention of regularizing opportunities for the public to interface with the elected branches of government in the oversight of sector programs. Instead, and by design, the governance of sector programs is focused on Ministry of Education-CSO engagement – a dangerous emphasis in contexts where sector funding is controlled by other Ministries (particularly the Ministry of Finance, in the case of General Budget Support), and where centralization of power in the executive has long limited the development of citizen engagement in formal democratic processes.

Tensions or gaps in the way that sector programs conceptualize a role for civil society actors can also be seen in several other dimensions of their design:

- Sector programs do not establish a clear procedural framework for civil society engagement at the national level. For example, there is no regularized and transparent process for choosing civil society interlocutors in key policy processes; and no clear framework explaining why certain civil society actors (and not others) should be "invited" to the policy table. Most sector plans also assume harmonious, collaborative interaction with CSOs; there is little discussion of competing interests or goals. The absence of a transparent procedural framework allows governments to control who sits at the policy table, and often leads to the exclusion of CSOs that have potentially critical or destabilizing viewpoints. This can work against the development of broadly-based, democratic forms of deliberation at the national level.

- Sector programs tend to employ an imagery of "partnership" around the financing and provision of education, begging the question: do sector programs view private/CSO funding and provision of basic education as "unfortunately necessary" or "inherently desirable"? By leaving these questions vague, sector programs create considerable uncertainty for CSOs. Sector programs not only reinforce longstanding tensions between the service delivery and advocacy roles CSOs play; they also foster administrative confusion about the relative responsibilities of the central state, subnational authorities and CSOs in guaranteeing access to quality basic education.

- Most sector programs emphasize new accountability roles for civil society actors at the local or decentralized level – largely based on the idea that the engagement of community-level actors in the oversight of schools will keep national sector plans on track. In some cases, decentralized engagement is "locked in" by donor funding, through conditionalities that require governments to disburse funding to school-level management committees with parental representation. However, we noted five "design contradictions" for civil society in decentralization reform programs.

o Tension between advocacy for universal access to schooling, and other education and development goals (especially when these suggest trade-offs in resources).
o Tension between traditional roles as direct service providers [stop-gap measures] and advocacy for universal and equitable governmental provision of services.
o Tensions in CSO relationships with international funding organizations, since CSOs must increasingly act as critics and campaigners within the international aid regime, while remaining significantly dependent on international donors for their own funding.

2. *The Structure and Capacity of Civil Society Actors in the Education Sector*

Enormous variation exists across our case countries, both in terms of the capacities and interests of different types of CSO actors, and in terms of intra-CSO relationships and CSO capacity to mobilize around a common agenda or policy platform for education. Such variation has important policy implications: it suggests that efforts to support civil society engagement in the education policy arena will need to be carefully tailored to specific country contexts; and must not assume harmonized interests or abilities among CSOs.

Below, we summarize what we found out about the capacities, interests and activities of civil society organizations identified in our research as key actors within the education policy arenas

- INGO/NGOs are among the most prominent actors in the education policy arena, representing the largest number of discrete CSO "voices" at the policy table. While INGO/NGOs continue to work in project mode, there is an increasing recognition among them of the need to work at a systems level, and within emerging sector plans. Furthermore, INGO/NGOs increasingly adopt a rights-based approach that implies an important commitment to the political mobilization of citizens for their rights. There is a clear perception among INGOs and NGOs that a small subset of actors, namely those that have repositioned themselves as complementary service providers and who have international connections, are more frequently invited to the policy table in the context of the new sector programs.

  Tensions between INGOs and national NGOs are less prevalent in the education sector than the wider literature on North-South civil society relationships might suggest. This is at least partly because leadership in both types of organization is often drawn from highly qualified nationals, and because most INGOs work to support Southern counterpart organizations. In addition, the existence of functioning civil society coalitions with leadership from national organizations appears to support a sense of local ownership and control among domestic NGOs in two of our cases.

- Teachers' unions are perhaps the most powerful, well-organized, and representative of civil society actors in all the education systems we studied (especially so in Mali and Kenya). In addition, these organizations have played a powerful historical role in advocating for democratic transitions. However, our research suggests that they remain somewhat marginalized players within sector programs, primarily because of their focus on employment issues. In Mali in particular, government efforts have focused more on containing the disruptive capacity of unions. However, even in countries like Mali, where teachers' unions have opposed major aspects of the sector program, unions are now committed to working towards the expansion of basic education with government. Our research suggests that the time has come to reconsider the role of teachers' unions in sector programs – focusing both on their capacities for professional socialization and mobilization, and their broader contribution to the fabric of democracy.

- Faith-based organizations

Tanzania and Kenya, Christian and Muslim organizations are routinely consulted by government and work effectively with national CSO education coalitions. In Mali and Burkina Faso, faith-based organizations are more marginalized in the policy process. We also noted, drawing on the Kenya case, that inherent tensions can arise between secular national education systems and faith-based bodies around the control of schools and school curriculum. Like teachers' unions, faith-based groups represent both general citizen interest and the particular interests and values of their members.

