



ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY DESIGN PAPER

For Decision

Please note: Board papers are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are not public documents until the Board has considered them at the Board meeting. It is understood that constituencies will circulate Board documents among their members prior to the Board meeting for consultation purposes.

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the proposed goal, objectives, outputs and operational components (i.e. the theory of change) for the Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) funding mechanism. The paper also proposes recommendations on the initial design parameters for eligibility, allocation and frequency of grants, and considerations for the governance and management of ASA.

1.2 The paper lays out a roadmap for operationalizing the ASA mechanism by 2019. It requests the Board to delegate authority to the Strategy and Impact Committee for oversight of stage 2 of the operational design to be completed between January and May 2018, in order to enable the ASA funding mechanism to be launched in 2019. Annex 1 provides an overview of key take-aways from additional analyses that informed the design choices proposed for the ASA mechanism.

Summary of Strategy and Impact Committee Deliberations on October 24 and 25th 2017

- The Committee acknowledged the progress made since its meeting in September on ASA and welcomed the concrete proposals on ASA design.
- The SIC requested language in the goals and objectives to more concretely address the intended purpose of ASA in terms of improved education sector dialogue and sector plan implementation, including through GPE country grants.
- The SIC discussed the risk of losing dedicated funding for the CSEF successor in the current framing of the theory of change, and agreed that additional language on the intention to provide support for a successor in the text would accommodate this concern.
- The SIC also deliberated on eligibility and proposed criteria to ensure that grantees of ASA would be grounded by nationally based civil society actors rather than externally driven.
- The SIC discussed the roles of a technical advisory panel and contracted firm for the stage 2 design work and requested clarity on the relative role of each. The SIC requested that if the technical advisory panel were to evolve into a selection panel for ASA grants that there be representation on such a body from the governance committees of GPE.
- SIC members discussed the multiple roles a grant agent might play (fiduciary, program management, strategic, learning and capacity building etc.). Some members raised concerns about the grant agent role should it be performed by a private firm, and debated the relative merits of having one or more grant agent for the program. It was agreed that these issues would be taken up as part of the operational design work between January and June.
- Some SIC members also raised the challenge of ensuring continuity of funding for CSEF grantees, and urged the consideration of a costed extension for CSEF in summer 2018 should it be required.
- In feedback following the meeting, SIC members asked for the inclusion of an analytical annex providing key-takeaways from additional analyses that influenced the design choices proposed for the ASA mechanism.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The Board is requested to consider the design parameters for the ASA funding mechanism set out in the following paper. Specifically, the SIC recommends that the Board approve the proposed:

- Goal, objectives, outputs and operational components for ASA
- Eligibility criteria
- Notional allocation of grants by objective
- Frequency of grants

2.2 Based on these key decisions, the Strategy and Impact Committee recommends that the Secretariat undertake further operational design work between January and May 2018, under the

oversight of the SIC committee. In May, SIC will consider the outcomes of the mid-term evaluation of the Civil Society Education Fund program (available in February 2018); and review proposed options for the management structure for ASA based on grant agent options and capacities. Further exploration of the operational and strategic linkages between ASA and KIX will also be undertaken between January and May for both mechanisms' design, in order to enhance the synergies of investments made once the mechanisms are operational. Based on consideration of stage 2 design options, the SIC requests the Board to delegate it the authority to finalize and approve the operational design features for ASA at its next face to face meeting in May 2018.

3. RECOMMENDED DECISION

3.1 The Secretariat requests that the Board of Directors approve the following decision:

BOD/2017/12 XX—Advocacy and Social Accountability: The Board of Directors:

1. Approves the goal, objectives, outputs and operational components for the Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) funding mechanism and;
2. Adopts the parameters for (1) eligibility criteria; (2) allocation of resources by objective; (3) frequency of grants as stated in this document [BOD/2017/12-DOC 10]
3. Delegates authority to the Strategy and Impact Committee to approve stage 2 operational design options for the ASA mechanism. This includes the authority to:
 - a. Approve the criteria and process for the selection of the grant agent(s);
 - b. Approve selection criteria and procedures for calls for proposals
 - c. Review and approve the overall approach to reporting, monitoring and grant extension or restructuring

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Financing and Funding Framework (FFF) adopted by the Board in March 2017, recognizes that the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE's) ability to strengthen mutual accountability (GPE2020 SO3) must be reinforced by dedicated, investments across the partnership. As part of the decision to establish an Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) funding mechanism in the FFF, the Board mandated that the Strategy and Impact Committee should provide oversight of the operational design of the mechanism. In BOD 2017/03, the Board requested that the ASA design take into account the following factors:

- The program at country level will be a successor program to the Civil Society Education Fund III program but will also seek to diversify partners and incorporate

new areas of work including citizen feedback, participatory methodologies towards helping public sector institutions to address policy, strategy and implementation challenges.

