

August 2021

Final Report

Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat

Rapid Review of Education Out Loud's Operational Component 1

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Executive summary

Introduction to the review

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) was founded on the principle of mutual accountability and a shared commitment with its partners in developing countries to ending the world's learning crisis. GPE's overall vision is a quality education for every child, as envisioned by UN Sustainability Goal 4: "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

One of GPE's country-level objectives is to support mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring. One of the mechanisms to do this is through Education Out Loud, the global program that began in January 2020 and builds on the previous long-running Civil Society Education Fund. Education Out Loud seeks to enhance civil society's capacity to engage in education sector planning, policy dialogue, and monitoring, and to promote transparency and accountability in national education policy.

Education Out Loud's overall goal is to contribute to enhancing civil society capacity to further GPE goals in learning, equity, and stronger systems, by improving their participation, advocacy and efforts. This includes strengthening national civil society engagement of national education coalitions in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring.

Since this phase of support to national education coalitions began in 2020, Education Out Loud wants to step back to understand how the support is progressing. As such, GPE commissioned an independent evaluator to undertake a rapid review of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of GPE support to national education coalitions under Education Out Loud's Operational Component 1 (OC1). The rapid review also provides initial evidence of impact and make recommendations for improvement. It focuses on the modality of Education Out Loud, rather than the effectiveness of national education coalitions themselves in terms of their national advocacy goals.

Methodology

The rapid review focused on answering three main review questions related to the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of Education Out Loud's Operational Component 1.

- **MRQ1.** To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant, appropriate, and aligned with GPE2020 thus far and GPE 2025 moving forward?
- **MRQ2.** How efficient are existing processes and available resources in implementing OC1?
- **MRQ3.** Is Education Out Loud OC1 achieving its intended outcomes and, ultimately, objectives?

It was operationalized through three methodologies – a relevance assessment, a process efficiency review and a synthesis of results thus far. The findings and evidence are drawn from mixed methods research and triangulated data sources, including extensive document reviews and 38 interviews and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders within GPE Secretariat, the Grant Agent, learning partners and a sample of national education coalitions.

Conclusions and recommendations

The following presents a summary of the main findings and conclusions according to each of the three main review questions, as well as the corresponding recommendations. The full conclusions and recommendations can be found in section 6.

Main Review Question on Relevance: To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant, appropriate, and aligned with GPE2020 thus far and GPE 2025 moving forward?

Conclusions:

- Education Out Loud Operational Component 1's strategic design is logical, informed by evidence and CSEF, and relevant to national education coalitions in GPE partner countries. While Operational Component 1 critically fills a gap for civil society support in the education sector, how Education Out Loud will link activities with other development partners is not yet clear.
- Operational Component 1's original strategic design is closely aligned and relevant to the past GPE2020 strategy, directly contributing to the achievement of GPE's objective to support mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring in partner countries.
- While Operational Component 1's strategic design is highly relevant, Education Out Loud's relevance lessens somewhat in implementation due to varying levels of capacity among national education coalitions, challenging and often fragile or conflict-affected contexts, and coordination timing challenges between other Operational Components of Education Out Loud.
- Education Out Loud Operational Component 1 is well placed to be both relevant and crucial to the realization of GPE2025's future focus on transformational change, country ownerships, and gender and social inclusion.

Recommendations:

- Review the full Education Out Loud Theory of Change to clearly theorize the connection and reinforcing mechanisms between the Operational Components for planning and implementation.
- Conduct a stakeholder mapping of relevant government, development partners, and civil society actors in each GPE partner country where a national education coalition is supported by Education Out Loud to identify opportunities and challenges to partnership.
- Continue Operational Component 1's strategic focus on supporting mutual accountability and civil society actors and identify additional opportunities to better connect Education Out Loud with GPE's country-level operational model and other global programs. Additionally, determine if any of Education Out Loud's tools and resources can be shared through KIX's digital learning platform to strengthen dissemination and reach.
- Develop more tailored capacity building approaches and learning plans for three cohorts of national education coalitions: more established and capacitated NECs; nascent NECs; and NECs operating in FCAS and severely constrained contexts.
- Emphasize in GPE Secretariat and with GPE country partners that national education coalitions are not solely grantees in Education Out Loud but critical actors already engaging in domestic policy spaces. To do this, the Grant Agent, once informed about GPE2025 and the new country model should identify and provide additional capacity building opportunities for NECs that respond to national needs identified in GPE tools.
- GPE Secretariat should conduct a series of workshops and create a feedback loop with the Grant Agent, Regional Coalitions, national education coalitions and other CSOs to bring all stakeholders on board to the new operating model, explain the shift to GPE2025 and articulate its logic, and highlight NECs crucial role in new ways of working to empower the presence of CSOs in policy dialogue.

Main Review Question on Efficiency: How efficient are existing processes and available resources in implementing OC1?

Conclusions:

- The Grant Agent, Oxfam IBIS, is perceived by global stakeholders and national education coalitions to have instituted rigorous and thorough due diligence protocols to ensure the adequate stewardship of resources in Education Out Loud Operational Component 1 thus far.
- Operational Component 1's initial start-up and application process as experienced by both Education Out Loud and national education coalitions is reported to be intensive and thorough but sometimes inefficient and overly rushed. This, along with the significant variation in the quality of national education coalitions' applications, limited the ability of global and regional stakeholders to strategically plan for implementation.
- The independent selection panels are an effective mechanism to support the quality of national education coalitions' applications at the start of Education Out Loud OC1. In contrast, the Year Zero process has not fulfilled its design as an incubator for innovation testing and strategy development in national education coalitions, partly due to limitations of many NEC applications.
- Efficient governance of Operational Component 1 is hampered by confusion across stakeholders on expectations, roles, and responsibilities. There is also a lack of distinction in capacity and roles of actors, especially regional coalitions, across the regions of Education Out Loud.
- The Grant Agent's Regional management units, and their adaptive management, are an integral component of Education Out Loud management and strengthen Education Out Loud's support of NECs. However, duplication of efforts between RMUS and RCs and the bottom-up approach of NEC-level reporting can sometimes be inefficient.

Recommendations:

- Continue the existing due diligence assessments through regular reporting. Identify how existing financial controls can be formalized into learning opportunities, for example through the development of manuals and identification of best practices for national education coalitions to utilize with other donors in the future.
- For future phases with national education coalitions that are already funded by Education Out Loud, institute a lighter-touch application process that prioritizes strategy and the unique nature of advocacy programming. It will be important to strike the right balance between internal application requirements and a lighter, swifter process for NECs.
- Survey all independent selection panels members to determine the appetite and preferences for wider engagement beyond solely reviewing grant applications but also engaging in a 'critical friend' role.
- Conduct discussions with the Grant Agent and GPE Secretariat, and request feedback from those national education coalitions that did and did not participated in Year Zero to determine : 1) whether the purpose of Year Zero should remain proposal-focused or re-prioritize innovation and experimentation; 2) what worked well and what did not work well in the support provided by Education Out Loud to NECs in Year Zero; and 3) the willingness and feasibility for all grantees to experience Year Zero, and the pros/cons of this expansion.
- Conduct participatory consultative process with all stakeholders – including the Grant Agent's Global Management Unit and Regional Management Units, the Global Campaign for Education, Regional Coalitions, and national education coalitions themselves – on what responsibilities should sit with which stakeholder according to each specific region, the capacity of actors and the desires of national education coalitions.

- Commission a small formative review to explore the role of Education Out Loud in GCE's wider movement building and identify opportunities to take advantage of GCE's new opportunity as a flexible leader in advocacy, instead of grant management.
- Review reporting requirements and frameworks to create a lighter, swifter process for both RMUs and NECs. Additionally, Education Out Loud should plan on how provide additional time for NECs to submit their reporting to their respective RMUs.

Main Review Question on Effectiveness: Is Education Out Loud OC1 achieving its intended outcomes and, ultimately, objectives?

Conclusions:

- At this early stage, overall Education Out Loud Operational Component 1 is mostly on track to achieve its expected results at the intended outcomes and objective levels and is continuing to contribute to GPE's strategic objective of supporting civil society and policy dialogue.
- There is substantial support by Education Out Loud for learning at the national education coalition level. However, there is a lack of progress on a systematic synthesis and dissemination of high-level lessons learned on what works and what does not work in education sector accountability.
- Education Out Loud has promoted co-financing efforts of national education coalitions beyond GPE by providing financial sustainability trainings and informal capacity building in financial and governance management.

Recommendations:

- Based on the overall success thus far of OC1, continue the funding and support of OC1 implementation based on the overall success thus far. Additionally, facilitate more tailored training opportunities for higher-capacitated NECs in technical and advocacy areas while maintaining the focus on governance capacity building for nascent NECs.
- Develop a high-level learning agenda (across all OCs) that will complement the existing learning framework but also identify overarching learning strategy, objectives, and questions for Education Out Loud, GPE Secretariat and sector-wide learning. Commission an Education Out Loud global learning partner as soon as possible that will be responsible for working with the GA, GPE Secretariat and GCE to lead this learning.
- Continue the technical support for co-financing efforts by facilitating trainings according to the capacity and engagement of the NEC, as well as through informal capacity building.

1 Introduction

1.1 Review objectives

In May of 2021, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) commissioned an independent evaluator to undertake a rapid review of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of GPE support to national education coalitions (NECs) under Education Out Loud's (EOL) Operational Component 1 (OC1). The rapid review also intended to provide initial evidence of impact and make recommendations for improvement. It focuses on the modality of Education Out Loud, rather than the effectiveness of national education coalitions themselves in terms of their national advocacy goals.

The objectives of the rapid review are to:

- Firstly, enable the GPE Board and Secretariat to assess whether Education Out Loud is on track to deliver on its intended objective of civil society participation in education advocacy and inclusive sector dialogue, and
- Secondly, provide evidence for making decisions on the scope and nature of GPE's future support for national education coalitions.

The subject scope of the rapid review is Operational Component 1 of Education Out Loud, including the GPE Secretariat, the Education Out Loud Grant Agent (the GA, Oxfam IBIS), and a small sample of its grantees. Certain aspects of Education Out Loud Operational Component 2 (Social Accountability) and Operational Component 3 (Transnational Advocacy) have been included when it relates to OC1, though on a limited basis.

The review covers the period from Education Out Loud's conception as Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) in the Design Blueprint (June 2018) until the present (July 2021). GPE's former mechanism for supporting accountability, the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF), is not within the scope of the rapid review. However, documentation and data from CSEF, particularly concerning grantees, have been included in the document review.

1.2 Review questions

There are 10 review questions (RQs) listed in the Terms of Reference. The final report organizes the 10 review questions into three main rapid review questions (MRQs):

- **MRQ1.** To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant, appropriate, and aligned with GPE2020 thus far and GPE 2025 moving forward?
- **MRQ2.** How efficient are existing processes and available resources in implementing OC1?
- **MRQ3.** Is Education Out Loud OC1 achieving its intended outcomes and, ultimately, objectives?

The 10 review questions listed in the original TOR are sub-questions under each of these MRQs. The data for each MRQ and RQ is managed through an evaluation matrix that identifies relevant methods and data sources. A detailed evaluation matrix is included in Annex 1.

1.3 Structure of the report

The report is structured in five main sections. Section 2 outlines the program background of Education Out Loud and Operational Component 1. Section 3 briefly describes the rapid review's design and methodology (greater detail is available in the inception report). Section 4 presents

the full findings and supporting evidence and is organized according to the three main review questions. Section 5 highlights key questions that remain for future evaluations and research on Education Out Loud, and finally Section 6 presents the rapid review's primary conclusions and recommendations for Education Out Loud to take forward.

2 Program background

This section sets the context for the rapid review. Section 2.1 describes Education Out Loud's operating model, focusing on Operational Component 1. Section 2.2 provides a brief introduction to the management by the Grant Agent. It details the overall objectives of the program, the relationship with the Grant Agent and grantees, and the size, composition and distribution of grants. It also presents Education Out Loud's overall Theory of Change.

2.1 GPE's operating model

This summary of GPE's operating model is informed and guided by GPE's Strategic Plans (2021-2025 and 2016-2020) and the most recent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework (2021).

The Global Partnership for Education was founded on the principle of mutual accountability and a shared commitment with its partners in developing countries to ending the world's learning crisis. It mobilizes partners and grantees in 76 partner countries to contribute to enhancing their educational systems and delivering quality, accessible learning to more girls and boys, including and especially those marginalized portions of their societies. GPE's overall vision is a quality education for every child, as envisioned by UN Sustainability Goal 4: "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

GPE's approach to transformational change is presented in the GPE 2025 Strategic Plan. GPE's 2025 Strategic Plan (2021-2025) was approved in 2020 and sets the overall direction for GPE for the next five years. The GPE 2025 Strategic Plan and its initiatives are guided by an overall goal to accelerate access, learning outcomes, and gender quality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century. This goal moving forward has transformed from GPE's previously outlined goals as stated in GPE Strategic Plan 2020 as 1) improved and more equitable learning outcomes; 2) increased equity, gender equality, and inclusion; and 3) effective and efficient education systems. This evolution in strategic goals is important to note as Education Out Loud's Operational Component 1 builds on the former Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) and the Financing and Funding Framework (FFF) of a new Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) funding mechanism, later branded as Education Out Loud, was approved in March 2017. The objectives and goals of GPE's 2020 and 2025 strategic plans are considered in this rapid review.

The 2025 Strategic Plan outlines GPE's strategic intent and is operationalized through several core structures, processes, and initiatives. GPE works with partners to strengthen planning, policy development, and monitoring capacity. One mechanism for this is through GPE's fund for advocacy and social accountability, Education Out Loud.