- Private providers and the business community. There have been a rising number of private educational providers in all four of our case countries over the past decade, supported in part by the new openness to private provision in new education sector plans. Mali, Kenya and Tanzania each have an active civil society organization that represents the interests of private providers within the educational policy arena. In addition, Kenya has a coalition of private providers from informal urban settlements. While governments tend to consult with these new provider groups, tensions sometimes emerge over their demands for increased government subsidies for private schools.

  It is also interesting to note that despite efforts by at least some civil society coalitions and their supporters to engage national business communities in advocacy and engagement with basic educational issues, Kenya was the only case country in which a national business association appeared to be active in the education sector program (and this was primarily focused on secondary, technical and vocational education).[44] There was limited evidence of direct business community or private provider engagement in sector programs or basic education advocacy in any of the other cases.

- National coalitions and intra-CSO relationships. While some type of CSO coordinating group exists in each of our countries, their histories, capacities and effectiveness are extremely varied.

  o Tanzania's TEN/MET appears to be the most effective in mobilizing a wide range of members around a common policy platform; it also is the most effective critic and watchdog over basic education commitments. Though it includes INGOs in its membership, its leadership is primarily drawn from national and subnational NGOs and significant attention is paid to building links to subnational groups. One way in which TEN/MET has distinguished itself is in its effective mobilization of international support and linkages to leverage domestic policy change. However, TEN/MET's effectiveness has at times engendered tensions with government, especially when its members have adopted a critical or watchdog role.

  o Kenya's national Elimu Yetu Coalition is quite weak; since the declaration of universal free primary education it seems to have lost the capacity to mobilize its members around a common agenda for basic education. EYC does not seem to play an effective watchdog role in the context of the new sector program, and has remained highly dependent on its hosting organization, the INGO ActionAid. Competition and varied views within education civil society seem to explain its deterioration. The threat of government reprisals for critical CSO activism may also have played a part.

  o In Mali, education CSOs have only begun to develop an effective coordinating body or common platform on basic education. Although a number of coordinating groups have emerged in Mali over the last 10 years, CSOs tend to bargain individually rather than collectively.

  o Burkina Faso, with the youngest of the national education CSO coalitions, appears to be developing a somewhat more cohesive and effective coalition, the *Cadre de Concertation en*

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[44] The Commonwealth Education Fund (which is financed by DFID and managed by a group that includes ActionAid, Oxfam and Save) has long advocated for the engagement of the business community in basic education issues (CEF 2007b).

Education de Base (CCEB). In contrast to TEN/MET, however this organization has not made the achievement of universal, equitable access to basic education its central platform; with the support of both INGOs and domestic NGOs, it embraces the government's more gradualist approach and focuses its efforts on specific issues, such as gender, curricular reform, and regional planning processes.

In both their own and in others assessments, civil society actors of all types in our case countries lack the organizational capacity and experience to engage consistently and effectively in policy dialogue, evidence-based advocacy and oversight activities in the education sector. CSOs recognize that playing these roles effectively will require collective, broadly-based action. They see a valuable role for international non-governmental actors in helping them to realize these new policy roles – not only in terms of financing, but also through their ability to leverage international moral authority and ideas. However, the value of nationally-led CSO action is also important to them.

3. Changing Dynamics of CSOs Engagement in the Education Sector

Both sides of the CSO-government equation shape the degree to which CSOs participate in the

Burkina Faso:

many CSOs (particularly well-established NGOs and INGOs) view the opportunity to work collaboratively with the government to meet sector goals with enthusiasm.

- CSOs only weakly engage parliamentarians or the executive in their efforts to support the achievement of better basic education in their countries: their relationships are largely concentrated on within-Ministry processes in a way that may be undermining rather than supporting the formal fabric of democracy.

- Government-CSO relationships at decentralized levels are complex and require further exploration. Many CSOs (especially NGOs) expressed enthusiasm for decentralization reforms. However, our limited exploration of government-CSO relationships at decentralized levels suggests that lines of authority are often unclear and experience with managing partnerships weak. Questions were raised about the autonomy of CSO actors attempting to both train local authorities and generate genuine citizen oversight of local services. In addition, CSOs had given little thought as to how local-level citizen voice might be aggregated to allow engagement in the national policy arena. Further research needs to be done on implications of decentralization reforms for citizen engagement and voice in the education sector.

Relations Between CSOs and Donors

CSO-donor relationships are changing rapidly in the context of new sector programs. Our findings suggest that CSOs are unsatisfied with the level and scope of donor support for their policy and advocacy efforts, and wary of donor initiatives that place CSOs in subcontracting roles vis-à-vis government. In Mali, Tanzania and Kenya, many CSOs described a drop in international funding for their activities – sometimes a precipitous one. In Mali in particular, several organizations expressed frustration with the fact that donors still tend to channel funds through their own NGOs rather than directly to Southern groups. In Burkina Faso, CSOs also cautioned that when donors delay disbursements of sector funds, due to government failure to meet conditionalities, CSOs' activities suffer.