- The program at global level will bring together consortia of actors who may otherwise not come together in the education space or include other actors from different sectors, to work collaboratively and respectively on global and transnational activities that bear on GPE country-level work particularly in the areas of aid effectiveness, finance and cross-sector synergies.
- It should be financed from both unrestricted and targeted contributions.
- It should be designed to avoid fragmentation and with due attention for ensuring transaction costs are limited including maintaining associated Secretariat operating expenses within a range of 5-7%.

4.2 Since March 2017, the Secretariat has been working with the Strategy and Impact Committee to design the ASA funding mechanism, with support from Dalberg Global Development Advisors. The following background materials have informed the decisions proposed in this board paper: Comparator Analysis, Market Analysis, Lessons Learned paper, and inputs from consultations with all of GPE's constituencies between August and October 2017 (see Annex 1). The design features proposed therefore reflect several considerations on the role of civil society, good practice in the fields of social accountability and advocacy and GPE's comparative advantage. DCPs emphasized the important role of civil society in providing oversight, supporting the engagement of citizens in education policy, and bringing the expertise and views of local communities to bear on education policy – but also acknowledged the challenges of achieving constructive and streamlined engagement with civil society. Civil society affirmed the value of the Civil Society Education Fund, and in particular of the role of the Global Campaign for Education and regional secretariats in supporting national coalitions' activities. Bilateral partners emphasized the importance of civil society efforts to increase transparency and improve governance, and this was reinforced by foundations and DCP inputs.

4.3 As part of the comparator analysis, comparator informants in the fields of social accountability and advocacy emphasized the importance of supporting civil society priorities, factoring in the difficulty in providing direct attribution to advocacy for policy outcomes when considering monitoring and evaluation approaches, and the need for sensitivity in engaging marginalized or low-capacity civil society partners. Foundations also emphasized the importance of allowing for an iterative process in advocacy and social accountability activities, by supporting learning and adaptation over multi-year periods. Partners identified strong linkages between KIX

and ASA as an important approach to embedding learning into the ASA grants, activities and capacity building for grantees. Finally, there was strong consensus from all partners and informants that GPE is well positioned to help ensure that accountability efforts inform national policy and planning cycles, including through GPE's support for government-led education strategies for systems' change and inclusive joint monitoring at the country level. Further details on findings from the background analyses for ASA can be found in Annex 1 on the Eteam site.

4.4 Following the Board decision in December 2017, the Strategy and Impact Committee will consider further analyses to inform the second stage of design work for ASA. It is expected that further work will be done to elaborate and consider the potential operational linkages between KIX and ASA, and between ASA and GPE's other financing and technical support for countries. The SIC will also consider the findings from the mid-term evaluation of the Civil Society Education Fund, further constituency consultations on ASA design options, as well as inputs from a technical advisory panel, to enable final operational design options to be considered in May 2018.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Strategy and Impact Committee recommends that the Board adopt the proposed goal, objectives and theory of change for the ASA funding mechanism. These form the basis for the rest of the operational design of the ASA funding mechanism, and provide a framework for subsequent work to define the results indicators and selection criteria for grants. In addition, the SIC recommends that the board adopt some initial parameters for eligibility, allocation of funds, length and frequency of grants. Finally, the SIC recommends that the Board mandate it the authority to proceed with stage 2 design considerations (as outlined in section 7 on next steps) including the delegated authority to approve the criteria and selection process for the grant agent(s) and approve the relevant call for proposals procedures and other procedural details of ASA. The following theory of change provides the overarching goal of ASA, its three main objectives, and the relevant outputs and operational components at country and global levels to achieve these objectives.

5.2 **GOAL:** The SIC recommends that the overarching goal of ASA be the following:

- Enhanced civil society capacity to further GPE2020 goals in learning, equity, and stronger systems, by improving their participation, advocacy and efforts to ensure transparency and increased effectiveness in national educational policy and implementation processes.

