DECEMBER 6-7, 2022

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PARIS, FRANCE	BOD/2022/12 DOC 07	FOR DECISION

EDUCATION OUT LOUD: COSTED EXTENSION PROPOSAL

Please note: In accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, documents are public only after their appraisal by the relevant governance instance. Governance officials may circulate documents to their constituency for consultation purposes, except for documents of a confidential nature.

Key issues for consideration:

- The Performance, Impact and Learning Committee (PILC) confirms to the Board that the EOL costed extension proposal responds to the findings and incorporates the recommendations presented in the mid-term review, builds on program learning and demand from partners, and aligns with the objectives of the GPE 2025 Strategic Plan. PILC further noted that a semi-annual progress update to PILC on EOL implementation, rather than an annual one, would enable PILC to monitor progress and learning more regularly.
- In addition, PILC emphasized the importance of EOL, particularly in its facilitation of civil society participation in education system transformation efforts. PILC highlighted the need to ensure continued active participation of a broad range of civil society representatives, with enhanced emphasis on gender and inclusion. It took into account that an impact evaluation would be conducted in 2024, and that there was a strong effort underway to position civil society along with partners e.g. national ministries to ensure contact and engagement among education stakeholders.
- The Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) recommends that the Board approves an allocation of US$ 60,000,000 (inclusive of agency fees of US$4,200,000) for the costed extension. Considering GPE's financial position, the FRC requested that the proposal be subject to availability of funds and commitment of trust funds in annual installments.

Objective

1. The Board is requested to consider a joint recommendation from the Performance, Impact and Learning Committee (PILC) and the Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) relating to the costed extension proposal for Education Out Loud (EOL), including allocation of resources to finance the extension, through June 30, 2027.

Recommended decision

BOD/2022/12-XX—Education Out Loud: The Board of Directors:

1. In accordance with BOD/2022/06-05, confirms that the costed extension proposal submitted by Oxfam IBIS, as grant agent, responds to the findings and incorporates the recommendations presented in the mid-term review, builds on program learning and demand from partners, and aligns with the objectives of the GPE 2025 Strategic Plan;
2. Requests that a progress update on the implementation of Education Out Loud be provided to the Performance, Impact and Learning Committee on a semi-annual basis.
3. Approves an allocation of US$60,000,000 (inclusive of agency fees of US$4,200,000) from the GPE Trust Fund to Oxfam IBIS as the grant agent for the extension of Education Out Loud, subject to availability of funds and commitment of trust funds in annual installments.

Background and overview

2. The Board requested the grant agent for Education Out Loud, Oxfam IBIS, to develop a costed extension proposal, for consideration by the PILC and FRC and recommendation to the Board in December 2022 (BOD/2022/06-05).
3. The costed extension proposal is informed by the findings and recommendations of the external mid-term evaluation which was discussed by the PILC in April 2022 and considered by the Board in June 2022 (BOD/2022/06 DOC 09).
4. The current Education Out Loud budget of $72.8 million includes the original budget of $55.5 million approved by the Board in March 2019 (BOD/2019/03–02) and the top up of US$17.3 million approved by the FRC in its delegated authority in September 2021 (FRC/2021/05-04). The current budget amount has been fully allocated with implementation of all grants underway.
5. The Secretariat's assessment found that all standards were met (see Annex B-quality assurance review matrix) and that the costed extension proposal responds well to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation, builds on program learning and has the potential to strengthen civil society's role in contributing to the achievement of GPE 2025 goal and objectives. On this basis, the Secretariat recommends the proposal for Board approval.

Annex A – Proposal background and Secretariat summary assessment

Additional documents (Annex B: quality assurance review matrix, full costed extension proposal including executive summary and original proposal) are posted on the Governance Portal.

Annex A- Proposal Background and Secretariat Summary Assessment

Context and Rationale

1. Education Out Loud was approved in 2019 by the Board (BOD/2019/03-02) as a continuation and expansion of GPE's support to civil society to contribute to national policy processes. While it was designed within the framework of GPE's previous strategy, the rationale to extend support to civil society is further enhanced by the adoption of GPE 2025, which relies heavily on country level inclusive policy dialogue. To achieve change at system level, inclusion of and collaboration among key stakeholders including parents, teachers and communities is a critical enabling factor. Anchored in the principle of mutual accountability, GPE as a multistakeholder partnership is strategically placed to support civil society to play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the right to education for all, to engage with policy makers and education systems to continuously improve effectiveness of policies and practices, and to channel and amplify the voices of marginalized groups at risk of exclusion from the public education systems.
2. Education Out Loud is halfway through its current implementation period, scheduled to end in 2024, a year before GPE's current strategy ends. It supports civil society in more than 60 GPE partner countries. The mid-term review (MTR) noted that it has a sound design, its implementation is on track, and it is relevant to promoting transparency and accountability and creating a stronger enabling environment for education rights-promoting dialogue and change. To leverage the opportunities offered by Education Out Loud, the MTR made nine recommendations to maximize its efficiency and impact, which included- providing longer term grants, strengthening learning and communication, developing structured guidance on gender and social inclusion, facilitating synergy on knowledge exchange and among grantees from different operational components, and optimizing monitoring and learning framework.
3. The Board and the Committees reviewed the MTR findings and invited Oxfam IBIS in June 2022 to develop a costed extension proposal (Board meeting report June 2022). It was suggested that the costed extension proposal should consider stronger gender and inclusion mainstreaming, including gender indicators at grantee level and encourage a wider range of civil society and youth participation.
4. Following the invitation, Oxfam IBIS developed a costed proposal for extending Education Out Loud through to 2027. Use of the additional financing by EOL will