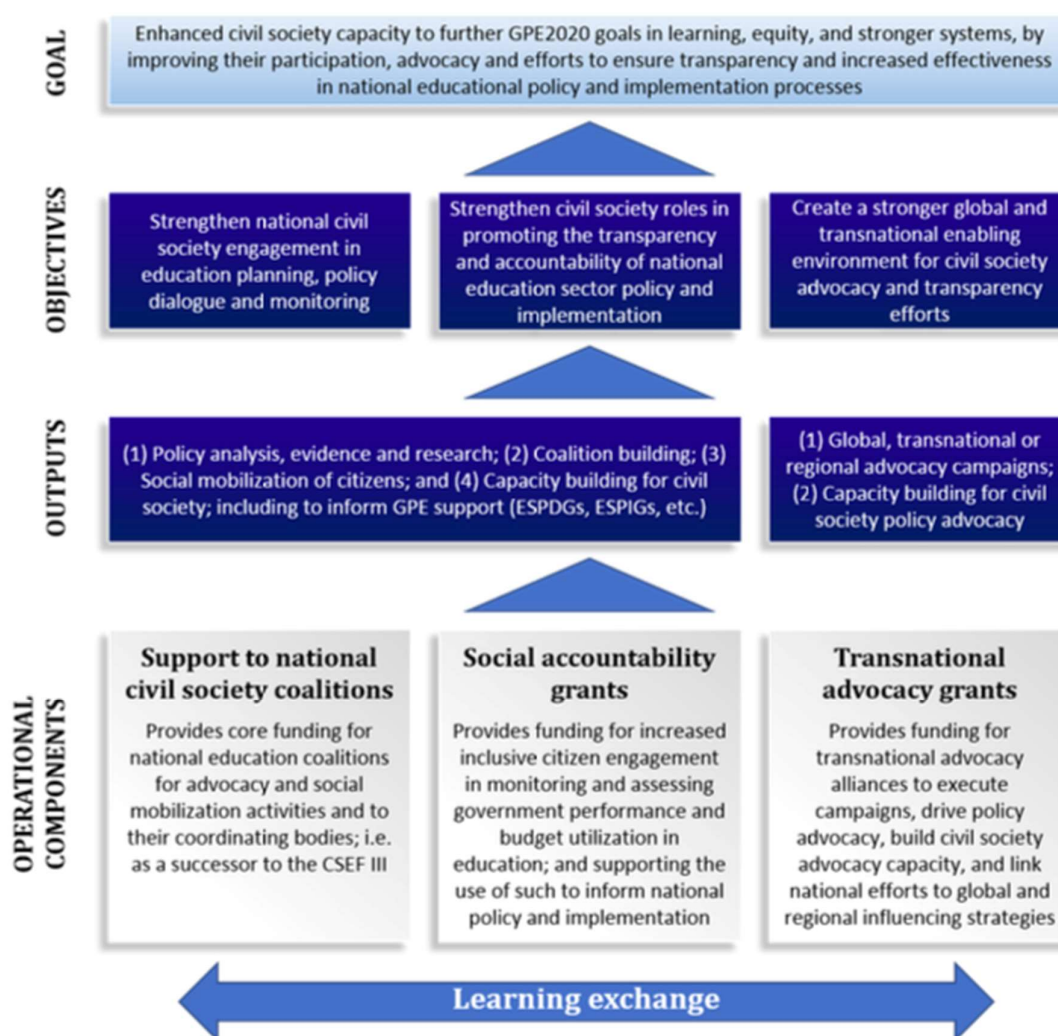
2.2 Education Out Loud's model and Operational Component 1

Education Out Loud is a GPE funding mechanism managed by the Grant Agent Oxfam IBIS. It seeks to enhance civil society's capacity to engage in education sector planning, policy dialogue, and monitoring, and to promote transparency and accountability in national education policy. Education Out Loud was first introduced and approved by the GPE Board of Directors in March 2017. Implementation of grants began in January 2020 and is currently scheduled to continue until December 2021.

Education Out Loud’s overall goal, as of June 2021, is to contribute to enhancing civil society capacity to further GPE2020 goals in learning, equity, and stronger systems, by improving their participation, advocacy and efforts. This goal will contribute to ensuring transparency and increased effectiveness in national education policy and implementation processes. According to Education Out Loud’s Summary Results Framework, the program has three overall objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue, and monitoring.
- **Objective 2:** Strengthen civil society roles in promoting the transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation; and
- **Objective 3:** Create a stronger global, regional, and transnational enabling environment for civil society advocacy and transparency efforts in education.

Figure 1. Education Out Loud's Theory of Change



The Grant Agent includes a global management unit (GMU) based in Copenhagen, Denmark, and four regional units: Africa (Ghana and Uganda), Asia (Nepal), and Latin America (Mexico). The GA also works with multiple learning partners (13 learning partners, as of June 2021) who support grantees in their monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL).

Education Out Loud is comprised of three Operational Components that complement its three overall objectives. The primary focus of this rapid review is Operational Component 1, which

seeks to strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue, and monitoring. Grantees under OC1 are national education coalitions (NECs) that are previous recipients of CSEF grants and based in countries that are either current GPE partners or actively seeking to join GPE. As of June 2021, there are currently 52 active national education coalition grantees in 52 partner countries through Education Out Loud. A summary table of the composition and distribution of grantees is presented in Annex 2.

3 Rapid review questions and methodology

The rapid review focuses on the three main review questions (MRQs), which relate to the past development, current implementation, and outlook of OC1. It is based on two complementary principles: formative and utilization focused.

The methodology consists of three mixed methods forms of analysis: a relevance assessment, a process efficiency review, and a synthesis of results thus far. The table below presents a summary of the methodology and analytical frameworks detailed in each sub-section below. Greater detail on the rapid review's methodology and analytical approaches are available in the full inception report.

Table 1. Summary of review questions, analysis and data sources

Revised review question	Analytical framework	Data source
MRQ1. To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant, appropriate, and aligned with GPE2020 thus far and GPE 2025 moving forward?		
RQ1.1. To what extent has Education Out Loud OC 1 been appropriate, in its strategic approach and design, to allow for an increase in the representation, engagement, and 'voice' of civil society in GPE's partner countries?	Relevance assessment	Literature review KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ1.2. To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant to the policy goals and objectives of the GPE's GPE 2020 strategic plan related to inclusive sector dialogue, including through the GPE country-level operational model?	Relevance assessment	Document review, including sample of grants KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ1.3. To what extent is OC1's strategic approach and design aligned with GPE 2025?	Relevance assessment	Document review, including sample of grants KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
MRQ2. How efficient are existing processes and available resources in implementing OC1?		
RQ2.1. To what extent has planned and applied grant management supported the successful stewardship of OC1 resources?	Process review	Document review KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ2.2. How efficient are OC1's institutional relationship-building and management processes, including governance architecture from the national to the global levels?	Process review	Document review KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ2.3. To what extent did management arrangements support the implementation of Education Out Loud OC1?	Process review	Document review

		KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ3.3. To what extent has adaptive management contributed to the effective implementation of OC1?	Process review	Document review KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
MRQ3. Is Education Out Loud OC1 achieving its intended outcomes and, ultimately, objective?		
RQ3.1. To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 (on its way to) fulfilling its objectives? (<i>Referencing annual and overall targets</i>)	Synthesis of results	Document review KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ3.2. Are there unanticipated results for OC1 – positive and negative – that need to be considered?	Synthesis of results	Document review KIIs/FGDs with key stakeholders
RQ3.4. To what extent have grantees, supported by the GA and learning partners, generated additional co-financing beyond GPE?	Synthesis of results	Quantitative and financial grantee-level data

4 Findings

This section details the Education Out Loud OC1 rapid review's findings and the evidence informing those findings, structured according to the three methods that make up this rapid review: relevance assessment (4.1), process efficiency assessment (4.2) and synthesis of results thus far (4.3).

4.1 Relevance assessment (MRQ1)

This section outlines the findings in relation to the relevance and appropriateness of the strategic design of Education Out Loud's Operational Component 1. The main review question explored in this section is the extent to which Education Out Loud's OC1 is relevant with GPE2020 thus far, and its potential to be relevant to GPE2025 in the future. Within this main review question, there are three specific review questions relating to the extent to which OC1's strategic design has been appropriate in increasing the 'voice' of civil society in GPE partner countries (RQ1.1); the relevance of OC1 to GPE2020 strategic plans (RQ1.2); and lastly the extent to which OC1 is positioned to be relevant to GPE2025. The sub-questions are detailed in table 2 below and table 3.

Reference source not found. provides a high-level summary of the assessment across different areas.

Table 2. Review questions for MRQ1

Review questions
MRQ1. To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant, appropriate, and aligned with GPE2020 thus far and GPE 2025 moving forward?
RQ1.1. To what extent has Education Out Loud OC 1 been appropriate, in its strategic approach and design, to allow for an increase in the representation, engagement, and 'voice' of civil society in GPE's partner countries?
RQ1.2. To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 relevant to the policy goals and objectives of the GPE's GPE 2020 strategic plan related to inclusive sector dialogue, including through the GPE country-level operational model?
RQ1.3. To what extent is OC1's strategic approach and design aligned with GPE 2025?

4.1.1 Relevance and appropriateness of Education Out Loud OC1's strategic design (RQ1.1)

The original conceptualization and design of Education Out Loud OC1 highly relevant to the issue and problems it seeks to address regarding civil society in the education sector. Education Out Loud's overall Theory of Change (ToC) is clear and logical (see criteria 1 and 2 in table 3) and is grounded in the idea that "education outcomes are more likely to be achieved when there is widespread public engagement in and demand for equitable quality education." Education Out Loud's overall goal is to contribute to enhancing the capacity of civil society to strengthen their engagement, and therefore demand for their engagement, in the education sector. There is an assumption within the Education Out Loud ToC that civil space for engagement is shrinking and government responsiveness 'exists along a spectrum. As such, efforts should be made to support civil society groups in shrinking CSO spaces and improve social accountability.

Against this backdrop, the strategic design of Education Out Loud as a whole is appropriately focused on supporting an increase in the representation, engagement, and 'voice' of civil society in GPE's partner countries. This design is a targeted and well-evidenced approach that builds upon lessons learned from the previously long-running Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF). CSEF aimed to strengthen national education coalitions to engage in education sector policy planning, dialogue, monitoring, and civil engagement. Education Out Loud's original design went beyond CSEF and sought to enhance civil society capacity of not just national education coalitions, but

other national and transnational civil society groups as well. This resulted in a scope beyond solely supporting national education coalitions (OC1) to also supporting domestic civil society organizations (OC2) and transnational actors (OC3) for an enabling environment. For example, the Blueprint requests that OC3 proposals from transnational advocacy actors ‘describe the transnational policy frameworks or international decision-making arenas which provide the potential for supporting increase progress in education in GPE eligible countries, with a clear feedback loop to country level advocacy and change.’ These linkages across strengthen the relevancy of OC1 itself, promoting the concept that NECs do not operate in domestic vacuums but are closely linked to domestic, regional, and global networks as well.

Table 3. Assessment of the relevance and quality of Education Out Loud OC1's strategic design

The strategic design is:	
1. Clear	
2. Logical	
3. Evidence-informed	
4. Relevant to international understandings of the sector	
5. Relevant to international norms, policies, and standards	
6. Relevant to what other major initiatives and funders are doing in this area	
7. Relevant to national contexts and stakeholder needs	
8. Relevant to GPE2020 and country-level operational model	
9. Relevant to GPE2025 moving forward	
Key:	
	Met all the relevance and quality criteria
	Met most of the relevance and quality criteria
	Met a few relevance and quality criteria
	Met no relevance and quality criteria

The Education Out Loud Blueprint and Portfolio Application are solidly based in the lessons learned and evidence that emerged from CSEF evaluations and experiences, as well as international best practice. The Education Out Loud Blueprint’s original Theory of Change presented a clear linkage across OCs to create an enabling environment for national coalitions, civil society, and transnational groups to strengthen advocacy and transparency efforts. The overall objectives have a strong evidence base of past CSEF interventions, evaluations, and analyses, and logically are geared towards amplifying the voices of diverse civil society in education policy dialogue (criterion 3 in table 3). It drew its strategic design from market analyses by external advisors (Dahlberg Global), background papers conducted internally by GPE Secretariat, and academic literature reviews. There is also significant reference in the ASA original Theory of Change to academic insights from leading scholars and actors in accountability to ensure the relevance of ASA to international best practice. However, while there are references to such scholarship and background analyses, the substantial analysis that took place, particularly the internal analysis, is not included in the Blueprint. That may be a partial driver for the lack of references in subsequent documentation such as the ASA Portfolio Application and

later implementation (though early materials such as ASA analyses and consultation summaries published in 2017 are readily available on GPE's website).

While the original design of OC1 is very relevant to its intended goals and evidence-based, it is also very ambitious and linkages between OC1 and other operational components are not sufficiently articulated to enable such ambition. The continuation of CSEF-like support to NECs is the central objective of OC1. In isolation OC1 is considered a relatively reasonable and feasible objective based on the positive results of CSEF. OC1 also seeks to expand to outcomes such as strengthening the inclusivity of NECs (Outcome 1.1) and generating lessons learned for institutional strengthening of civil society organizations (Outcome 1.4). While all four outcomes under OC1 are relatively clear, logical, evidence-informed, and feasible, they are all very high-level. The explicit causal links between activities and outcomes within each OC are discussed in the narratives within the Blueprint and Portfolio Application but are somewhat general. This weakness is also particularly evident regarding the intended linkage between OC1, OC2, and OC3. This linkage is presented in the visual ToC but not articulated in the narrative or strategic approach. As such, while global stakeholders describe the strategic design of the OCs as being interconnected and mutually reinforcing in their relevancy, these interconnections are not unpacked or discussed in any detail. How they will be linked is not articulated in key documents, and therefore not sufficiently present in practice. This lack of coordination across OCs is attributed to delays in granting and start-up. In those instances where OC2 and OC3 grantees have been identified, some NECs and other stakeholders remarked that there were few opportunities provided by Education Out Loud for cross-OC engagement beyond introductions.

Additionally, theory of change assumptions are presented, but are again general (e.g., global/regional policy discussions should be informed by - and inform - national and local realities) and not linked to the specific OCs. For example, outlining exactly how and why global/regional policy discussions should be mutually informed by local realities would present a conceptual vision of how OC1 and OC3 are reinforcing. While it is appreciated that unpacking causal links and assumptions for high-level programming is demanding, detailing the basic theory is particularly appropriate for more innovative and ambitious programming like Education Out Loud as well as tracking and validating the assumptions within the Theory of Change.