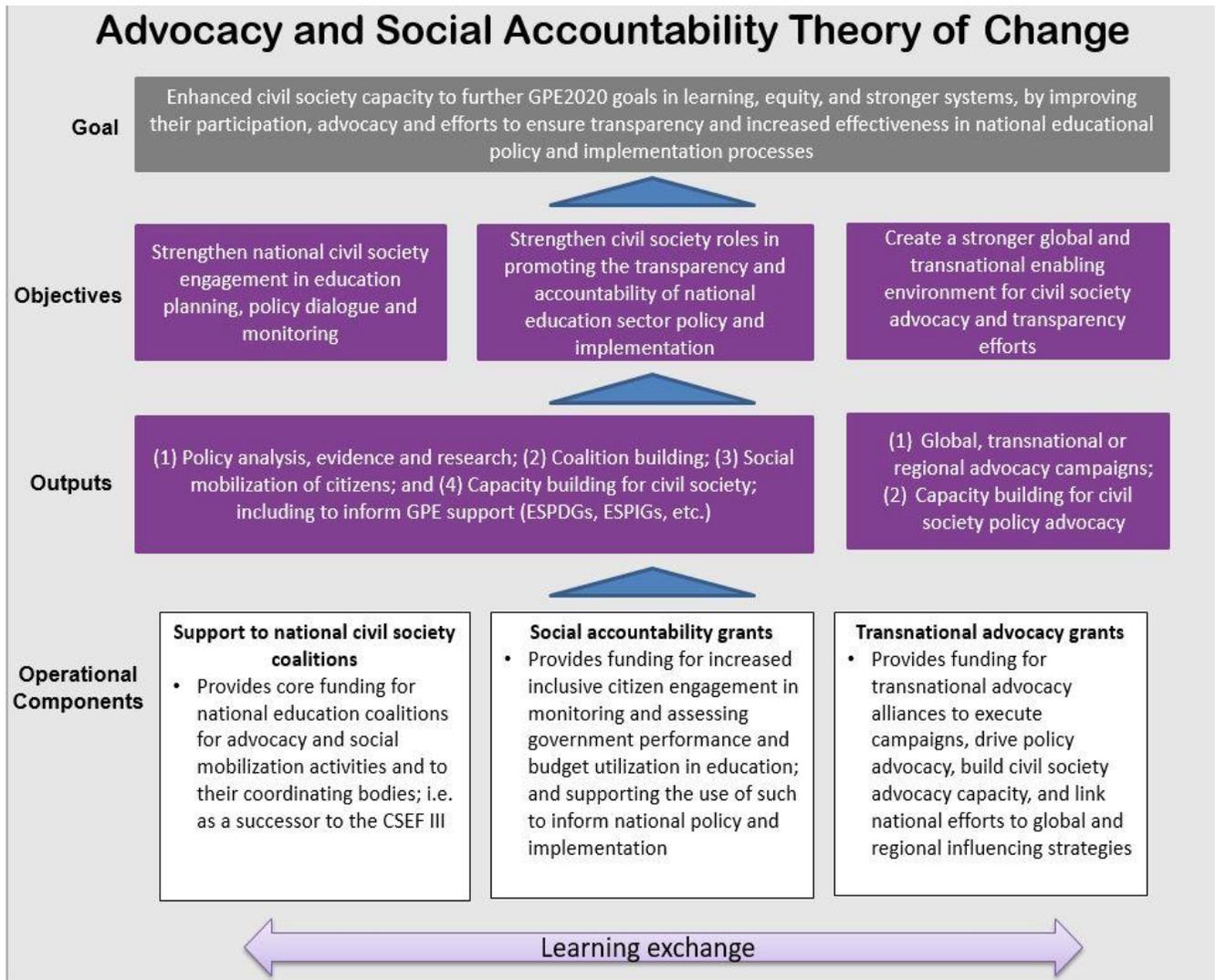
5.3 **OBJECTIVES:** The three objectives of the ASA funding mechanism correspond to the three windows identified by the Board in BOD/2017/03 DOC 3 – Annex. However, the SIC found the term “window” and the mix of recipient and objective by window to be confusing, and proposed that ASA

be based on a clear theory of change with concrete objectives. The following three objectives are based on the windows initially proposed in the FFF but which are better defined in terms of the results they seek to achieve. As such, the proposed objectives for ASA are the following:

1. to strengthen national civil society engagement in education sector planning, policy dialogue and monitoring;
2. to strengthen civil society roles in promoting the transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation; and
3. to create a stronger global, regional and transnational enabling environment for civil society advocacy and transparency efforts in education.

5.4 **OUTPUTS AND OPERATIONAL COMPONENTS:** The ASA funding mechanism would offer a competitive call for proposals from national, regional and transnational civil society organizations (NGOs, parental, community based, and teacher organizations) with a total minimum value of \$60 million over three years, to meet any of three objectives through three operational components described below. Approximately \$10 million is set as the amount to be raised from targeted funding. At the national level, ASA will invest in (1) policy analysis, evidence and research; (2) coalitions building; (3) social mobilization of citizens; and (4) capacity building for civil society including to inform GPE support (ESPDGs, ESPIGs, etc.) It will do so through two operational components: a successor to the CSEF III program and social accountability grants. At the global level, ASA will invest in (1) global, transnational or regional advocacy campaigns; and (2) capacity building for civil society policy advocacy through transnational advocacy grants.

5.5 **Learning exchange:** ASA will be supported by investments in capacity building through all three operational components, with the support of learning partners working directly with grantees to strengthen the impact and sustainability of their work. In addition, the three operational components will be designed to work in close alignment with one another and with the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) mechanism's learning exchange platform and funding. For example, KIX may be well placed to disseminate and facilitate deeper learning on relevant thematic areas of knowledge generated through the ASA mechanism. On the other hand, civil society may benefit from knowledge and advocate for innovations which have been identified and supported through the KIX mechanism. Close attention will be paid in the second stage of design to the operational linkages between these two mechanisms.



5.5 **ALLOCATION OF FUNDS:** The minimum funding required for ASA is \$60 million over three years as set out in BOD/2017/03 DOC 3 – Annex and in the Financial Forecast. Depending on the outcome of the resource mobilization efforts under replenishment, this amount may be increased up to \$100 million. Of this total, the FFF suggest spending:

- 50% of funding on ASA Objective 1;
- 25% of the funding on ASA Objective 2; and
- 25 % on ASA Objective 3.

