OVERVIEW

- The good governance of education systems and participatory approaches to delivering quality education are fundamental to meeting the needs of developing countries, especially for their vulnerable and marginalized populations. Public policy making is more effective when there are strong mechanisms for civic consultation that draw on the views and expertise of national constituencies.

- Education accounts for a significant share of national budgets, spent through multiple administrative layers down to the school level. It therefore requires a highly systematic process to build the capacity of education stakeholders who can help governments set education policies that are responsive to learners’ needs, can guard against leakage and misuse of power, and are able to mobilize communities in support of education.

- Yet, in many countries, students, teachers and their communities have no voice in policy making for education. This lack of participation is aggravated by policies that deny the right to education to vulnerable groups, such as girls, children with disabilities, rural communities and ethnolinguistic minorities.

- By enabling citizens to provide evidence and feedback on policy and budget frameworks, and monitor equity and quality in education, governments can benefit from strong civic support for the success of their education systems. At the same time, advocacy both within countries and transnationally can help to accelerate the momentum of political support for education, thereby increasing its priority in domestic and aid budgets, and keeping it at the top of the international development agenda.

GPE’S RESULTS

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) recognizes the vital role of civil society in education governance. In 2009, GPE made its first investment in this area by supporting the Civil Society Education Fund. Since then, GPE has expanded its investments to strengthen the participation of civil society and teachers in policy dialogue, increase global advocacy and improve transparency in education. These interventions are helping to build sturdier relationships between governments and civil society, and strengthening mutual accountability across the partnership.

- The Civil Society Education Fund, managed by the Global Campaign for Education, provides small grants to civil society coalitions in 62 countries to build capacity for policy engagement and advocacy. In 2016, the fund received its third grant of just under US$29 million to support the program for three years.

- Reviews show a steady increase in the number of coalitions with formal links to local education groups, with 86 % of coalitions participating actively in their country’s local education group by the end of 2015.

- GPE provided nearly US$2 million in funding to support Education International and UNESCO’s efforts to strengthen the capacity of teacher organizations in 10 countries to engage in national policy through its Global and Regional Activities Grant.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH GPE

GPE’s new financing and funding framework—adopted in March 2017 to raise significantly greater and more diverse finance—acknowledges that the political impetus to improve education is one of the most important drivers of change, and embeds support for advocacy and social accountability into GPE’s operational model.

The framework includes an advocacy and social accountability mechanism (ASA) which offers partners—and other organizations striving to improve education governance and broaden the participation of civil society in public policy making—the opportunity to invest in these crucial development areas.

With a successful replenishment, the advocacy and social accountability mechanism will enable GPE to invest a minimum of US$20 million annually to support civil society. This represents a doubling of GPE’s previous level of support for civil society, which will expand its ability to help bring the partnership’s views and experiences to the policy table.

Building on GPE’s investments in the Civil Society Education Fund and Education International/UNESCO programs, the new advocacy and social accountability mechanism will also expand GPE’s support for transnational advocacy efforts to build the political will for well-financed, equitable and quality education strategies. The funding for advocacy and social accountability aims to

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

GPE’S REPLENISHMENT

- GPE’s five-year strategic plan, which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal on education, has three main targets: improving learning; increasing equity, inclusion and gender equality; and building effective and efficient education systems.

- To achieve these goals, GPE is replenishing its resources. It aims to become a US$2 billion a year organization by 2020. To reach this goal, GPE is seeking US$3.1 billion in donor contributions for 2018-2020 to ensure quality and equitable education for an additional 25.6 million children.

- A fully funded GPE will allow significant investments of up to US$100 million over three years for advocacy and social accountability work—US$10 million of which is sought from targeted funding. This would represent a tripling of current investments and a sea change in the accountability ecosystem for education.