Though ambitious, the strategic design of OC1 remains highly relevant because of its 'vertically integrated' approach. It is increasingly understood by scholars that a focus of strategy on the interconnected challenges of environment faced by stakeholders at the national, regional, and global level is highly relevant (criterion 4 of table 2 above). Vertical integration refers to the "systematic coordination of policy monitoring and advocacy between diverse levels of civil society, from local to state, national and international arenas." While this is most explicit in OC3 (particularly Outcome 3.1 on 'vertically integrated' civil society alliances), it has begun in OC1. The strategy's top-down and bottom-up approach also demonstrates this relevant approach to strengthening systems change (an ambition for GPE2025, discussed below).

The focus of OC1 is also highly relevant to current international efforts to strengthen civil society as Education Out Loud is critically filling a gap in the education sector. According to GPE's Comparator Analysis of the education accountability sector and many national and regional-level stakeholders, it is broadly agreed that few donors and programs take an integrated view of education dialogue and were willing to engage in the complexity of support national education coalitions. Therefore, the outcome of OC1 to strengthen NECs' engagement in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring, would go a long way towards filling this gap in the sector.

However, neither the ASA Blueprint nor the Portfolio Application provide much detail on how Education Out Loud OC1 relates or aligns other major initiatives by other donors or development partners in this area (criterion 6 in table 2 above). There are not substantial references to how Education Out Loud OC1 will link or potentially overlap with other donor interventions in GPE's partner countries (though there are references to how Education Out Loud may potentially link with other GPE country operations, such as KIX and the GPE country operating model). For example, some global and national stakeholders mentioned EU programming also supporting NECs but connections to Education Out Loud's design or implementation are absent in design and unclear in practice.

Regarding Education Out Loud's relevance to international norms and standards (criterion 5 in table 2), GPE is a unique position in the global educational sector as one of the leaders and few actors in the educational accountability space. Therefore, the strategic design to Education Out Loud OC1 is particularly relevant to international standards, as it sets many of the standards and international norms in the global sector. Furthermore, GPE's strategic design of Education Out Loud went beyond this and ensured relevance to and lessons from international standards. This is particularly evident in the influence of the GPE ASA Comparator Analysis and GPE's comparative advantage in the Blueprint and Proposal Application.

4.1.2 Relevance of Education Out Loud OC1 to GPE2020 strategy (RQ1.2)

The original strategic approach of Education Out Loud OC1 is closely aligned with, and has high relevance to, the GPE2020 strategy. In the original design of Education Out Loud (then known as ASA), the three objectives and overall goal in the Results Framework map directly onto the GPE2020 country level objective to 'support mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring.' However, Education Out Loud's design goes beyond that to demonstrate how ultimately, Education Out Loud also contributes to GPE2020's other strategic objectives including strengthening education sector planning and implementation, supporting efficient and effective GPE financing, mobilizing more and better financing (through CSOs advocating for more transparency in domestic financing), and building a stronger partnership.

Despite these ambitions, Education Out Loud's strategic design is pragmatic in acknowledging that it most directly contributes to GPE2020's country-level objective 2: to support mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring. Education Out Loud directly contributes to GPE2020's Results Framework through (proxy) MEL framework indicators of improved joint sector reviews meeting quality standards (Indicator 18) and local education groups include teacher and civil society representation (Indicator 19). The results, monitoring and learning frameworks in Education Out Loud (as presented in the portfolio application and subsequent results reporting) maintain this alignment to GPE 2020's country-level objective 2, though focus more heavily on supporting civil society (in contrast to teacher representation, although teacher unions are commonly active members of NECs).

Additionally, the strategic design of Education Out Loud is well aligned and relevant to GPE's country-level operational model and other global program KIX though there are some perceived challenges on maintaining Education Out Loud's theoretical relevance in practice 'on the ground'. This is clear in the Education Out Loud Blueprint as it sought for supported NECs to engage in national-level policy dialogue and accountability spaces such as local education groups (LEGs, or their local equivalent) in GPE partner countries. The intention is that capacitated NECs effectively participate in policy processes such as: inputting on education sector plans, joint sector reviews, and monitoring of implementation through independent research and citizen feedback mechanisms. This intention to align with GPE's country operational model is similarly present in the Grant Agent's Portfolio Application. It acknowledges the distinction of Education

Out Loud grants from other GPE country-level grants. However, the GA's design emphasizes strengthening the organizational capacity and expertise of civil society actors to actively engage as "legitimate representatives of civil society in the LEG." This is done by meeting the learning needs of each of the NECs.

Overall, many global stakeholders agree that the strategic design of Education Out Loud OC1 is relevant to GPE's operational model. However, a few noted challenges to maintaining OC1's theoretical relevance in practice 'on the ground'. These include the relative strength and maturity of some younger NECs (acknowledging institutional strengthening as the key focus of OC1), the receptiveness and personalities in government, the lack of understanding of other stakeholders of Education Out Loud funding mechanisms, and the inactivity or ineffectiveness of some local education groups. For example, one stakeholder put it succinctly: "we have put all our EOL eggs in one basket: a real LEG."

The design of Education Out Loud is also relevant to other GPE global programs such as the Knowledge & Innovation Exchange (KIX). Education Out Loud's strategic approach builds off lessons learned in KIX such as inclusion of a learning network and a more flexible MEL framework with qualitative indicators (also a recommendation of the CSEF III Evaluation). The Blueprint and Portfolio Application both emphasize the role of the Education Out Loud GA to communicate regularly, identify and exploit linkages between Education Out Loud and KIX. The intention was Education Out Loud's joint tools, evidence, and resources were to be stored and shared through KIX's digital learning platform to strengthen dissemination and reach. This commitment to systematic collaboration has yet to come to fruition. Global stakeholders agreed that there is "genuine potential and willingness for collaboration and synergy." This limited interaction thus far is attributed to the two global programs only just beginning in the past 1-2 years and difficulties with Covid 19. Moving forward, stakeholders were eager to leverage opportunities to collaborate more; for example, with NECs being part of KIX coalitions, hubs, and research activities. Whether Education Out Loud and KIX's theoretical relevance and alignment is maintained once operationalization moves forward is a question that remains.

While OC1's original design is aligned with GPE2020, alignment of implementation varies.

Education Out Loud OC1's strategic design is very aligned with GPE2020 strategic plan (2016-2020), seeking to strengthen education sector planning, support mutual accountability and dialogue, and leverage the power of NECs. Despite this, OC1 implementation is sometimes not linked to GPE's country-level operational model such as local education group participation and some stakeholders at the regional and national levels remarked feeling detached from GPE and lacking knowledge of GPE's approach or overall strategy. It is acknowledged by the Rapid Review that the purpose of Education Out Loud is not necessarily to ensure that all NECs are knowledgeable about GPE high-level strategy. The purpose is for NECs to be capable of participating in country processes including but not limited to the local education group. However, some less capacitated NECs struggled to articulate or discuss the overall objective of Education Out Loud to fund NECs, requested GPE heavily intervene in political processes (i.e., apply more pressure on ministries directly) or asked Education Out Loud to fund implementation (e.g., construction of schools by the NEC). This indicates a lack of understanding of OC1's original intent or GPE's country-level operational model more widely. This contrasts with more established and high-skilled NECs that are very in-tune with GPE country processes, regional forums and, interestingly, GPE Board and Committee processes. This enables certain NECs to coordinate strategically to ensure that their activities and objectives align well with GPE2020 strategy, as demonstrated in their proposal applications and M&E frameworks.

Additionally, operational delays have hindered the coordination between different OCs in Education Out Loud and dampened its relevance to GPE2020. Many stakeholders noted the

delays in starting up OC2 and OC3 in accordance with the Proposal Application and in tandem with OC1 grantees. There have also been agreed changes to the scheduling of concurrent calls for proposals. One global stakeholder emphasized that a well-coordinated coalition of NECs and other OC2 and OC3 grantees should be ‘at the heart of an organized civil society so it makes it easier for governments to interact with them.’ The combined effect of both operational delays and changes to the timing of calls for proposals has limited the time available in 2021 for building links between OC1, OC2 and OC3 grantees. NECs have not been able to effectively engage with OC2 or OC3 grantees yet, which detracts from Education Out Loud’s overall alignment with the GPE2020 strategy. GPE strategy is not solely focused on NECs but mutual accountability overall, and the inclusion of OC2 and OC3 is the value-add of Education Out Loud from CSEF. The limited interaction thus far is also a risk moving forward for Education Out Loud’s applicability to GPE2025, which will require even more effective coordination among CSOs in country.

4.1.2.1 Relevance of Education Out Loud OC1 to the contexts of GPE partner countries

The original design of Education Out Loud OC1 is generally relevant to the contexts that NECs operate in GPE’s partner countries, though it is less relevant for more capacitated NECs and NECs in contexts affected by fragility and conflict. As was similarly found in the CSEF III evaluation, the objective and outcomes of OC1 are broad enough to be relevant to the objectives of the diverse NECs. Furthermore, Education Out Loud OC1 has strengthened its relevance to NECs. This is thanks to more individualized focus on specific country contexts and needs, particularly in those regions that provide one-on-one capacity building to some NECs. There is an intention to determine the individual learning needs of each NEC. From the beginning of OC1 – from the proposal and Year Zero phase to present implementation – the specific needs and strengths of all NECs, not just the strongest NECs, have been identified by Education Out Loud through learning assessments. There are also instances of GPE Secretariat using its influence to encourage greater space and engagement by NECs and civil society groups in education sector policy spaces, like local education groups. However, this is not systematic nor linked explicitly to Education Out Loud. It is also strongly dependent on the existing strength and age of the NEC, and personalities of government receptive to CSOs.

High-level assessments of Education Out Loud OC1’s relevance to NECs’ national contexts

Overall, OC1’s strategic approach and design, particularly its focus on institutional capacity building, is relevant to the national contexts and capacities of sampled NECs. However, Education Out Loud OC1 is less relevant to more advanced NECs and NECs in contexts affected by fragility and conflict. Ten of the 54 national education coalitions participating in OC1 were sampled for inclusion in the rapid review. This included document reviews of results reporting, cover notes, and narrative reports as well as key informant interviews and focus group discussions with NECs themselves and regional partners (RMUs and RCs). Additional data collection and analysis of the activities and impact of a wider range of NECs, particularly in terms of geography, capacity, and length of existence, as well as their linkages (if any) with OC2 and OC3 is recommended for inclusion in the upcoming Mid-Term Review of Education Out Loud. Additionally, more detailed context analysis and stakeholder mapping should be collected by Education Out Loud for each NEC, beyond what is included (often only briefly or missing) in biannual results reporting by the NEC, before the MTR.

Annex 4 provides a high-level initial assessment of the relevance of OC1’s strategic approach to their national contexts and capacity.

4.1.3 Relevance of Education Out Loud OC1 to GPE2025 (RQ1.3)

A key strength of OC1 is the potential to be both relevant and crucial to the realization of GPE2025 moving forward. It should be acknowledged that due to timing, Education Out Loud

overall and OC1 specifically were not consciously designed to be aligned with GPE2025, which was recently published in April 2021. However, despite timing, Education Out Loud and OC1 are already very relevant to the strategic mission, priority areas, and objectives of GPE2025. The GPE2025 strategy seeks to strengthen mutual accountability and alignment behind systemic reform, drive capacity development, and prioritize implementation on a demand-driven basis in partner countries. Education Out Loud's funding of NECs in OC1 (and national CSOs, in OC2) is best positioned to support this mutual accountability and improve domestic sector planning, policy dialogue, monitoring and transparency. Additionally, one of GPE's priority areas moving forward will be building government organizational capacity. CSOs and NECs play a critical role in this capacity building by engaging in advocacy in country-level processes. For example, Education Out Loud support to a NEC may "offer an opportunity to complement government monitoring systems" for greater transparency. However, while the stronger focus of GPE2025 on country-level processes and ownership is well suited to OC1 and NECs, it creates an inherent risk in those GPE partner countries with minimally or non-functioning local education groups.

The strategic focus on transformational change and country-owned dialogue and processes presents an opportunity to strengthen Education Out Loud OC1 impact and relevance to GPE2025 moving forward. According to key informant interviews with global stakeholders, central areas of focus for GPE2025 moving forward include transformational change and broader engagement and dialogue with GPE partner countries. A truly transformational agenda at the country level is ambitious and requires all stakeholders to align behind government reform priorities. GPE2025 strategy highlights that mutual accountability is needed to support such systematic reform. Mutual accountability is strengthened by active participation from civil society organizations, national education coalitions, and other non-state actors in country-owned collaborative forums (not necessarily local education groups) and strategic plans (not solely education sector plans, which are sometimes seen as just GPE Secretariat requirements to receive education sector program development grants or education sector program implementation grants).

In some contexts, NECs and other CSOs are not seen as important actors by policy actors in the national education sector but only included as a token entity or in fulfillment of GPE funding requirements. As GPE2025 seeks to shift the focus away from Secretariat-centered requirements to transformational change and country-ownership, Education Out Loud is well placed to emphasize the importance of civil society in dialogue and policy. Country partners may be less likely to see the presence of CSOs and NECs as not simply a requirement for GPE funding but as contributing members of the more decentralized process. This may be through engagement in assessments and monitoring of the partnership compact, advocating for the equity component of the partnership compact, or for those especially capacitated NECs, even as Coordinating Agents.

In essence, GPE2025's strategic model has the potential to increase the importance of well-functioning, engaged country-level actors, like NECs and CSOs, in system transformation. The stronger focus on country-level processes is well suited to Education Out Loud's support of NECs but creates an inherent risk in those GPE partner countries with minimally or non-functioning local education groups, not yet fully addressed by Education Out Loud. A future opportunity moving forward highlighted by a few stakeholders is capacity support to NECs being linked to GPE partner country needs identified in the partner compact's initial assessment. Capacity building needs for NECs should not be solely determined by the gaps identified by the partnership compact, as it is only one tool in supporting the big-picture of system transformation. However, GPE2025 relevance should be included as a consideration when determining learning agendas for NECs to ensure that they are well-equipped to engage with, and be respected by, other country actors in policy dialogue.