The SIC recommends that this notional split in the overall weights of each objective be retained.

5.6 Of the \$60 million minimum amount allocated for ASA, \$10 million is already committed to finance the last year of CSEF III in 2018. It is also intended that the successor program to CSEF III in 2019 and 2020 is provided for through the ASA funding mechanism at approximately the

previously allocated level of \$10m per year. The balance of ASA funding (a minimum of \$10 million annually) will be dedicated to address the Board’s request that ASA diversify partners and incorporate new areas of work, and that ASA include support for global, transnational and regional advocacy.

5.7 ELIGIBILITY: The FFF includes a clear set of eligibility criteria with 89 countries that are intended to benefit from GPE financing. For the ASA funding mechanism specifically, the BOD/2017/03 DOC 3 – Annex proposes that civil society organizations (“non-governmental organizations, think tanks, research organizations, national university departments, and other individual civil society organizations etc.”) be eligible to apply for funding. The SIC proposes to refine the eligibility criteria to exclude think tanks or media organizations (reflecting inputs from the consultations and comparator analyses), with eligibility limited to civil society organizations defined as not-for-profit public interest organizations, networks, coalitions or associations. This would include, for example, teacher organizations, parents’ associations, community-based organizations and other NGOs working on behalf of public interest issues.

5.8 Furthermore, the SIC have also proposed to refine the eligibility criteria to ensure a strong focus on building the capacity of national civil society actors and enhancing the impact of ASA at the national level through two principles:

1. For national-level activities, eligibility should be confined to national civil society actors working in any of the 89 FFF-eligible countries
2. For transnational activities, eligibility should be confined to civil society organizations working anywhere to support an enabling environment for successful national education advocacy, as long as the intended policy impact is in the 89 FFF-eligible countries and is undertaken in conjunction with at least one civil society actor originating in a developing partner country.

Finally, to ensure that GPE effectively grows the successful efforts undertaken through the Civil Society Education Fund, the SIC recommends that:

3. Special consideration should be given to national education coalitions, regional CSEF Secretariats and the Global Campaign for Education, which are currently funded through the CSEF, to ensure continuity of funding and to build on GPE’s previous investments in these groups. This consideration should also take into account the findings of the Civil Society Education Fund III mid-term evaluation.

5.9 FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF GRANTS: Based on findings from the Secretariat's comparator analysis, constituency consultations and expert interviews, a minimum commitment of three years of funding is typically seen as the ideal minimum timeframe for work on policy change to bear fruit, meaning that grants could be renewed every 3 years or more. It is also proposed that there be 2 calls for proposals, first in 2019 (or earlier if possible) and in 2020. It is recommended that consideration be given for a "year zero" during which grantees will undertake planning, capacity building, alliance building and grant work program refinement, followed by increased allocations for bigger grant allocations to support work in the subsequent 2 years of the grant cycle.

5.10 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE SIC: A clear management and governance structure for ASA along with roles and responsibilities will accompany the final operational design options in May 2018. Governance of the ASA funding mechanism will require clear definition of roles and responsibilities of the Board and sub-committees, as well as the Secretariat and grant agent(s). In the interim, given the need for a second stage of design work for ASA from January to May 2018 and the existing mandate of the SIC to oversee the design work for ASA, the SIC requests the Board to delegate the following authority to the SIC:

- Agree formal criteria and process for the selection of the grant agent(s);
- Agree to selection criteria and procedures for calls for proposals;
- Review and approve the overall approach to reporting, monitoring and grant extension or restructuring, (with inputs from the grant agent(s) and technical advisory panel).

5.11 The SIC will review the final operational design for ASA, if delegated this authority, at its May 2018 face to face meeting, for final approval. This will allow a rapid transition to implementation, including the contracting of a grant agent(s) and subsequent call for proposals process finalization and planning. Following approval of the final operational design for ASA, the Governance and Ethics Committee (GEC) as part of its regular updating of committee Terms of Reference will review which committee should have on-going oversight of ASA. The GEC will complete this review and make a recommendation to the Board by the end of 2018.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT RESOURCES

6.1 The management of the second stage of design and initial contracting of a grant agent or agents during the remainder of 2018, is possible through re-allocation of existing staff resources. In addition, one junior analyst will be employed on a part time (STC) basis. Additional resources needed

to support stage 2 design will also be sourced from the Secretariat budget – and will include contract with a firm and the establishment of a small technical advisory panel.

6.2 Secretariat capacity for management of ASA will need to be re-assessed after the final adoption of an operational design in May 2018, when more is known about the capacities of grant agents. However, an initial assessment done under the auspices of the current human resources review is that dedicated team resources will be required for a) the management of grant streams under ASA; b) to support improved participation of civil society in education policy processes and policy monitoring through GPE country processes and investments and c) to support learning and knowledge sharing about civil society inclusion across the partnership. Some additional capacity is also required in the Finance and Operations Team to support the increased volume and complexity of ASA related transactions involved in facilitating donor contribution agreements from new donors, and agreements/contracts for a more diverse group of grant recipients. These items have been incorporated into the HR plan, and ongoing operating costs beyond June will be captured in the normal 2019 budget and workplan process.