be triggered by the implementation of adaptations recommended in the mid-term review to strengthen its alignment with GPE 2025 and leverage the implementation experience so far, starting as early as January 2023. The proposal to extend financing for Education Out Loud through mid-2027 would enable the grant agent to align Education Out Loud better with GPE 2025, which can further reinforce civic engagement in wider system transformation efforts. It would also allow sufficient time for completion of a further impact assessment through 2025, and to align with the priorities of the next strategic plan (GPE 2030) without disrupting GPE's support for civil society participation in national education policy processes.

Summary of Secretariat Assessment

5. The proposal remains grounded in the broader vision and justification for Education Out Loud, organized around the three operational components, but adapted to the new context of pandemic recovery which has affected education adversely around the world. It has increased the relevance of the program's potential to extend support to civil society as a defender of public education and as the voice of marginalized groups to advocate for solutions to the learning crisis.

6. Prioritizing the capacity strengthening of CSOs and furthering their participation and influence at national and regional levels is a cross-cutting theme of the mid-term review (Recommendations 1-3, and 8,9) and GPE Board and PILC discussions. The proposal confirms enhanced support to strengthening NEC's (national education coalitions) capacity to mobilize and support civil society to become more effective participants in dialogue throughout the policy cycle with special emphasis on fostering accountability and transparency, not only through local education group mechanisms but at regional district and school levels. This builds on recent achievements, with grantees having contributed to 77 policy changes in 31 different countries, which include policies specifically directed at ensuring the right to education for marginalized groups such as adolescent girls and persons living with disability. The grant agent will also provide enhanced support to NEC capacity strengthening by focusing on targeted support to advocacy skills and thematic competencies such as gender transformative education and education financing.

7. Adaptations to the program design and changes to the MEL approach and results measurement give greater prominence to integration of a gender-perspective across all activities while also creating a framework where grantees could become more effective in supporting improvements in gender

equality. The proposal adequately responds to challenges identified in the MTR, noting that while "grantees promoting socially inclusive policy changes or inclusive education… are carefully tracked…efforts to achieve results could benefit from a clearer steer, outlining strategic ambitions and providing better clarity of concepts." Responding to this recommendation and GPE Board and committee discussions, the grant agent will develop a comprehensive policy guidance note on gender equality and inclusion for grantees. The Secretariat will monitor this aspect of implementation closely over the next two years. In the area of results measurement and MEL, all relevant indicators are defined in such a way that only outputs/outcomes that are *gender responsive* count towards results (see Annex 1). Notably, the results framework ties together measuring gender responsive change with programmatic efforts to promote grantees' leaning, knowledge generation and knowledge sharing (i.e., through learning collaboratives, OC 1.4) related to promotion of gender equality[1]. This will contribute to a more holistic approach to integrating and promoting gender equality.

8. Operationally, the program will provide more intensive support for sustainability. The program appreciation of sustainability includes a recognition of the longer lasting nature of the core role of NECs / CSOs in influencing policy, institutions, and enabling environments for more democratic participation and accountability, while also improving the capacities of national education coalitions (NECs)/Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to continue to fulfil their role in advocacy and social accountability processes.
9. The Secretariat considers the activities of the costed-extension proposal responsive to Board and Committee expectations and guidance and well-tailored to adapt to the highly differentiated country and regional contexts in which CSOs and NECs seek to promote social change, inclusion, and gender equality.

Next Steps

10. The grantees, especially the national coalitions, are engaged in local education groups in more than 40 countries and in other policy forums in all the countries with active EOL grants. The representation of a diverse range of marginalized

[1] N.b. Outcome 1.4 At the end of the EOL project, "Learning collaboratives" established are generating and sharing knowledge for institutional strengthening of civil society organizations, particularly in relation to the promotion of social accountability, inclusion and gender equality.

groups has been on the rise (e.g., 93% of the NECs have representation from youth groups). In line with principles of effective partnership and recommendations from the mid-term review, the Secretariat will continue to work closely with the grant agent and the grantees to facilitate grantees' timely and effective participation in country dialogue around education system transformation, including specific dialogue, grant, and monitoring activities with potential to further policy change and progressive realization of education rights.

11. This proposal's ambitions to integrate and advance gender equality are a step change toward the bold vision articulated in GPE 2025. Monitoring progress and early results of newly proposed gender equality initiatives (and considering course correction, where needed) will be a critical task over the next two years and one which should be attended to by the Secretariat and relevant Committees.

The progress report for January-June 2022 is available on the Governance Portal. This was received after deliberations had been conducted at PILC, and has since been shared with the Committee, along with a matrix summarizing how and where the recommendations from the mid-term review are addressed in the EOL costed extension proposal (also available on the Portal).