The clearer emphasis on gender and social inclusion in GPE2025 is not only reflected in Education Out Loud OC1 but is an example of how GPE Strategy can learn from Education Out Loud and build on the existing strengths of NECs. Many civil society organizations and coalitions supported by Education Out Loud seek to influence education policy to ‘better meet the needs of communities, especially of vulnerable and marginalized populations.’ As GPE2025 prioritizes gender equality and inclusion, many global, regional, and national respondents emphasized how gender and equity are already priorities for many coalitions. Some NECs center gender and marginalized groups as advocacy priorities, demonstrating how equity is ‘hardwired’ into Education Out Loud OC1.

GPE2025 is based on an inclusive sector coordination process. This inclusive process is dependent on the inclusion of non-government stakeholders such as civil society, teacher unions, and national education coalitions. NECs already leading inclusion, gender and marginalized community advocacy are an example of how GPE2025 can learn from Education Out Loud. Although the rapid review has not included a review of how many of the OC1-supported focused on gender-issues, all 54 NECs supported by Education Out Loud have participation from at least one organization representing the perspectives of women and girls. A few stakeholders noted how the extent to which NECs are already engaged in equity and gender advocacy is not yet sufficiently captured or leveraged by Education Out Loud. For instance, one NEC identified the need for and offered capacity building training to their fellow NECs on ‘Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)’ dynamics in education policy. GPE2025’s emphasis on these priority areas poses a new opportunity for Education Out Loud to not only build greater relevance to GPE2025 but also leverage the existing capacity of NECs in their own areas of expertise.

4.2 Process efficiency review (MRQ2)

The following section details findings on how efficiently Education Out Loud OC1 is being implemented. The main review question explored is the perception of the relative efficiency of processes and resources in the implementation of OC1 (MRQ2). Within this main review question there are four specific review questions: firstly, the extent to which grant management processes support the successful stewardship of resources (RQ2.1); secondly, the efficiency of institutional relationship-building and management processes in OC1 (RQ2.2); thirdly, the extent to which management processes supported implementation of OC1 (RQ2.3); and lastly, the contribution , if any, of adaptive management on OC1 (RQ3.3). The sub-questions are detailed in table 4 below.

Table 4. Review questions for MRQ2

Review questions
MRQ2. How efficient are existing processes and available resources in implementing OC1?
RQ2.1. To what extent has planned and applied grant management supported the successful stewardship of OC1 resources?
RQ2.2. How efficient are OC1’s institutional relationship-building and management processes, including governance architecture from the national to the global levels?
RQ2.3. To what extent did management arrangements support the implementation of Education Out Loud OC1?
RQ3.3. To what extent has adaptive management contributed to the effective implementation of OC1?

4.2.1 Planned and applied OC1 grant management process (RQ2.1)

The following section analyzes how Education Out Loud OC1 initially structured its grant application process with national education coalitions. It explores the different aspects of the

management process, including grant applications, Year Zero, and the Global and Regional Independent Selection Panels (GISP/RISPs).

Education Out Loud’s institutional set-up was perceived by all stakeholders to be a rigorous system that prioritized due diligence, ensured the appropriate use of available financial resources, and went according to the planned timeline. The portfolio application by the Grant Agent (Oxfam IBIS) was approved by GPE Board of Directors in April 2019. Oxfam IBIS was swift in establishing and recruiting global and regional staff members by September 2019. By mid-2019, Oxfam IBIS also rapidly built the website and online grant application portal. The call for proposals for OC1 formally opened in August 2019. The schedule for the OC1 restricted call applied at the start of the program, in 2019 to 2020, went according to what was planned in the ASA Blueprint and Oxfam IBIS Portfolio Application.

The Grant Agent created an efficient, linguistically inclusive, and transparent system to access guidelines in four working languages (English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese) and submit full applications. It was a restricted call in which the 56 national education coalitions that had previously received funding under CSEF and were based in countries which are current GPE partners or are in the process of becoming GPE partners. All templates and documents were easily available to applicants and all NECs sampled reported that expectations for the application process were clear at first. OC1’s due diligence assessment by the GA was also a first for many NECs, providing those NECs with a valuable learning experience of how to engage in a DDA process for future potential funders.

According to most stakeholders, Oxfam IBIS’s thorough due diligence assessments of all coalitions and partners has improved the efficient and transparent use of resources in Education Out Loud OC1. In tandem with the proposal application process, all OC1 applicants were also required to provide audited financial reports for the past two years as well as CVs of key personnel. Such processes were grounded in Oxfam’s own internal policies and protocols to ensure effective financial management and accountability of grant making. The ability for each NEC and partner to appropriately manage resources was individually assessed; this provides a higher level of accountability. It also created a level of maneuverability to OC1 as the GA was guided by the due diligence assessments to make informed, tailored decisions according to each of the NEC’s financial management capacities. This enabled a more differentiated and efficient use of resources in OC1. The initial financial due diligence of grantees has been maintained throughout implementation of Education Out Loud. For example, the Portfolio Application by the GA outlines grant financial management processes including six-monthly financial and program reporting and annual audits. The establishment and use of such financial controls is confirmed by document reviews of NECs’ regular reporting.

Many global stakeholders commended the robustness of the GA’s due diligence processes as one of the strengths of Oxfam IBIS. Efficient and appropriate grant management is an integral component of GPE Secretariat’s expectations for a GA around fiduciary responsibility and mitigation of risk. The GA’s processes are well regarded as an ‘extremely organized, well-structured system’ that ‘separates the wheat from the chaff’ and ensures “those NECs are in a much better position to do good work, brought up to a minimum standard, and provide greater resources to those doing good work.” The processes have improved the efficient use of financial resources in OC1 by NECs as well, as it effectively manages risk, builds financial reporting capacity of NECs, and builds ‘mutual trust and confidence building.’

As a result of the GA’s due diligence assessments and concerns of appropriate financial management, four grant agreements to NECs were temporarily paused (Haiti, Ghana, Liberia, and Yemen) and one grant agreement with a Regional Coalition did not proceed. As a result, 52 NEC

full proposal grantee projects, 1 GCE, and 3 RC grants are currently under implementation, as of June 2021.

Integration of lessons learned from CSEF evaluation and experiences have had a positive impact on the efficiency of the grant application process and the capacity of grantees in resource management. Several CSEF evaluation recommendations were directly taken up by the Grant Agent in the design of Education Out Loud OC1. One recommendation in the Mid-Term Review of the CSEF III recommended that comparative analyses be conducted of Regional Coalitions to determine ‘organizational capacity and level of resources vis-à-vis aims and scope.’ In response, Oxfam IBIS as Grant Agent conducted a due diligence and capacity assessment of GCE and each of the RCs with the intention of developing individual learning plans accordingly. Similarly, the CSEF III evaluation recommended that NECs’ skills in proposal development and auditing be capacitated and possible disbursement bottlenecks be scrutinized to improve the efficiency of Education Out Loud OC1. The GA’s set up of the proposal and application phase clearly integrated this recommendation by instituting due diligence assessments for all grant-recipient stakeholders. While the characterization of the due diligence process by the GA as ‘participatory’ is not immediately evident, the due diligence assessments are perceived to be well linked to financial management and governance capacity development of NECs.

While the grant application process was robust, limited time and inefficient use of existing CSEF systems were barriers to strategic planning at the start of OC1. It is commendable that the institutional set-up of Education Out Loud at the global (GMU) and regional (RMU) levels was completed within six months of approval of Education Out Loud by GPE’s Board of Directors (from April to September of 2019), and that the first call for proposals under OC1 was launched in August, 2019. As discussed above, all application templates, protocols and portals were quickly made available to CSEF-funded NEC applications to ensure that there was not a lapse in funding for NECs between the transition from CSEF to Education Out Loud OC1. However, this resulted in a very rushed start-up period for Education Out Loud team members within the Grant Agent at the global and regional level.

Many global stakeholders reported feeling frustrated with the pressure to move swiftly on OC1 proposal reviews and approvals, despite the call being restricted, as it limited the ability to plan strategically. This may have a result of the limited background knowledge of new team members and resulted in an over-emphasis on the OC1 call for proposals itself rather than efficient planning and strategic discussions on the core objective of Education Out Loud and how to best support OC1 grantees in implementation. For example, OC1 applications were quickly reviewed by Regional Independent Selection Panels (RISPs) in December 2019-January 2020. These RISP meetings to review OC1 proposal applications were also the first time that RISPs convened for Education Out Loud. This resulted in a rapid learning curve for some RISP members on OC1 application criteria and Year Zero expectations, which may have influenced the content of their Year Zero recommendations and approval decisions (discussed in greater detail below on Year Zero and Role of the RISPs). Another possible barrier may have been that the Grant Agent did not utilize any existing project management systems from CSEF. All systems, templates and guidelines at all levels were created from scratch. While communication channels were established at the start-up of Education Out Loud, coordination and handover during the transition was often limited and some stakeholders felt as though they were ‘swimming alone in water unknown.’ The creation of some new systems is understandable, as a new GA seeks to ‘own’ the program, though the former GA was said to have offered sharing some existing instruments. There were initial efforts to use existing systems, but it was concluded as not being technical feasible. However, the re-creation of all systems resulted in an over-emphasis on

project set-up at the start of the Education Out Loud, as “sometimes it is very challenging to go into the details and do the best quality work and we often didn’t have the time for that.”

Balancing intensive application requirements and application quality concerns were also challenges to the grant management process for the GA, RCs and NECs. As stated above, most NECs felt the application process by the GA was rigorous. Beyond financial reports, NECs were also required to submit completed project proposals, log frames, monitoring frameworks, project budgets, and risk management protocols. Some higher-skilled and experienced NECs were able to complete the proposal application to a sufficient quality (27 projects, of which 7 could be implemented immediately and 20 after the introduction of minor changes to the project documents). The 27 remaining NEC applicants were selected for a 3-to-6-month review process, known as Year Zero, to strengthen the quality of the project proposal components. Some of the global-level stakeholders described feeling somewhat surprised at the low quality of many of the NEC applications, a sentiment emphasized in the Grant Agent’s reporting.

Another obstacle to the proposal assessment quality was the variance in quality of handover or ‘cover notes’ by Regional Coalitions from previous CSEF funding. The quality of RC cover notes often reflected the quality of NEC applications in certain regions. The ASA/ Education Out Loud Blueprint outlined an expectation that RCs carefully review applications from all NECs in their region to help the quality of proposals. However, many cover notes reviewed indicate an only passing review of the quality of applications or mistakenly assume that not-yet-seen applications would be sufficient. As such, many NECs may not have received the necessary transitional support during the initial application process to either avoid Year Zero delays or focus Year Zero on more strategic and innovative planning, instead of proposal strengthening.

The quality of proposals also varied significantly by region. This may indicate that OC1 should better nuance its approach to application processes for those NECs that historically have not been capacitated sufficiently. In all, the quality of proposals was as diverse as the capacity of NECs themselves, “quality is in accordance with the situation of the countries themselves”. Some stakeholders recommended that Education Out Loud keep this in mind in for future application processes, especially for newer NECs and NECs in fragile and conflict contexts.

Along with quality concerns, the application process itself was also often characterized as overly intensive by a diverse array of stakeholders. Though some global stakeholders were surprised by the quality of applicants (above), other global and regional respondents reported the inverse. Many more global and regional stakeholders, particularly those with significant experience working with civil society and coalitions at the grassroots levels, were unsurprised and instead perplexed by expectations from the GA. The application process was therefore viewed as burdensome, overly ‘bureaucratized’, and “making it hard to get to the actual core of what the project would be.” Some NECs highlighted that much of their advocacy work is not easily translated to formal M&E frameworks or reporting, while other NECs acknowledged that the application process was a good learning experience but ‘very pressured and required more strategy and research.’ As Education Out Loud OC1 plans for a potential reapplication process for NECs in future phases, it will be important to strike the right balance between internal application requirements and a lighter, swifter process for NECs.

Year Zero was heavily focused on traditional grant-making and proposal-specific technical support, minimizing its initial design aspiration to generate innovation. The original design of the Year Zero process outlined in the ASA Blueprint described it as an initial 12-month period for capacity building on ToCs, M&E, learning and ‘supporting the conditions for civil society organizations...to act adaptively.’ The Portfolio Application prepared by the GA went beyond this to propose an ‘iterative and developmental pathway’ that intended to undertake context and

stakeholder assessments, relationship building, and development of exploratory ToCs. It was envisaged as an opportunity to support NECs reflect and establish innovative mechanisms, develop adaptive management skills, refine experimental activities, and begin learning journeys. Education Out Loud reporting acknowledges that Year Zero was originally intended to be a more ‘tailor-made’ and iterative learning process that had to be amended significantly due to the unexpected quality of some applications. While those NECs sampled felt supported by RMUs during the Year Zero process, concerns remain as to Year Zero’s deviation from design.

The Year Zero phase was originally designed to be a progressive approach to fund innovation and test concepts. However, this spirit of experimentation and innovation was not evident in implementation. In reality, Year Zero for many NECs became a 3 to 6-month phase aimed at improving proposal documents and building organizational capacity on basic budgeting, log-frames, and results frameworks. For some NECs, Year Zero had a heavy focus on ensuring the proposal, rather than the project itself, met a certain level of quality. A few NECs described it as simply to satisfy a requirement or for the benefit of the RISP, while those better positioned to leverage the opportunity to experiment and innovate were not invited to a Year Zero phase at all. For example, one NEC remarked Year Zero was about ‘just making sure [the proposal] came to a standard for your reviewers even though they do not know our context.’ Some members of RISPs also reported a lack of clarity as on the purpose of Year Zero and how their comments to Year Zero NECs would be effectively taken up and integrated in subsequent applications. One RISP stakeholder wished that all NECs get a chance to participate in Year Zero. Others highlighted the competitive nature that arose from Year Zero in OC1, which was not originally intended and may have implications for other Year Zero phases in OC2 and OC3, which are open calls and competitive, in contrast to OC1’s restricted non-competitive call.

Regional and global independent selection panels are an effective mechanism to support the quality of grants applications and have the potential for an expanded role in future phases of OC1. The Blueprint outlined a review of grant applicants by ‘independent, arms-length technical panels’ engaged by the Grant Agent. The five regional and global independent selection panels (RISP and GISP, respectively) were selected early in the Education Out Loud institutional set-up phase (November 2019) and corresponded with RMUs in terms of geographic scope (the GISP was originally responsible for the Middle East/Eastern Europe applications, as that RMU was based in the GMU). Members of the RISPs/GISP were tasked with assessing proposals according to criteria provided by the GA. Many global and regional stakeholders commended the coordination of the RISP and GISP by the GA, as well as the diversity and varied backgrounds of RISP members as, “some members focus on capacity, some on advocacy and others on education so the [NEC] receives well-rounded feedback.” A few NECs that were a part of Year Zero also appreciated the constructive comments provided by their respective RISPs.