6.3 It is estimated that the equivalent of 3% of the value of the overall resource envelope for ASA would be needed to support a mid-term and final evaluation of the program. An additional 5% for learning and knowledge exchange should also be dedicated from the overall ASA resource envelope. Depending on how learning functions are embedded in grant proposals from civil society these funds might be channelled and used through the grant agent(s) or be achieved by subcontracting. Knowledge and learning exchange will be integrated and aligned into the KIX platform.

7. RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The current GPE risk framework reviewed by the Finance and Risk Committee identifies the potential risks associated with the ASA mechanism; notably the risk that uncertainty undermines the continuity of civil society and teaching profession engagement while designing the new mechanisms. As such, ensuring that there is a clear timeline both for design and implementation planning will help to enable civil society to undertake preparatory work in 2018. All efforts should be made to ensure that any changes in the way GPE funds civil society are not disruptive to the existing work of its grantees. The risk of disruption is compounded by the challenge of finding a grant agent that meets the existing criteria for GPE's grant agents. If it is not possible to secure a grant agent in a timely manner, and if modifications to the criteria for a grant agent are required in order to do so, this would require the approval of the Board and trustee and likely result in significant uncertainty or delays regarding the start of the ASA program. The Secretariat will be actively working with the trustee to identify potential grant agents within the existing criteria to the extent possible in early

2018. Finally, if the Secretariat requires and is not able to secure supplemental budget to support the design of ASA in the second stage, this may also result in delays to the start of ASA. If delays in the start of the ASA program cannot be mitigated to minimize disruption, the Board may need to consider providing a costed extension to the current CSEF III in the early 2019 period.

7.2 The Strategic Financing Working Group also identified several risks in BOD/2017/03 DOC 3 – Annex for the ASA funding mechanism in which will be reviewed in stage 2 design work and factored into the design options or reflected in commensurate mitigation strategies. These include the risk of fragmentation at country level, which will require sufficient resourcing for the Secretariat to effectively broker and leverage synergies between different country-level partners. The second risks relates to the relative size of the transaction costs related to the administration of large numbers of small grants. This will be factored into considerations related to the role of the grant agent(s), or other intermediaries who can potentially offer efficiencies in grant management. Thirdly, the SFWG identified the risk of lack of coherence to overall systems approach, and fourth to the risk of political nature of accountability work, including the need to ensure due diligence in who to fund, and increasing awareness of the role of accountability in sector planning. The SIC identified a fifth risk related to the potential for some countries to have a closed environment for civil society engagement, hampering the ability for civic mobilization to be effective. Risk assessment will be reviewed throughout the second stage of the ASA design process, and will be finalized by June 2018.

7.3 The Secretariat recommends that the GPE risk framework be updated in June 2018 once the operational design is approved, and appropriate mitigation measures put in place where they are still required.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 The Secretariat will work with the SIC to review further design options and finalize the ASA operational design. From January to May, the SIC will oversee the development of operational options, and will review and select the final ASA operational design at its face to face meeting in May 2018. Among those considerations already identified as requiring more work in stage 2 are the following:

1. On eligibility: Further design work is required on the calls for proposals process and mechanics, in order to support the development of strong proposals by consortia, including how to best diversify actors, bring non-traditional partners, including marginalized groups, into alliances, and tie transnational work to work being done by actors in the countries in which they aim to have an impact. In addition, consideration must be given to whether ASA

calls for proposals allow for joint applications on behalf of consortia, or allow for multiple individual organizations to apply separately for work on a larger joint advocacy strategy.

On size of grants: Board in BOD/2017/03 DOC 3 – Annex sets out the grant size ranges of \$50k-200k annually for national level activities (objectives 1 and 2) and \$200-500k (objective 3) annually for transnational activities. Stage 2 design work will assess what size of grant is appropriate for the impact desired, and what the cost-benefit ratio is related to transaction costs. Further research is needed to compare these amounts with grant sizes used by other organizations. Stage 2 design work will also inform the need for a grant floor or cap, as initial indications (absent further details on grant agent(s) capacity) show that grants under \$300,000 are prohibitively expensive for GPE to administer, which would imply that larger grants to intermediaries is a more effective design option, but this needs to be validated. In addition, the imperative to diversify the actors and practices supported by GPE may require consideration of a cap for any one grant recipient.