CSOs in all countries all noted that a decline in opportunities to meet with international technical and financial partners characterized the period following the introduction of sector programs. However, in some contexts (particularly Tanzania), several CSOs praised donors for helping them to leverage a greater degree of CSO engagement in national policy processes.

A significant finding across our case studies was the degree to which donor organizations lack a well-informed and coordinated strategy for supporting CSO involvement in the education sector. We were surprised how little donors seemed to know about local CSOs and their capacities – or even about the funding given by various branches of their own organizations to education sector CSOs. While donors are seeking new ways of supporting CSO engagement in sector programs, they have generally preferred to fund small research or information-sharing exercises among CSOs. With the exception of Tanzania, donors have generally shown limited interest in providing the kind of core funding that might enable national CSOs to engage in sustained programs of research or advocacy. Many donors prefer to channel funds through their own national NGOs, for reasons of familiarity and trust, and have only begun to experiment with direct funding of Southern organizations. Nor do donors have clear rules or transparent processes for selecting which CSOs they interact with and support.

However, despite the general lack of a common framework for supporting CSOs, most donors have begun to experiment with project or (less frequently) programmatic support for CSO engagement with the new sector plan. Notably:

- In Burkina Faso, this can be seen in the agreement to establish a fund for CBO-led non-formal

1. *Clarifying Why Civil Society is Important*

Emerging principles of aid effectiveness typically describe civil society as contributing to development in three ways: by enhancing direct services to citizens; by contributing to the fabric of democracy; and by empowering citizens – especially those that are poor or marginalized (AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b). However, when we look at the way these rationale play out in the implementation of an aid effectiveness agenda within a specific sector, like education, we can begin to see that sector programs, as well as the governments and international development partners responsible for their design, achieve much greater focus and clarity about the service-enhancing functions of civil society. While the democratic and pro-poor roles played by civil society actors in the education sector are routinely mentioned, there is considerably less clarity about these roles. There is also a tendency to assume that civil society actors act harmoniously and in a complementary fashion under government leadership.

If we accept the proposition that civil society participation should enhance democracy and empower

our case studies suggest that we might begin our discussions on where to focus our efforts by evaluating what appear to be five key thresholds for civil society effectiveness:

- Are the formal terms for CSOs engagement in national policy processes conducive to autonomous policy, oversight and advocacy roles [including regulatory and legal issues; mandated roles in sector plans, and informal rules and expectations within government]?
- Have individual CSOs attained a degree of autonomy and voice in the national policy process [including the capacity to act in watchdog or oversight roles that are critical]?
- Have CSOs developed mechanisms for coordination and collaboration around a common platform in the education sector?
- Is this agenda or platform deeply rooted in, and owned by, a wide range of national civil society actors?
- Are CSOs able to link enhanced citizen voice at a local level to their emerging roles in national policy processes [including not only within-Ministry but to parliamentary processes]?

Clearly, these thresholds look quite different in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Mali, or Kenya, and may be even more varied across other national contexts. Investing in better understanding of CSO-sector program dynamics is an important starting point for better and more effective external initiatives. However, across all our case studies, the one area that seems in most urgent need of further research an analysis is the interface between new forms of local governance in education, and the development of greater citizen voice and public deliberation within national-level policy processes.

3. Better External Support for Civil Society Engagement

External actors face a delicate task when supporting the more "political" of the roles played by civil society actors. They must do so while continuing to support government leadership and ownership of sector programs; in ways that do not imply partisanship; and that do not carry the threat of sanction or hegemony. Nonetheless, our case studies suggest that external actors can assist in seven important ways:

- They can dialogue with governments about the establishment of legal frameworks, formal processes and better government receptivity to CSO policy, oversight and public deliberation roles.
- They can argue for (and assist CSO actors in advocating for) more transparent, regularized and democratic processes for the inclusion of civil society representation in the formal processes engendered by national education sector plans.
- They can provide reliable core support for coalitions/networks to ensure that these networks survive and act as broadly-based national fora on education. Funding has to be provided in a way that ensures autonomy, continuity, and decentralized capacity.
- They can support neglected civil society actors or interests – such as teachers' unions and smaller subnational or thematic groups – to develop productive forms of engagement in national policy deliberation. (Funding that allows civil society organizations to develop the capacity to provide specific protections in areas like early childhood care, disability, conflict and democracy education, or that reaches out to underserved regions and communities, are especially important.)
- They can support international linkages between Northern and Southern citizens and their organizations, including INGOs, transnational advocacy groups and other international associations and bodies (e.g., Education International, representing teachers' unions internationally). Where governments block certain types of civil society engagement or issue-specific efforts, or where civil society capacity is weak, these external relationships help national CSOs to leverage international moral authority and experience as a policy resource.

Appendix I: Participants by Type of Organization and Country

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Kenya	Tanzania
Total Estimated # Education CSOs/NGOs	**154 est. 127 doc.**	**127 doc.**	**302 doc.**	**400 est. 202 doc.**

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