Despite some early confusion as to the expectations of RISPs, all sampled members highlighted the positive and supportive process established by the Grant Agent to maintain an independent process and RISP/GISP. Moving forward, their limited yet crucial role in OC1 provides opportunities for greater learning as well as clearer linkages between OC1, OC2 and OC3 (a gap most RISP members highlighted). All members expressed strong interest in playing an increased role as a RISP beyond the initial review phase, especially as a few noted the constraints of a restricted call in OC1. There are early indications that the GISP’s scope is already evolving into an expanded role on monitoring for a few OC2 and OC3 grants. Additionally, Education Out Loud reporting states an expectation that “Independent selection panel members will stimulate learning and reflection across Education Out Loud” but does not articulate how this will be operationalized. The reapplication of OC1 grantees and continued review of OC2 and OC3 grantees creates an opening in the future for this innovation as “we [RISP members] are the ones

carefully reviewing the proposals, we have strong insights and know their strengths, pitfalls and doubts... not as evaluators but critical friends... it would be closing the cycle.” However, the Grant Agent will have to strike the right balance of expanding the role of the RISPS/GISP in a continuous learning cycle while maintaining their carefully crafted independence.

4.2.2 Efficiency of relationship building and governance architecture (RQ2.2)

The following section is focused on the mechanisms by which OC1 institutional relationships and governance arrangements are managed. It includes findings related to the coordination of stakeholders and efficiency of governance structures.

The most significant challenge to efficient governance of OC1 is a perceived lack of clarity of roles, responsibilities, and expectations across stakeholders within the OC1 structure, including ‘appreciation’ between the current and the former GAs. Evaluations of the former CSEF program identified some inefficiencies and potential conflicts of interest arising from the Global Campaign for Education’s (GCE) dual role as both the Grant Agent and a program implementer in CSEF. Consequently, the Blueprint of Education Out Loud determined that GCE would no longer be the Grant Agent and instead all fund management roles be played by a fully independent Grant Agent that would be responsible for fiduciary management and accountable for all grantmaking and reporting. GCE and the Regional Coalitions were intended to still play a central role in Education Out Loud by providing capacity building for coalitions and coordinating global and regional advocacy activities, while being held accountable by the Grant Agent. In this new arrangement, GCE and RCs were expected to submit proposals to the new GA, Oxfam IBIS, and detail how they would support the implementation of OC1 as learning partners based on their expertise and experience in CSEF (GCE and RCs are also grantees in OC3 in support of their transnational advocacy work). In parallel, the new GA was expected to establish quality assurance standards and monitoring of GCE and RC activities (like that of NECs) to ensure accountability of all stakeholders.

During the design of OC1, the expected roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders were detailed in a responsible, accountable, consulted and informed (RACI)-matrix (the most relevant excerpt of RACI to OC1, on capacity development and learning, is presented in table 5). The RACI matrix was a result of extensive consultation between GCE and Oxfam IBIS before Education Out Loud began. However, it is not clear that those consultations identified the risk of differing capacity or absence of RCs in regions (though GMU agreed to develop individual contracts for GCE and each of the RCs respectively based on the need contextual and organizational differences), the impact of such dynamics on NECs, nor mechanisms to amend roles and responsibilities based on the changing needs of NECs.

Table 5. Portfolio of OC1 capacity development and learning RACI

Capacity Dev & Learning Activities/Actors	GMU	RMUs	GPE Secr.	GCE	RCs
Organizational due diligence of grantees	A/R	R			C (OC1)
Support self-assessment of grantees for learning	A	R		I	R (OC1)
Decision on learning plans/partners including Year Zero	A	C		C (OC1)	C (OC1)
Identify and contract learning partners	A	R	C	C (OC1)	C (OC1)

Facilitate learning collaboratives	A	R		C (OC1)	C (OC1)
Support grantees in Year Zero	I	A		I (OC1)	R (OC1)
Reporting and system training, including MEL and finance	A	R		R (OC1)	R (OC1)
Capacity development to grantees	A (OC3)	A (OC1/2)		R (OC1)	R (OC1)
Document and analyze learning across EOL for adaptive mgmt. and comms to stakeholders	A/R	C	I	I (OC1)	C (OC1)
Analyze trends in education and social accountability sector	A/R		I	C (OC1)	

Additionally, global, regional and national respondents, all referred to the GCE and RCs and their roles in significantly different ways. Some of the ways described GCE and RCs as ‘network convenors’, ‘social movement leaders’, ‘civil society collaborator’, ‘organic movement unbounded by projects’, ‘membership organization’, ‘advocacy coalition’ and, most notably, ‘the shade under which the EOL plays.’ Additionally, GCE and RCs are often referred to as learning partners in practice by Education Out Loud stakeholders, although they are described as advisory support in the Portfolio Application and differentiated from learning partners in the RACI. This points to substantial confusion and lack of agreement on what exactly being a learning partner entails and what GCE and RCs is best positioned to do in OC1.

There are substantially different opinions between stakeholders on three key points: a feeling between RMUs and RCs of ‘stepping into [their/our] turf’ that results in duplication of efforts; a perceived ‘lack of appreciative inquiry’ on the contributions and differing skills of GCE and RCs; and a concern around asking the sensitive question of ‘what is the role of GCE?’ in a program like Education Out Loud. Firstly, it is strongly evident that regional-level and national stakeholders see an overlap in responsibilities and efforts between RMUs and RCs. This is especially the case for capacity development and training for NECs, but also is present in coordination of NEC reporting requirements and learning needs. The RACI (figure 2 above) may have initiated much of this confusion and overlap; some stakeholders refer to it as ‘vague’, ‘unclear’, and ‘one size fits all approach.’ According to the RACI, both RMUs and RCs are responsible for reporting and system training of NECs, and RCs are responsible for providing capacity development for grantees (RMUs are accountable) while RMUs are responsible for identification and coordination of learning agendas and partners, which would logically inform those capacity building trainings. The RACI framework and protocols also do not clearly define what capacity development themes are expected from (or best suited to) RCs as opposed to other themes are alternatively provided by RMU-hired learning partners. Stakeholders at all levels also confirmed this overlap and a substantial number of respondents used recurring language around “stepping into [their/our] turf and territory.” This has resulted in difficulties in gaining trust between stakeholders.

Some NECs highlighted how this tension of ‘turf’ at the regional level affects OC1 dynamics and implementation. A few NECs reported being confused and wished RMUs and RCs would better communicate and coordinate among themselves. They described being concerned that they would lose access to regional forums as well as the inherently political nature of their work. This is especially felt among stronger NECs, historical ties with RCs, and those that seek more advanced training on political advocacy and research. For example, one NEC described how “they have both provided us financial sustainability and proposal writing workshops, which is nice, but

they should coordinate and be more streamlined...I am not saying there is not coordination, but they need a proper discussion.” Another stated that “[RC in region] has a strategic advantage with NECs on political and educational issues but I see there is a gap of knowledge transfer from [RC in region] to [RMU].” One NEC even described the NECs in the region as a family and the RC as the father, so sentiments are deeply felt. However, it is very notable that some of those NECs operating without the RC in Africa reported not missing its presence, acknowledged certain organizational weaknesses, and felt that the RMU was replacing that role well.

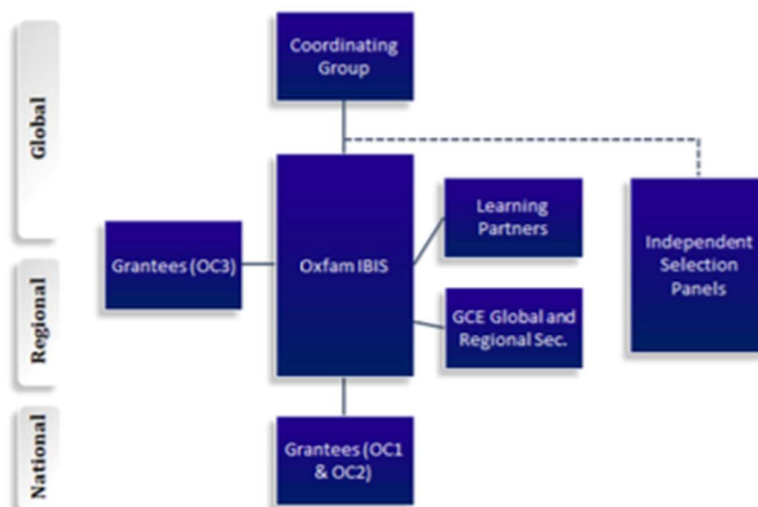
Secondly, there is a sense of ‘a lack of appreciative inquiry’ between the current and former Grant Agent on experiences, especially regarding regional differences in capacity. Many global and regional respondents felt there was a need for more willingness to share and learn between groups and acknowledge the experiences and achievements of CSEF and Education Out Loud. Differing sentiments on the role of the GA in Education Out Loud are also strongly felt. This lack of ‘appreciation’ between stakeholders may be a result of some dissatisfaction on all sides in characterizing RCs as learning partners. Some respondents felt the responsibilities of a learning partner are not well suited to a RC and have not been sufficiently fulfilled. Others noted that the respective RC is not present at all and needs to be replaced by a contracted learning partner; and for other regions the RC is so strong and well established that it is much more than a learning partner. This points to a lack of nuancing or regional distinction in capacity and roles of RCs across the regions of Education Out Loud.

Stakeholders acknowledged that it ‘takes time to settle down and understand our respective roles’ after such a substantial transition in governance from 10 years of CSEF, where GCE was GA for the final phase, to Education Out Loud and Oxfam IBIS as the new GA. As such, some of these dynamics may be simply a result of transitional ‘teething issues’ that will lessen as implementation goes on. However, there is a risk that without significant action on regionally contextualized roles and responsibilities, as OC1 continues and OC3 begins (with GCE and RCs as a grantee), difficulties will be exacerbated. A need for better, facilitated dialogue was also expressed by regional and global stakeholders, indicating an opportunity for GPE Secretariat.

Finally, a question that arises but is beyond the scope of this Rapid Review is the sensitivity of asking ‘what is the role of GCE?’ in a project such as Education Out Loud, as well as in the wider accountability movement. Though the question was often repeated by Education Out Loud team members, GCE and RC respondents pushed strongly against the appropriateness of even asking such a question. They argued that it attempts to place all of GCE and RCs combined, historical efforts into just one program. Additionally, while all GCE and RC respondents reiterated the importance of Education Out Loud and its continuation, Education Out Loud is viewed as just one actor in the sphere. Some also emphasized that Education Out Loud would not exist without GCE, RCs and the NECs they established. With this in mind, for many GCE and RC stakeholders, an alternative question for future research, outside the MTR of Education Out Loud, may be more appropriate: *what is the role of Education Out Loud in GCE’s wider movement?*

Significant difference in the capacity of regional coalitions is a challenge to Education Out Loud’s existing governance structure, from the global, regional and national levels. The Education Out Loud portfolio application developed by Oxfam IBIS initially proposed a consistent global-regional-national structure that built upon the CSEF existing architecture and recommendations from evaluations. While this has been an efficient structure for supporting advocacy by NECs, it has certain challenges as the capacities of national and regional coalitions, RCs in particular, are not consistent across regions. While this is in part because of varying availability of RMUs across regions (i.e., some RMUs include part-time roles and other RMUs have high-level workloads with many NECs), it is much more to do with regional differentiation between NECs, RCs, and those NECs in fragile/conflict contexts.

Figure 2. Organizations involved in Education Out Loud implementation



Education Out Loud’s design attempted a consistent approach to working with RCs and grantees across regions, as visualized in figure 2. The assumed comparability across regions is clear as the Portfolio Application does not include any discussion of regional differentiation in capacity. Despite the recommendation in CSEF III’s mid-term review those comparative analyses be conducted of Regional Coalitions to determine ‘organizational capacity and level of resources vis-à-vis aims and scope’, this was not considered in the governance structure design. The differentiation between RC capacity was also not identified as a risk in the application (though differing capacities of NECs was identified as a risk, Risk 8).

The difficulties in maintaining a consistent governance structure are especially evident with the contrasting examples of regional coordination of OC1 in Africa and Asia/Pacific. The Regional Coalition in Africa is not a part of Education Out Loud (for due diligence assessment concerns, discussed above) though the region has the greatest number of Education Out Loud-supported NECs. In contrast, the Regional Coalition in the Asia/Pacific region is one of the strongest and longest-standing actors in the education advocacy sphere in the region, and is active in supporting regional NECs effectively. This results in differing levels of support available to some NECs (e.g. a few Francophone NECs in Africa often work independently with the Regional Coalition while other Anglophone NECs only work with the RMU in Education Out Loud) as well as overlapping, often conflicting, activities at the regional level for other NECs in Asia/Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean regions. It also limits the ability of global actors like GMU to establish global policy that consistently applies to all regions. This includes agreements on roles and responsibilities for RCs as learning partners in their respective regions.

Education Out Loud OC1’s continuation of CSEF’s effective tri-level structure of global, regional and national actors has leveraged the complex, vertically integrated nature of supporting global advocacy. CSEF was initially built to mirror the structure of the Global Campaign for Education as a social movement, integrating regional coalitions and national education coalitions. Evaluations of CSEF found that the national-regional-global program structure was an efficient and effective management architecture, as it provided “NECs with a holistic set of support from global and regional levels, which increased their visibility and credibility, and in turn supported the achievement of CSEF III objectives and strengthened the wider GCE movement.” As such, the evidence recommended that, despite GCE no longer acting as the Grant Agent, the tri-level structure be retained in Education Out Loud. The lesson was integrated by Oxfam IBIS in their

design with the creation of the Global Management Unit (GMU) and the four Regional Management Units (RMUs) to support the 54 national education coalitions and oversee the day-to-day operation of Education Out Loud. This approach maintains the complex and unique approach necessary for supporting collective advocacy across national, regional, and global levels. Additionally, the impact of the efficiency of the tri-level structure may be more apparent as OC2 and OC3 grantees begin implementation as Education Out Loud seeks to create transnational, 'vertically integrated' civil society alliances for advocacy and transparency efforts in education (Objective 3).