2. On grant agent(s): Further exploration of potential ASA grant agents is required to better understand their institutional arrangements, capabilities, and requirements. Some suggested criteria for the selection of the grant agent(s) include having a track record of effective grant-making particularly in providing small grants (under \$100k) to civil society organizations in developing countries. It should have no conflicts of interest, demonstrate strong fiduciary oversight capacity and have a country presence or strong partnerships with country presence in at least 3 of the 4 regions where ASA will be active (Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Middles East). The Secretariat will explore potential grant agents as part of stage 2 design work, guided by trustee requirements and additional selection criteria to be determined by the SIC. The type of grant agent and their respective capabilities and requirements will influence the call for proposals procedures, and so consideration of such will follow the shortlisting of potential grant agents.
3. On an independent technical advisory panel: In order to advance ASA design, the Secretariat will contract an advisory panel to support and strengthen the technical rigor of Stage 2 design options. It is intended to include 3-5 technical experts in the fields of social accountability, advocacy and grant-making. In particular, the technical advisory panel should provide guidance on good practice in undertaking calls for proposals, including consideration of how to ensure that marginalized or other under-represented groups are able to successfully apply for funding from ASA. Once ASA is operationalized, this advisory panel might be continued or evolved to become an arms-length technical review panel to

oversee and adjudicate calls for proposals and to provide high level advisory and technical input into ongoing work across the ASA portfolio. The SIC will consider more specific grant review and selection options, including those evolving from the technical advisory panel, as part of the stage 2 operational design options.

4. On links between KIX and ASA: Mutually beneficial linkages can be made between KIX and ASA to maximize the potential impact of both mechanisms. Civil society may be a source of research and innovation in areas identified by KIX and therefore contribute these assets to the KIX knowledge exchange platform. On the other hand, knowledge and evidence generated through the ASA mechanism may be disseminated and build capacity of other grantees and actors within ASA, using the KIX knowledge exchange platform and tools to embed learning within ASA. Further exploration of these operational and strategic linkages between ASA and KIX will be included in stage 2 design work for both mechanisms, enhancing the synergies of investments made once the mechanisms are operational.

9. PLEASE CONTACT Sarah Beardmore at: sbeardmore@globalpartnership.org for further information.

10. REFERENCES

10.1 Annex 1 includes key take-aways from the CSEF Lessons Learned; Comparator Analysis, Market Analysis, and consultations with GPE's constituencies which influenced design choices made for the ASA mechanism.

10.2 The full references, listed below, are included on the E-team site:

- CSEF Lessons Learned paper
- Comparator Analysis slide deck
- Market Analysis slide deck
- Consultation summary

Annex 1: Key considerations for ASA design

Please note: The background materials referenced in this report are available on the E-team site.

1. Background

To inform the design of the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) new Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) funding mechanism, the Secretariat and Dalberg Associates conducted the analyses summarized below between July and October 2017. These analyses were considered by the Strategy and Impact Committee at its meetings in Copenhagen on September 26-27, 2017, and in Paris on October 24-25, 2017, and have significantly guided the Committee's recommendations to the Board on ASA design decisions.

2. Comparator analysis summary

With a focus on what might be helpful to inform the design of the ASA mechanism, the comparator analysis considered the following five parameters across twenty organizations focused on social accountability, regional/national advocacy, and/or global advocacy:

1. Funding activities and outcomes sought
2. GPE's comparative advantage in the landscape
3. Approaches to learning
4. Approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
5. Grant parameters and processes

Key findings from the analysis were reviewed by the Strategy and Impact Committee at its meetings in September 2017, and are summarized below:

2.1 Funding activities and outcomes sought

Comparators were asked to provide insights about the kinds of activities and outcomes funded through advocacy and social accountability funding. Broadly, the activities funded by comparators ranged across areas of: i) transparency, participation and accountability, ii) creating and sharing evidence for advocacy and policy making, iii) citizen feedback and participation, iv) civil society strengthening, and vii) movement building and mobilization.

- **Transparency, participation and accountability:** Grantmaking in this area seeks to increase government responsiveness so that public services meet the needs of citizens more effectively.
- **Evidence:** Grantmaking in this area seeks to create high-quality evidence and harness the data revolution to further strengthen the field of evidence-based policy making.
- **Citizen feedback and participation:** Grantmaking in this area seeks to address governance and development challenges through social accountability processes that involve citizen feedback and participatory methodologies, aimed at working with governments and public institutions to solve these challenges.
- **Civil society strengthening:** By investing in institutional strengthening of civil society organizations, work in this area aims to create constructive engagement and collaboration between civil society and accountability institutions of the state.

- **Movement building and mobilization:** Grantmaking in this area seeks to bring together organizations with complementary agendas in order to create sustained advocacy pressure and align efforts to monitor progress on policies and programming. The movement is further strengthened through needs-based knowledge sharing, capacity building and mobilizing multi-sector allies.

