“Strengthening Accountability: The Role and Future of Civil Society in Education”

Concept Note

Civil society organizations and social movements can play a unique role in representing the voice of citizens in education sector dialogue, influencing policy and plans in line with concerns of citizens and particularly the most marginalized, and holding governments accountable for commitments and responsibilities. Citizen engagement, oversight and monitoring in both developing countries and in donor countries is an essential dimension of current efforts to improve accountability in education.

This side event will explore the role of civil society as accountability-holders, agents of change and vital partners in the GPE’s collective efforts to strengthen national education systems in the poorest countries and ensure that they are responsive to the needs of all learners. It will draw on the work of global civil society networks, teachers unions, organized youth, international NGOs and grassroots movements to distill lessons learned about the role and impact of citizen-led accountability. Using research, advocacy campaigns, budget tracking, parliamentary engagement, school-level monitoring of service delivery, and other tools to improve accountability for the delivery of a good quality education, civil society has become a key driver of reform, transparency and improved outcomes in the education sector.

The GPE charter, sector process guidelines, grant applications and current strategic plan recognizes the crucial role of civil society in ensuring that national goals are achieved. GPE has been supporting social accountability in education, particular through financing of GCE’s Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) and Education International’s (EI) work with UNESCO to improve teachers’ engagement in local education groups. The CSEF supports broad-based and inclusive civil society education coalitions in around 50 GPE partner countries to promote citizen engagement in the education sector, including research, monitoring and tracking of activities and spending at the grassroots. GPE is also supporting EI’s program “Delivering Teachers” in 10 countries, which includes activities to increase engagement of teachers in education policy dialogue, improve standards of teaching practice, and address issues related to teacher deployment, remuneration and working conditions.

The GPE also collaborates with northern NGOs engaged in policy analysis, advocacy and transparency initiatives to improve oversight of bilateral and multilateral commitments to education. In the global north, civil society movements have played a strong role in tracking donor pledges to education and acting as a watchdog to ensure more effective use of aid money in the achievement of national education goals. All of these efforts are examples of GPE’s current work to mobilize more participatory and effective partnerships in education which give a voice to the learners, teachers, most marginalized and disenfranchised.

As the international community prepares to adopt a new set of education goals for the post-2015 era, issues of governance, monitoring and accountability have come to the fore as necessary pre-requisites to the realization
of a new sustainable development agenda. These salient concepts will be explored with a view to informing the principles for inclusive and participatory accountability frameworks in education, building on the Dakar Framework for Action and pointing the way towards citizen-driven accountability in education beyond 2015.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this session are to:

- Share lessons learned from the past decade of experience to strengthen the role of civil society in education policy, implementation and monitoring since the adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action
- Demonstrate the impact of citizen engagement to accelerate progress in achieving education outcomes through the development and monitoring of national education legislation, strategies, goals, and commitments, building on lessons learned from the Civil Society Education Fund and Education International’s work to support teachers’ engagement in social dialogue
- Discuss the role of the Global Partnership for Education in resourcing civil society; and in supporting norms and processes to achieve more inclusive, participatory and accountable education partnerships at global and national levels.

*The session will also highlight core recommendations for the international community to improve accountability in the post 2015 education agenda through stronger civil society oversight and monitoring.*

**Format**

The session is to be a round-table discussion, followed by questions and answers from the audience.

**Moderator:**
Sean Coughlan, BBC Education Correspondent

**Panelists:**
HE Yao Florent Badjam Maganawe, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Republic of Togo
HE Roberto Iván Aguilar Gómez, Minister of Education, Bolivia
Benedicto Kondowe, National Coordinator of Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) Malawi
Ojonwa Deborah Miachi, Youth Advocate, Nigeria
Villa Kulild, Director General, NORAD, Norway
Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Co-ordinator in Education and Employment Unit, Education International