The complex multi-level structure of Education Out Loud also integrates the added-value of a global INGO Grant Agent like Oxfam and creates opportunities for greater cross-regional and cross-OC coordination. The structure clearly takes 'full advantage of Oxfam's existing global structure' and this is especially true at the RMU level. All four RMUs, based in Uganda, Ghana, Mexico and Nepal, are hosted by Oxfam country offices and 'benefit from administrative and substantive collaboration and support from Oxfam colleagues.' Some stakeholders highlighted this advantage for Education Out Loud, particularly in order to support NECs in fragile and complex contexts or during travel restrictions due to Covid 19. For example, "because Oxfam has this outreach, now EOL has a wider reach in places like Yemen. If necessary, Oxfam Yemen can just reach out to the NEC and help them feel supported and encourage communication, that is a good asset." In essence, Oxfam IBIS is effectively building upon and strengthening the architecture of Education Out Loud for efficient management of OC1. However, now that OC2 and OC3 are beginning it is still not clear how Oxfam IBIS will efficiently ensure the uptake of the second half of the CSEF evaluation recommendation: *ensuring cross-regional and cross-OC coordination. Specifically, how to "retain the overall national-regional-global program architecture, and where possible, ensure communications channels are clear both vertically and horizontally, and actively promote and fund engagement for learning across regions."*

Maintaining a careful balance between a top-down and a bottom-up governance structure has enabled a positive and flexible governance of OC1 for NECs thus far but creates some risks around efficient use of time and fragmentation of activities. Interestingly, there is little discussion of a bottom-up or a top-down approach to Education Out Loud governance in design documents such as the Blueprint or Portfolio Application. However, recommendations and requests did emerge from CSEF evaluations and NECs themselves that NECs should have the flexibility to define their own expected results and indicators for their specific context. Therefore, an attempt to a bottom-up approach has emerged among Education Out Loud team members. This is evident in Oxfam IBIS' M&E Framework that includes both a bottom-up approach planning and monitoring for NECs and an Education Out Loud global results framework for coordination and reporting to GPE Secretariat. The MEL framework intentionally utilizes a bottom-up framework as to 'install a bottom-up and results-based planning and monitoring culture among [EOL's] grantees.' Also, the learning needs of each NEC are identified at the start of OC1, and individualized learning agendas are subsequently created. This tailored focus on NEC-specific learning and results frameworks was appreciated by many NECs, though a few NECs still requested more flexibility in reporting requirements and nuanced support.

The bottom-up approach to OC1 has created some inefficiencies in time management, coordination of all NEC activities and results towards common objectives, and generation of wider learning. Firstly, the heavy focus on NEC activities and operational support creates limitations to strategic program-wide planning as 'we [as EOL] lose the wider image of EOL as it becomes itemized and fragmented.' The generation and dissemination of high-level learning is similarly affected. Lessons learned and results for OC1 grantees are often presented on a case-by-case basis (such as in Education Out Loud biannual and annual status reports and annexes)

and not synthesized into Education Out Loud sector-informing lessons. For example, lessons on what strategies are most or least effective for NECs to engage in policy dialogue with governments are presented as a list of bullets according to region. Some global stakeholders noted this lack of distilled learning and strategy as a missed opportunity thus far in OC1, despite GPE's position as a 'strong normative organization' able to advance the field of education advocacy globally (greater detail on OC1's learning approach below in section 5.3).

The fragmentation of activities and results at the national level regarding common activities being documented to demonstrate what Education Out Loud is achieving overall was also identified as a possible risk in Oxfam IBIS's portfolio application. The suggested mitigation strategy was to develop protocols for coordination and communication with GPE Secretariat and country partners 'to maximize linkages between GPE's different support mechanisms.' However, this mitigating action does not address the risk of fragmentation of activities within OC1 itself or at the regional level. This may be a result of Covid 19 travel restrictions limiting regional venues for NECs to engage in regional advocacy and in-person networking.

Some global and regional GA team members also highlighted how time-consuming it is to coordinate individualized reporting and technical support for NECs, due to the diversity of skills and activities among NECs. A few regional stakeholders described how much time this focus on reviewing reporting takes away from other Education Out Loud strategic work. This poses a risk for the efficient time management and workload of RMUs moving forward, as more OC2 and OC3 grantees come on board to Education Out Loud, and greater attention should be spent on linkages between OCs instead of reporting. It will be a question for the upcoming MTR of Education Out Loud to determine whether this bottom-up approach can be maintained with OC2 and OC3 grantees, or even strengthened for a vertically integrated approach that better encompasses regional and transnational actors as well.

4.2.3 Efficiency of management arrangements (RQ2.3)

A key asset to efficient implementation of OC1 is the RMU and their adaptive support and relationships with NECs. Education Out Loud OC1 has integrated lessons from CSEF of a national-regional-global structure and leveraging Oxfam's global reach. NECs are very appreciative of RMUs and view them as dynamic, efficient and, most importantly, very responsive to their specific needs. However, RMUs are often understaffed and limited in providing support to more unique NECs. Many stakeholders at all levels also noted the substantial variation in capacity and contexts, such as fragile contexts, of NECs and the need to do respond to such variance by RMUs.

A key strength of OC1 management is the rapid disbursement of grants by the Grant Agent, though reporting is considered rushed by some NECs. The agility of adaptive management also enables effective use of resources for activities, especially considering Covid 19 disruptions.

Almost all NECs highlighted the quick financial management and receipt of OC1 funds to be a significant improvement from CSEF, enabling NECs to effectively plan. The GA has utilized rigorous due diligence procedures and mechanisms not solely at the start of the program (ultimately resulting in a small number of NECs and learning partners not receiving funds) but throughout. Many stakeholders also highlighted the effective maneuverability of Education Out Loud in adapting to challenges, such as adapting in-person activities cancelled due to Covid 19. However, some processes, particularly regular reporting, are considered burdensome and overly rushed to some NECs. While the management of funds has been efficient, there are concerns around the 'overly burdensome' processes.

4.2.4 Adaptive management of Education Out Loud OC1 (RQ3.3)

The adaptive management of Education Out Loud OC1 is well informed by the experiences of CSEF and supports effective grant management, according to the Grant Agent's criteria.

Adaptive management of Education Out Loud's – not just OC1 – design and implementation has been a central pillar to GPE Secretariat and the Grant Agent's approach. The mid-term evaluation of Education Out Loud's predecessor program, CSEF, recommended adopting an iterative and adaptive approach and this intention is clearly present in design documents such as the ASA Blueprint and Oxfam IBIS' Portfolio Application. The Blueprint outlines the role of the Grant Agent is the primary actor in adaptive management, leading iterative reflections based on evidence and monitoring, as well as potential reflections on the Education Out Loud Theory of Change and its assumptions (see recommendation 1 below). Oxfam IBIS' portfolio application outlines a more detailed adaptive management strategy based on complementary approaches to informed decision-making, regular stock-taking, regular discussions, reflective learning, flexible budgeting, monitoring and learning frameworks, and coordination with other GPE-funded programs like KIX.

The Grant Agent also presents a set of criteria against which it will check its performance to inform potential adjustments over time and guide adaptive implementation. Using the Grant Agent's set of criteria for adaptive management, thus far OC1 has been effective at creating what is perceived to be a fair and transparent proposal process, grant process, and well-functioning learning partner network at the regional level. Additionally, grantees have begun to be included in learning collaboratives within Education Out Loud; however, links between Education Out Loud and KIX are at a very early stage (see relevance discussion above).

Education Out Loud's efficient adaptive management is a key strength that has been enabled by the Grant Agent's delegation of decision making to the regional level and the flexibility of grant budgeting, though evidence use and reflective learning for global adaptive management is less evident. Oxfam IBIS's portfolio application highlights delegation of decision making and flexible financing to national education coalitions as necessary to enable adaptability. The Grant Agent structure has therefore delegated minor revisions (in accordance with GPE's approach to program revisions) of specific grants to the regional management units in order to facilitate 'rapid decision-making in response to changes in context, need or new insights.' This intention has been effectively realized at the RMU level, as many regional and national-level stakeholders – including RMU staff and NECs – highlighted RMU's ability to adaptively manage grants as a key strength to the design of OC1.

In contrast, one area of slower progress is the ongoing reflection and integration of learning and evidence into global decision-making, or what the Grant Agent's Portfolio Application refers to as 'single and double-loop learning.' A significant amount of monitoring data is collected and synthesizes from national and regional-levels at the global level for reporting purposes. However, some global stakeholders acknowledge that monitoring data is not often reflected upon or used to inform adaptations in a continual basis (though the rapid review itself is a form of evidence for to inform adaptation). Regional teams highlighted this as well. A few RMU respondents also requested additional guidance programmatic steering from GMU on how to translate learning and adaptive management into practice to help regional teams. One regional stakeholder stated, "programmatic steering from [GMU] would be appreciated as if you talk about learning and adaptive management, how do you actually do that in an operational sense? There have been webinars but that learning has to be translated and shared all together."

Adaptive management is perceived to have partly enabled the efficient implementation of OC1 despite Covid-19 challenges. Operational Component 1 has been able to remain relatively on track to achieving its intended outcomes and objective (see results section below for more detail). This is particularly impressive when considering the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on in-

person advocacy, capacity building and coordination at the country-level for national education coalitions. Many of the global, regional and national stakeholders attributed much of the continued ability of NECs to conduct activities and achieve results to the flexible financing and support of RMUs, based in Education Out Loud's adaptive management approach. One regional stakeholder described how adaptive management provided this 'backing' confidence:

"If I look at it that the context we envisioned has not been at its best. Where we are at now, we have in OC1 has achieved a lot. And I think the reason is for, the framers of EOL probably had a look ahead and incorporated the aspect of adaptive management into the program. So, when the pandemic came and distorted the context for NECs to operate, it was easy for us to work with NECs to adapt, easily without the fear that it looks like we are changing things that needed to change. We had the backing of adaptive management, which gave us the leeway to change strategy, even activities and outputs in a manner that reflects the changes of the context."

A NEC respondent also confirmed adaptive management as an enabler of implementation despite contextual challenges: "This is one great thing we appreciate...we try to adapt and the open door of regional communication and coordination with the RMU is great. We work through the adaptations despite Covid and the insecurity in our context."

4.3 Results achieved to date by Education Out Loud OC1 (MRQ3)

The following section presents a high-level synthesis of emerging results achieved thus far in OC1 of Education Out Loud (MRQ3). The key data sources informing this analysis consisted primarily of key informant interviews with Education Out Loud teams and national education coalitions and an in-depth document review of MEL, reporting, and grant-level documentation.

Table 6. Review questions for MRQ3

Review question
MRQ3. Is Education Out Loud OC1 achieving its intended outcomes and, ultimately, objective?
RQ3.1. To what extent is Education Out Loud OC1 (on its way to) fulfilling its objectives? (<i>Referencing annual and overall targets</i>)
RQ3.2. Are there unanticipated results for OC1 – positive and negative – that need to be considered?
RQ3.4. To what extent have grantees, supported by the GA and learning partners, generated additional co-financing beyond GPE?

It is important to note that given how new Education Out Loud OC1 is in terms of full implementation by the grantee (about 1.5 years, as of June 2021), there is limited robust evidence available on which to draw out key results that are attributable only to OC1. That said, GPE Secretariat has been funding national education coalitions for over 10 years through CSEF. Significant data is available on the achievements of CSEF. Therefore, while the scope of the rapid review is the conception of Education Out Loud (as ASA) in June 2018 until the present (June 2021) many of the key achievements and results discussed include those that GPE has contributed to through its support of mutual accountability programming in CSEF and Education Out Loud.

4.3.1 OC1's progress towards its objectives (RQ3.1)

Table 7. Results thus far in OC1, according to Education Out Loud's results framework

Overall Goal: Contribute to enhance 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 education policy and implementation processes.		
Objective 1: Strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring		
Outcome 1.1 At the end of the project, NECs are more inclusive, particularly for marginalized and local groups	Outcome Indicator 1.1.1 Number of NECs that have diversified their member base and become more inclusive, particularly for marginalized and local groups	
Outcome 1.2 At the end of the project, NECs' capacities are increased, particularly in relation to engagement in policy dialogues	Outcome Indicator 1.2.1 Percentage of NECs' learning plans implemented, improving their organizational, thematic and advocacy capacity	
	Outcome Indicator 1.2.2 Percentage of NECs that have received effective and satisfactory, respectively, support from GCE and RCs to increase their capacities	
Outcome 1.3 At the end of the project, civil society capacities, participation and strategic influence in formal education policy processes have increased in selected countries	Outcome Indicator 1.3.1 Proportion of grantees that are on track achieving their targets in their own results frameworks	
	Outcome Indicator 1.3.2 Number of education policies with changes – and in their financing and delivery in practice – that are influenced by EOL grantees	
Outcome 1.4 'Learning collaboratives' established generating lessons learned for institutional strengthening of CSOs	Outcome Indicator 1.4.1 Number and types of learning collaboratives on CSO institutional capacity building established	
Key:		
	Appears fully on track to achieving expected outcomes in the future, according to indicator reporting	
	Partially on track to achieving expected outcomes in the future, according to indicator reporting	
	Minimally on track to achieving expected outcomes in the future, according to indicator reporting	
	Not on track to achieving expected outcomes in the future, according to indicator reporting	

Despite significant challenges of Covid 19 disruptions and shrinking civic spaces, OC1 remains on track to achieve its expected results at the outcome and objective levels, enabled in part by adaptive management and building on the achievements of CSEF. It is too early to determine or assess achievement of Education Out Loud-specific intended outcomes and objectives according to the MEL framework as OC1 has only been implemented for 1.5 years. Advocacy takes time. Almost all stakeholders remarked that OC1 necessitates a long-term outlook for substantial impact as change is not linear. As such, the 10 years of support to NECs by GPE thus far has enabled this long-term perspective. However, Education Out Loud reporting demonstrates that thus far, OC1 appears on track to achieve its objective and intended outcomes (though there is variation at the indicator level, namely on OC1 learning and support from regional coalitions). Success thus far is a result of many factors but is in part due to productive adaptive management by RMUs, Oxfam IBIS' successfully building on the strengths of CSEF, and the focus on the individual needs of NECs. A summary of progress thus far is presented in table 6 above.