2.2 GPE's comparative advantage

The primary comparative advantage of GPE – i.e. where it can most be additive to existing investments in advocacy and social accountability -- was identified as building capacity and generating learnings and public goods. Comparators highlighted a number of opportunities that GPE is well positioned to consider:

- **Building the capacity of civil society and government systems:** Support the mobilization of civil society, as well as the responses of government systems to a demand for greater accountability.
- **Mobilizing learnings from the country to the global level:** Leverage context-specific work to create a bottom-up approach to global dissemination of results and lessons learned, facilitated by a knowledge platform.
- **Developing case studies for 'positive deviants':** Identify 20 of GPE's partner countries with active civic actors and select several exemplars to develop case studies to demonstrate minimum good practice.
- **Creating a summary review of work-to-date on how responsive governments are to accountability in education:** Despite a lot of work that has been carried out in the education sector around social accountability, there is not an easy reference that consolidates what has been learned about how to help strengthen governments' ability to respond to citizens.
- **Supporting global public goods related to accountability and SDG 4 (measurement)**

Comparators recommended that GPE deprioritize areas of work such as supporting local data collection and funding accountability interventions in a few specific countries as this would not necessarily leverage GPE's unique position.

2.3 Approaches to learning

Comparators highlighted the importance of creating an ecosystem for dynamic knowledge exchange and a clear learning strategy, from early stages of design, to enable not only an evaluation for purposes of donor reporting, but also to truly learn and adjust projects and programs at various stages of implementation to achieve desired outcomes.

- **Selection of research partner:** Comparators recommended having a research partner based in-country to facilitate tighter linkages between local researchers and policymakers.
- **Distinct learning strategy:** It is important to create a clear learning strategy in addition to, or as part of a monitoring and evaluation strategy from inception, to truly embed learning into grantmaking processes, as an evaluation strategy alone will not facilitate internal and external learning.

- **Vertical and horizontal learning and exchange:** Learning investments should intentionally reach all targets of the learning strategy, including actors that are actively implementing programs, and not be restricted to directors and other managing actors, as is often the case. Similarly, it is important to connect strategists and implementers for horizontal learning and exchange.
- **Balance between evaluation and learning:** Often, evaluation for accountability purposes (especially to funders) crowds out the capacity for genuine learning. However, when accountability demands are less stringent, organizations tend to invest less in M&E, and it is important to maintain a balance to ensure a focus on both evaluation and learning.

2.4 Approaches to M&E

Given limited resources in the development sector, combined with an increased desire to improve evidence and program effectiveness, analysis found that overall, comparators tended to place a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of programs in their portfolios.

- **Overarching trends:** Analysis found that evaluation practices varied across programming levels, and were more likely to be outsourced than other responsibilities. At the country-level, a range of standard impact evaluation techniques were used to measure the impact of civil society on a program; whereas at higher-levels, evaluation tended to be more long-term and of a narrative nature (for example, evaluating what kinds of policymakers have been connected and what kind of change has been created). Comparators also stressed the importance of disentangling learning from evaluation as they serve very different purposes.
- **Challenges in M&E:** Despite a strong commitment to rigorous M&E (for example, through hiring leading think-tanks to conduct Randomized Control Trials, amongst others), specifying advocacy outcomes and attributing results to specific actions emerged as a key challenge to conducting effective evaluations, especially in cases where behavioral change was the end goal. However, organizations were still able to focus on measurement at an outputs level.

2.5 Grant parameters and process

An analysis of grant sizes, time frames, and grantee selection processes across comparators found that advocacy and accountability grant sizes ranged from anywhere between \$90,000 to \$200,000 over a time frame of one to five years.

- **Grant sizes and time frames:** Analysis reveals that while the size of global advocacy grants varies based on objectives and targets, in general, global advocacy activities almost always require more resources than social accountability activities. Further, while some comparators continue to make grants for short periods (~1 year), others focus on larger grants over multiple years to minimize transaction costs. This also allows for multi-year planning, predictability and relationship building.
- **Grantee selection process:** Comparators enhance their proposal selection process in four ways: i) initial consultations to guide the process, ii) providing input from experts, iii) a multi-step application process and iv) curation of proposals based on alignment with priorities.

- **Additional support:** Comparators provide technical assistance in addition to the core grant, both during the application process as well as during project implementation. Some funders also provided a knowledge sharing or learning component.

3. Market analysis summary

Dalberg Associates, in conjunction with the Secretariat, carried out a preliminary survey of overall trends in the global philanthropic landscape and identified a set of ten private foundations that were strategically aligned to GPE's priorities, for purposes of this analysis. Interviews with representatives from these foundations, supplemented by publicly available documentation, form the basis of this analysis.

Overall, education and government and civil society were found to be the most popular sectors for global philanthropic support. Further, interviews revealed that private foundations demonstrated an interest in supporting new mechanisms, and GPE's unique positioning as a partnership presents an opportunity for them to support work beyond their usual remit.

3.1 Engagement with ASA-like activities

- In 2014, foundations granted approximately \$2.7 billion in support of human rights (which encompasses funding for advocacy and social accountability funding). Around 7% of this was invested in civil and political participation.
- Many of the strategies and activities supported by human rights funding could potentially align with the ASA mechanism's activities. For example, funding for advocacy, systems reform and implementation included grants to promote Global South voices in international institutions and to support policy advocacy and donor engagement around healthcare reform and implementation. Further, analysis found that often, research grants included support for research on accountability in natural resource governance in developing countries.