OC1's support to NECs has contributed in part to their presence and engagement in policy dialogue spaces like local education groups, in line with GPE2020's strategic objectives.

According to monitoring documents, the results thus far in Education Out Loud have been focused in OC1 and its support to NECs to be able to carry out advocacy and accountability

activities for quality education access for all. Most of the advocacy and dialogue in GPE partner countries take place in local education groups (LEGs, or the national equivalent). 41 of the 52 NECs (79 percent) supported by Education Out Loud were able to attend local education groups in 2020. A geographic breakdown of participation by supported NECs in local education groups is presented below in table 8. This directly contributes to GPE2020's strategic objective 2 to support mutual accountability through effective and inclusive sector policy dialogue and monitoring, according to the proportion of local education groups with civil society representation (Indicator 19). The extent to which Education Out Loud or CSEF's support of NECs contributed to NEC participation in local education groups cannot be fully assessed in the rapid review (this would require a rigorous contribution analysis approach and no baseline data is available), and participation in virtual local education groups by Education Out Loud-supported NECs declined slightly in the second half of 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions (from 41 to 37 NECs). However, many NECs shared how Education Out Loud and GPE Secretariat Country Team Leaders have enabled the continued existence of NECs and encouraged their participation both with civil society and government stakeholders.

Table 8. Participation of supported NECs in at least 1 LEG in 2020

Participation in at least one Local Education Group (LEG) meeting	West and Central Africa	Eastern and Southern Africa	Latin America and Caribbean	Asia and Pacific	In total
Number of EOL supported NECs in the Region	18	16	4	16	54
Yes, the NEC did participate in the LEG in year 2020	15	13	1	12	41
No, the NEC did not participate in the LEG in year 2020	2	3	3	4	12
N.D.	1	0	0	0	1

However, despite progress on OC1 across all intended outcomes, there is a perceived lack of synergy between OC1 and other OCs to ensure the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; in other words, how OC1 collectively reinforces the contributions of OC2 and OC3 towards Education Out Loud's overall objective. Due to start-up delays, few OC1 grantees and activities have been able to connect with OC2 and OC3. There have been ad-hoc interactions between grantees facilitated by Education Out Loud but systematic linkages between the three OCs are not evident. There are also concerns about losing sight of the overall spirit and objective of Education Out Loud, attributed by stakeholders to fragmented support to individual NECs, few regional-level forums (especially in contrast to CSEF), and a heavy focus on technical project support. The extent of interaction and linkages between OCs for overall impact towards Education Out Loud's fundamental goal is a significant question that remains for future wider evaluations of the program.

4.3.2 OC1's results thus far: Outcome 1.1 on Inclusive NECs

About half of Education Out Loud-supported NECs have become more inclusive and diversified in their membership, while most of the remaining NECs have relatively maintained the diversity of their membership. The primary focus of Outcome 1.1 is contributing to NECs becoming more inclusive, especially for marginalized and local groups, according to the outcome's indicator. All supported NECs include participating women and girl groups in their coalition. Groups representing marginalized, illiterate, disabled, and people in poverty are also all well presented in most NECs (at least 78 percent of NECs). However, participation of groups representing discriminated ethnic, caste, migrant, and religious groups as well as LGBT communities remain underrepresented and absent in most NECs (for example, only 17 percent of NECs include LGBT groups and only 31 percent of NECs include groups representing people with discriminated nationalities, ethnicity, caste, or migration status). The lacking inclusion of LGBT

groups across NECs was highlighted by one NEC as well, and they recommended that OC1 (or the NEC itself) provide training to other NECs on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) frameworks. While OC1 is very much on track to improve the overall inclusivity of supported NECs, a more nuanced, targeted approach to how inclusivity is defined and what groups are included may be beneficial moving forward.

4.3.3 OC1's results thus far: Outcome 1.2 on Capacitated NECs

Almost all OC1-supported NECs have developed or improved their individual learning plans and are actively receiving technical support according to their identified learning needs. However, the support received by NECs from RCs varies greatly according to region. Outcome 1.2 seeks to increase the capacities of OC1-supported NECs, particularly in relation to engagement in policy dialogue, to improve their organizational, thematic and advocacy capacity. One of the indicators to determine this is the percentage of individual NEC learning plans that are implemented, as well as the support that GCE and Regional Coalitions provide. As of December 2020, OC1 has supported 51 out of 54 grantees develop or improve learning plans. Those learning plans identify their self-assessed learning needs and priorities for capacity development, which is intended to be provided by RMUs, RCs, and contracted learning partners. Additionally, three RCs in Asia/Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East have provided significant capacity building to NECs. Most RC-supported trainings are thematically focused, such as political efforts and advocacy, and are very positively received by those participating NECs interviewed. However, while the efforts by RMUs in Africa are very appreciated by NECs, those NECs do not receive any capacity building support from the RC in Africa (which is not supported by Education Out Loud).

These efforts have combined into a multi-pronged approach to trainings facilitated by RMUs, RCs and learning partners, though there are instances of overlap, as discussed above in the section of efficiency. Encouragingly, as a result all NECs have participated in some sort of learning event according to their identified needs, such as formal trainings, webinars, and coaching, as well as informal learning through interactions with Education Out Loud stakeholders and other organizations. Therefore, the trainings provided by RMUs as well as RCs (when active) in 2020 include but are not limited to those presented in table 9 below.

Table 9. Summary of NEC strengthening activities by RMUs and RCs in 2nd half of 2020

Actor	Activities
West and Central Africa RMU	The EOL-RMU in West and Central Africa has provided some one-to-one trainings and capacity building meetings to reinforce the NECs capacities on monitoring and evaluation tools, identification of project indicators and targets, creation and development of learning plans and reporting of project budgets for the NECs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, DRC, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The NEC in Mozambique reported that the Learning Plan has been an asset, as it has helped to identify the areas of capacity that require more efforts from the network to improve them.
Eastern and Southern Africa RMU	The EOL-RMU in Eastern and Southern Africa has supported the capacity building and skills development of the NECs in Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Yemen, Nigeria, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Malawi in activity implementation planning, monitoring and tracking project implementation and in financial reporting. The NECs have also received support in identifying learning needs and in developing and improving learning plans. The RMU has also shortlisted a pool of 20 learning partners and started training courses on Policy Advocacy, Community Mobilization and Budget Analysis and on Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning for OC1 grantees. The purpose of the training is among other objectives to equip grantees with advocacy skills and enhance their knowledge and practice in policy

	advocacy and influencing, policy implementation tracking and development of an advocacy strategy; as well as to facilitate learning and practice of community mobilization and social accountability techniques; and to build the capacity of grantees in budget analysis.
Regional Coalition ACEA	The Regional Coalition ACEA supported capacity building of the NECs in the region in general, and in particularly the NECs in Yemen, Sudan and Somalia. ACEA organized an Arab Educational Feminist Forum that aims at strengthening the feminist movement in education policy discussions; as well as a Policies' Academy, which is a series of on-line dialogues engaging coalitions, academics, researchers, civil society organizations in discussion on education policies. ACEA also reports the organization of trainings on Digital Campaigning for the NECs in the region; and the production of an ACEA training manual in Arabic on the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education. ACEA also carried out diverse on-line meetings to orient the coalitions on the new emergency that Covid represents.
Latin America and Caribbean RMU	The EOL-RMU in Latin America and Caribbean has supported the NECs in Honduras, Bolivia, and Nicaragua with planning and how to comply with monitoring and financial reporting requirements. The NECs have also received support in identifying learning needs and in developing learning plans. The RMU has also offered a design and capacity building workshop provided with the aid LPs for the improvement or development of proposals to Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti and Bolivia in 2020, which included developing or strengthening capacities (there were a variety of capacity levels) on: context analysis development, stakeholders mapping, theory of change, indicators development, risk management assessment. The RMU also invited significant time and effort on accompaniment for strengthening financial management to Haiti (2020). An LP financial sustainability and resource mobilization workshop was provided by the RMU in coordination with CLADE for the NECs of Nicaragua, Honduras, Bolivia, Haiti, Guatemala and El Salvador (2021). Additionally, support and strengthening support is currently being provided with LPs and an individual approach to Nicaragua, Honduras and Bolivia in strategic planning (which includes analysis of the previous strategic plan and new development, as well as support for the preparation of biannual project proposals).
Regional Coalition CLADE	The Regional Coalition CLADE supported the EOL-supported NECs' capacities through extending invitation to them for virtual meetings such as one on the Human Right to Education, Horizons and Meanings in the Post-Pandemic Work that helped - together with GCE elaborated policy guidelines on this topic - to give strategic orientations to the NECs in the new Covid-19 situation. The NECs had also the opportunity to participate in preparatory meetings on Youth and the right to education; early childhood education; youth and adult education; inequalities, inclusion, and education; public education at risk of privatization and international developments in the pandemic context. CLADE and GCE have also shared information on a Monitoring system of the Financing of the human right to education and a regional observatory on Inclusive Education. CLADE has also continued to support the participation of young people in national coalitions and the interaction among them at regional level. Students and young people were also invited to organize an event on "Youth and the Right to Education in Latin America and the Caribbean" where they shared information about their demands and expectations for education. CLADE also reports that the Student Movement of Latin America and Caribbean (MELAC) and youth participants were encouraged to participate in GCE activities.
Asia and Pacific RMU	The EOL-RMU in Asia and Pacific Region has supported the NECs in the region with planning and how to comply with EOL monitoring and financial reporting requirements. The NECs have also received support in identifying learning needs and in developing or improving their learning plans. The RMU has also co-organized and co-facilitated some learning activities for the NECs together with RC ASPBAE mentioned below.
Regional Coalition ASPBAE	The Regional Coalition ASPBAE has organized webinars on civil society organizations' advocacy work for the promotion of the right to education in times of Covid; and on domestic financing of education post Covid. The NECs (in Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Mongolia and in other countries) have also learned about and from the strategic plan of ASPBAE for promoting SDG 4.7. ASPBAE has also conducted online meetings to increase the NECs (in Nepal, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Philippines, Timor Leste and Vanuatu as well as in other countries) knowledge on the impact of

	<p>Covid 19 on education and well-being of marginalized youth and on how to incorporate youth groups in the National Education Coalition work. In relation to this, ASPBAE has conducted Youth-led Action Research. This effort not only gathered data but also mobilized young people from diverse marginalized backgrounds that became active in advocacy events of the national education coalitions and strengthened the participation of youth in these spaces. ASPBAE has also provided guidance and advice regarding the NECs thematic and advocacy work in general, which they have learned from; and it has also organized the sharing of learnings regarding the use of digital platforms. ASPBAE has also provided technical assistance to the NEC in Cambodia, as mentioned above, to interpret and act on clauses in the NECs Charter (constitution) to help ensure a smooth and democratic election of the new NEC Board.</p>
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Of course, providing training is only one aspect of whether capacity of NECs is strengthened and improved. It is not feasible to independently assess and verify within this rapid review the following: the extent to which all OC1-supported NECs have been able to effectively apply training to their work; whether long-term system-based capacity building was undertaken at the organizational level; or the extent to which Education Out Loud has contributed to strengthening their organizational, thematic, and advocacy skills. This is a question that remains and would be well suited to the collection of monitoring data from NECs themselves. Education Out Loud should begin to collect this type of self-reported data from NECs.

In the meantime, the Grant Agent has collected reflections from RMUs on their perceptions of changes in NEC capacities thanks to OC1 support in 2020. According to RMUs, 41 out of 54 NECs (76 percent) have improved in at least one area related to governance capacities; 40 NECs (74 percent) are considered to have improved in at least one area related to technical capacities; and 39 NECs (72 percent) are considered to have improved at least one area related to advocacy capacities (see table 10 below). Overall, RMUs reported that the most substantial areas of improvement by NECs was in governance capacities, namely as adaptive management, organization, use of IT and monitoring. Additionally, RMUs perceived relative improvements among most NECs in technical capacities (namely knowledge and analysis of national education systems, and education in emergencies) and advocacy capacities (specifically lobbying).

Table 10. RMU reflections on improved NEC capacities thanks to OC1 support in 2020

Improved Capacity Type	Number of NECs	Percentage of NECs
Governance capacities	41	76%
Technical capacities	40	74%
Advocacy capacities	39	72%

Based on the reflections of RMUs, most NECs are on track in improving their capacities, but additional focus may be needed moving forward in technical and advocacy capacities. This request for greater capacity building in technical and advocacy areas was strongly confirmed by the NECs sampled as well, who commented on the sometimes heavy or less relevant focus of capacity building on governance building of less capacitated NECs. This is particularly felt among NECs who are already institutionally and organizationally strong and are seeking more advanced skills training. This also implies a need for differentiated capacity building based on the existing capacity of NECs so they can continue to appreciate the added value of Education Out Loud beyond core financing for functioning alone.

4.3.4 OC1's results thus far: Outcome 1.3 on Influential NECs

Most of the grantee NEC projects are on-track to reach their own expected results on NEC policy influence. Outcome 1.3 seeks to support the increased capacities, participation, and influence of CSOs and NECs in formal education spaces. One component of this is the proportion of grantees that are on track to achieving their own targets (Outcome Indicator 1.3.1). According to Education Out Loud reporting on Outcome 3, about 75 percent supported NECs are on track to achieve their own expected results as established by the NECs themselves. This is very encouraging for the early stage of OC1 implementation, as the target is maintaining at least 60 percent of NECs on track throughout OC1. Much of this progress is admittedly at the activity and output levels thus far. That is expected in the early days of Education Out Loud support, though the program is encouraged to ensure that this progress remains on track at the outcome and impact levels as well, which are traditionally when many interventions struggle to achieve significant results. The progress thus far is attributed in part to adaptive management of grantees by RMUs and the flexibility of the layered Education Out Loud grantee-level results frameworks and Global Results Framework. However, the limited capacity of some NECs may hinder focus on achievement of overall impact later as a predominate level of effort remains devoted to institutional and governance capacity building.