3.2 Trends and considerations around supporting ASA

- Private foundations recognize that they need to work at the global level to maintain funding but are moving towards more intentional engagement at the country-level.
- Further, foundations are seeking to align funding with national education sector plan priorities and see GPE as a potential broker to realize this opportunity.
- Foundations also highlighted the importance of linking advocacy investments to programmatic investments being made in a specific country.

3.3 Suggestions for GPE

- Private foundations are interested in exploring how they can play an expanded role in national advocacy that would lead to greater political will and more domestic financing.
- They also suggested that GPE rely on learning outcomes and its own evidence base to prioritize policy themes for funding.

4. Lessons learned from the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF)

In October 2017, the Secretariat commissioned a review of the lessons learned from first two phases of CSEF from 2009 to 2015. Based on a desk review of internal and external reports and evaluations of CSEF, the analysis aims to assess CSEF's success in improving the quantity and quality of civil society advocacy in the education sector. Based on the lessons learned about strong successes as well as ongoing challenges, the report offers recommendations for ASA design for consideration. A mid-term evaluation of the third phase of the program from 2016 to 2018 i.e. CSEF III will be available in February 2018 to further inform ASA design. Some of the key findings from this analysis are summarized below:

4.1 Overall impact

- *Successes:* CSEF has been very successful at raising the political profile, aptitudes and capacities of national civil society coalitions.
- *Challenges:* Formal barriers to civil society participation in political processes remain in place and political opportunities vary tremendously by country context.
- *Learning for ASA:* ASA should help coalitions, secretariats and other civil society organizations to address the factors that limit meaningful CSO engagement on a country-by-country basis.

4.2 Research and advocacy

- *Successes:* CSEF has been widely praised for supporting the production of advocacy-oriented research that is targeted and impactful.
- *Challenges:* Quality is uneven, and little has been done to learn from the research and the research process within and across regions, leading to lost opportunities for south-south knowledge sharing and improved practice.
- *Learning for ASA:* ASA should invest time and resources into data gathering, analysis and dissemination. Any online systems need to be robust, but reporting must not be overly burdensome for coalition members.

4.3 Grant management

- *Successes:* CSEF has undergone a number of major shifts in its institutional design in order to address concerns over cumbersome management and funding structures as well as weak transparency.
- *Challenges:* Concerns remain about how to best manage the two streams of grant management and program implementation.
- *Learning for ASA:* ASA should invest time and resources into data gathering, analysis and dissemination. Any online systems need to be robust, but reporting must not be overly burdensome for coalition members.

4.4 Global advocacy vis-à-vis national autonomy

- *Successes:* CSEF is committed to a country-driven and coalition-centered approach.
- *Challenges:* CSEF's efforts to create cohesive global advocacy messaging sometimes compromises the autonomy of national coalitions.

- *Learning for ASA:* ASA planning should ensure that donor/global priorities do not unduly influence the advocacy strategies of civil society organizations, and that support is provided to support the genuine priorities of national civil society.

4.5 Governance

- *Successes:* CSEF's coalition centered-approach minimizes resource expenditure at regional and global levels.
- *Challenges:* This lean governance structure does not take into account the labor required for good regional coordination in terms of capacity-building (particularly for the weakest coalitions) collating and analyzing evidence, and cultivating shared platforms.
- *Learning for ASA:* ASA should support regional secretariats as part of a coalition-strengthening model. Special attention should be paid to how to best equip secretariats with the necessary skills and resources to support civil society in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

4.6 Inclusiveness of coalitions

- *Successes:* CSEF has made great strides in growing and diversifying membership of national education coalitions.
- *Challenges:* Gaps remain in ensuring genuine engagement (rather than tokenism) of traditionally-marginalized groups and grassroots groups.
- *Learning for ASA:* ASA should adopt strategies to map and support genuine engagement of traditionally-marginalized and grassroots groups. This could build on a qualitative review of coalition membership across the CSEF program to learn more about who is and is not participating and why, and inform measurable performance indicators to track progress on inclusion and equity.

4.7 Equity within coalitions

- *Successes:* CSEF has made steps towards encouraging more thematic, district and sub-national groupings within national coalitions.
- *Challenges:* Urban, professional, and internationally-linked NGOs dominate coalitions and receive the lion's share of capacity development and skills training.
- *Learning for ASA:* ASA should assess the extent to which national coalitions are really accessing and supporting grassroots groups, and whether capabilities are being strengthened beyond just the coalition leadership. More strategic development may be needed to ensure genuine and equitable participation in capacity-building programs.

4.8 Sustainability

- *Successes:* CSEF has helped improve the sustainability of national education coalitions by making the case for funding civil society advocacy as a whole, by building more credible and legitimate coalitions, and by securing continued funding through GPE.
- *Challenges:* CSEF funding arrangements have experienced a number of delays and shifting requirements, which compromised the ability of coalitions to think beyond the short-term and to retain staff. CSEF has no 'exit strategy' for how coalitions can survive beyond the program's life cycle.

- *Learning for ASA:* ASA will need to ensure clear and reliable funding cycles, and to continue to build the fundraising capacities of civil society groups.