Additionally, there have been significant and positive changes in education policies in GPE partner countries that included the participation of OC1-supported NECs. One of the primary objectives of GPE (Strategic Objective 1 in both GPE2020 and GPE 2025 strategies) is to contribute to the improvement in the quality of education sector planning, policies, financing, and implementation in GPE partner countries. OC1 also seeks to contribute to this strategic objective by supporting education policy changes, financing and delivery influenced by grantees (Outcome Indicator 1.3.2). Education Out Loud reports that policy changes to improve the education sector have taken place in at least 25 out of 54 countries in which NEC grantees operate and are present in local education groups, for a total of 48 new or changed education sector related policies in 2020. The overall target in Education Out Loud's Results Framework is at least 60 positive changes by the end of the project, and OC1 is encouragingly on track at this relatively early stage. The policy changes are diverse in theme and include education in emergencies (in response to Covid 19), gender education sector planning, ICT, inclusive education, and female adolescent right to education. A few instances where Education Out Loud-supported NECs contributed or participated in policy changes in 2020 are presented below in table 11. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but examples of how some NECs sampled in the rapid review have participated and contributed to sector dialogue in GPE partner countries.

Table 11. Examples of OC1-supported NECs participating in sector policy changes

Country	National Education Coalition, Description of Policy Plan Change, and NECs' Participation in Process
Bangladesh	Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)
	Development of Education Sector Plan December 2020
	Bangladesh has developed the Education Sector Plan that is now covering the pre-primary to tertiary education level. It embraces the following sections: context, access and equity, quality and relevance, and management and governance with quantifiable targets and indicators and a result framework. It is expected that the plan will contribute to improve planning, coordination, and implementation of education programs in alignment with national aspirations. The plan provides a framework for the implementation of the right to education agenda in Bangladesh and it is in alignment with the SDG 4 priorities. The plan has become a solid reference to advocate for the right to education in the coming five years and achieving SDG4 agenda as per the government commitments. Education Out Loud actors have organized several consultations involving national and sub-national stakeholders and provided the expert team's output.

Kenya	Elimu Yetu Coalition
	Kenya National Guideline for school re-entry in Early Learning and Basic Education December 2020
	<p>This is a new policy/guideline that attempts to make processes to get back to school easy for children that would otherwise lose out on education. It further elaborates on how Standard Operation Procedures will be observed in schools to curb Covid-19 spread and presents a school calendar of how lost time will be recovered over time.</p> <p>This policy is important as it communicates the Government's commitment over school re-entry in Early Learning and Basic Education. The policy was developed against the backdrop of high number of cases of Early Pregnancy, Gender based violence especially affecting children, cases of child trafficking and drug and substance abuse. The NEC contributed to the policy as one of the members of the LEG in Kenya (EDPCG) forums in which the guidelines were discussed and it participated in all the processes through the EDPCG fora on matters of school re-entry.</p>
Philippines	Civil Society Network for Education Reforms Inc. (E-Net Philippines)
	Philippines House Bill 8080 on Instituting Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education and Establishing Inclusive Learning Resources in School Districts.
	<p>The Bill establishes a Learning Resource Center in every school district to make education accessible to learners with disabilities ensuring their right to education. Children with disabilities often confront inaccessible schools or encounter learning barriers like inappropriate curriculum, learning materials, and methods of teaching. The National Education Coalition (E-Net) participated in the Technical Working Group in the House of Representatives during the elaboration of the bill. E-Net together with its members and persons-with-disability-partner-organizations made a position paper with recommendations to the bill that were submitted to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and advocated for the incorporation of the recommendations in meetings and hearings. As support ASPBAE -where E-Net is a member- also made a thematic paper on inclusive education for persons where experiences from Philippines, Mongolia, Vietnam, and India were shared that enriched the discussion.</p>
Zimbabwe	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI)
	Finance Bill (2021 National Budget) December 2020 Primary and Secondary education budget policy brief.
	<p>The bill increases the allocation of funds to the primary and secondary education sector budget. An extra \$820 million was added to some items in the \$421,6 billion 2021 National Budget to cover critical funding gaps identified by Parliament. The improvements in the budget are key to the primary and secondary education sector to enable them to improve the delivery of quality and equitable education especially in the face of COVID-19 and its effects.</p> <p>The coalition attended the parliamentary portfolio committee on primary and secondary education for a 2020-budget-utilization-analysis and presentation of the 2021 budget as an observer. The coalition made the budget analysis and made recommendations for improvements on the budget that was presented to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Primary and Secondary Education. This Committee guide Members of Parliament to debate the Finance Bill (2021 National Budget) improvements to the budget.</p>

Of course, these policy changes in GPE partner countries are not solely or conclusively attributed to GPE, Education Out Loud or NEC efforts. The Education Out Loud Theory of Change clearly includes assumptions that national governments have the primary responsibility for delivering education and determining education policy, and the CSOs are only one actor in sector dialogue. However, NECs and CSOs are present or contribute to sector dialogue through local education groups (or the contextual equivalent) at relatively high rates; as discussed above, 41 of the 52 NECs (79 percent) supported by Education Out Loud were able to participate in local education groups in 2020. The contributions of NECs in national dialogue and policy have been strengthened by the promotion of regional political agendas by Regional Coalitions as well.

4.3.5 OC1's results thus far: Outcome 1.4 on Learning

While there is a clear intent and support for learning at the grantee-level, progress on Education Out Loud Outcome 1.4 for generating and sharing lessons learned broadly at the OC1, Education Out Loud and sector-levels is limited. There is evidence of learning at the

grantee-level (partners, collaboratives, and capacity building in response to NECs' learning agendas). As discussed above on technical support and capacity building of NECs, coalitions are well supported through Oxfam IBIS's four approaches to implementing the learning agenda (visually presented below in figure 3). Many NECs interviewed appreciated the learning agenda directly respond to the self-identified needs of NECs themselves. It is notable however that while there are four key components to the learning agenda, all four components are heavily focused on the grantee and lack a description or unpacking of the causal mechanisms between the four components (i.e. how they reinforce each other) nor how the components come together for a full learning agenda (i.e. visually, what do the four components sit within?). Learning is also top-down (NECs as receptacles for learning) and not well-linked to strategic decision-making and adaptive management. This may be a result of a too-narrow definition of learning as solely capacity building and a de-prioritization in comparison to other tasks.

Regarding the implementation of the four components themselves for grantees, there has been significant progress on procuring learning partners and facilitating year zero and learning agenda support. The learning collaboratives for grantees are still in early days but beginning implementation. NECs are very interested in participating in learning collaboratives, and a few sought stronger learning collaboratives around different issues. For example, many NECs remarked on a lack of learning across regions, themes such as gender or FCAS contexts. This need for greater South-South lesson sharing across regions was also highlighted as a recommendation (Recommendation 9) in the CSEF III final evaluation. One NEC stated this remaining gap well: "There is a lack of learning for us beyond the region. Before we had ideas of the work of the NECs of [RC in this region] and [RC in that region]."

Figure 3. Education Out Loud's four approaches to implementing the learning agenda



This strong programmatic emphasis on NEC learning and capacity building has not effectively translated to higher-level learning and evidence generation for Education Out Loud. Procuring trainers and capacity building sessions for grantees is one dimension of a wider learning strategy. The ASA Blueprint initially emphasized the 'learning-oriented monitoring and evaluation' of Education Out Loud. The purpose of a learning-oriented approach to MEL was described by the

Blueprint as to learn about “how and why progress towards shared objectives may or may not occur should be something that benefit all actors (rather than just for upwards accountability and control).” This dual purpose for M&E to both inform accountability and learning is not only best-practice but a clear objective within GPE Secretariat. GPE’s most recent Evaluation Policy emphasizes that MEL serves the primary purposes of ‘accountability and decision-making (within the partnership) and evidence-based learning (across the partnership and its stakeholders).’ As such, the Blueprint presents two indicators for high-level learning for OC1: (1) Clear learning goals around improving the fulfilment of coalition functions; and (2) Clear learning goals around strategies to influence government and evidence of adaptation. In other words, the Blueprint intended OC1 to generate and synthesize learning on what works well and what does not work well in strengthening NEC capacity building and improving influence mechanisms.

The language of a ‘learning-oriented monitoring and reporting’ system is present in the Portfolio Application by the Grant Agent. However, there is very little detail as to how the ‘learning-oriented’ approach will be translated into practice at the regional, OC1, Education Out Loud or sector-wide levels. The limited detail in design documents on how to implement high-level learning has thereby resulted in limited learning in practice. Across programmatic documentation, descriptions of learning at the portfolio and sector level are only in reference to lessons learned shared in donor reports and website. The learning agenda section of Education Out Loud reports states that one of the focus areas is ‘ensure capturing of learning across the Education Out Loud portfolio’, but the subsequent reporting focuses only on the grantee-level. It is acknowledged by the Evaluator that lists of grantee-level learning or success stories are regularly reported and publicly available, for example in the annexes of status reports and on the website. Communications and availability of key documents via the website are also getting better over the course of the program. However, grantee-level lessons are not robustly assessed (i.e., they are self-reported by NECs and any innovative or experimental approaches are not independently tested by Education Out Loud) nor synthesized (for example, through learning approaches such as meta-reviews or cross-case synthesis of lessons). The substantial sections in program reporting on the Learning Agenda do not provide that high-level insight either. What is especially absent is ‘what does not work’, a crucial aspect of learning.

Most of the Education Out Loud documentation and review respondents emphasized importance of the Learning Framework (presented in the Portfolio Application and reporting). The learning framework is detailed and effectively used by the Grant Agent to coordinate learning activities. However, the indicators within the Learning Framework are very focused on quantitatively tracking learning at the grantee-level (e.g., Outcome 1.2 indicator: percentage of grantees satisfied with support received) or the number of ‘success stories’ (Outcome 1.1 indicator). However, integral components to programmatic and sector learning are missing, including:

- Key learning objectives for OC1 or Education Out Loud at the outcome, objective, or goal level of the Theory of Change (i.e., what does Education Out Loud want to learn about supporting CSOs that do education advocacy?).
- Identification of learning objectives according to stakeholder/audience (e.g., what does GPE Secretariat and other donors want to know in contrast to CSOs).
- How programmatic learning will be integrated back into adaptive programming.
- How insights on what works and what does not work will be tested.
- How lessons will be shared among NECs (beyond their region), OC2 and OC3 grantees, and non-Education Out Loud stakeholders beyond reporting; and
- How learning partners, GCE and RCs will be involved.

The critical weakness of the Education Out Loud Learning Framework and approach is also the lack of a global learning partner. A global learning partner is usually responsible for many of the currently absent activities and products, as listed above. This is attributed to operational delays but many stakeholders, especially global stakeholders but also NECs, emphasized the urgency of this missed opportunity. Some also acknowledged that the absence of a learning partner is not only due to operational delays but also because of a lack of prioritization of learning thus far by the GA. One global stakeholder highlighted the sector importance of Education Out Loud learning based on GPE being the largest global funder of accountability in education and the urgent need to prioritize it as other donors and practitioners may wish to potentially replicate, adapt or further scale the Education Out Loud OC1 model: “Other stakeholders are so interested in our lessons learned, we have to document and disseminate learning robustly, make sure it is available in an easily digestible form, and connect to other players.”

4.3.6 Unanticipated results of Education Out Loud OC1 (RQ3.2)

This section of the rapid review thus far has discussed the emerging results thus far in Education Out Loud OC1, according to monitoring according to the Education Out Loud Theory of Change’s OC1 intended outcomes. There have also been unanticipated results of OC1 beyond the expected Theory of Change or intended outcomes. In the current context, the most significant unanticipated aspect is certainly the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21. Therefore, the following sub-section explores the perceptions among stakeholders of the impact of Covid-19 on implementation of OC1.

Covid-19 resulted in a sudden pause on all in-person interactions for Education Out Loud across the globe, requiring RMUs to rapidly adapt the coordination, monitoring and training of national education coalitions. The beginning of implementation for many OC1 grantees (January 2020) coincided almost exactly with the start of the global Covid-19 pandemic (Spring 2020). This has understandably created significant challenges to previous ways of working, as travel is limited and the Grant Agent’s GMU and RMUs have not been able to co-convene with NECs in person (except for one early opportunity in 2020 prior to the pandemic for the East and Southern Africa RMU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). One global stakeholder referred to Covid-19 as ‘throwing a big wrench’ in Education Out Loud’s initial implementation plan. This is especially impactful on a program such as Education Out Loud that seeks to support civil society groups and their advocacy efforts as “this program relies on face-to-face interactions and the rapport you can build with grantees.” So much of advocacy work and capacity building takes place informally or ‘in corridors, not meetings.’ However, many global stakeholders reported being very impressed by how effectively the Grant Agent’s RMUs and NECs have been able to rapidly shift activities and approaches to the new Covid-19 context. For example, one global stakeholder applauded NECs’ agility as “Covid-19 has been huge, and the coalitions have done well in dealing with advocacy...they have been quite agile in identifying policy spaces.”

Regional stakeholders highlighted that OC1’s delivery of virtual trainings to NECs unexpectedly provided informal capacity building in online convening, as well as helped a few distant NECs to interact. One regional coalition emphasized the agility of virtual training as one of the key strengths of the Grant Agent, as NECs received Education Out Loud-facilitated capacity building and quickly shifted that new informal training of working virtually to their national influencing efforts: “due to Covid, many NECs have shifted their participation in local education groups to an online modality. This gave coalitions the ability to improve their capacity and shift to that platform of influencing...Education Out Loud set up was very timely in responding to the Covid emergency.” Another regional stakeholder noted in one instance, a grassroots member of a NEC was able to participate in an RC’s regional assembly for the first time due to the shift to virtual

events, as “this was now possible because of Covid-19 and it gave us an unexpected opportunity to interact with our members.”

However, regional convening for networking and learning among NECs was substantially curtailed because of Covid-19 restrictions. Almost all NECs interviewed in the rapid review noted the limited ability to convene and network with other Education Out Loud-supported NECs in their region and beyond their region as the most substantial disappointment of Covid-19 restrictions on Education Out Loud. According to many NECs, in CSEF they had many opportunities to meet, coordinate and share learning with other national and regional coalitions in regional forums. In contrast, Education Out Loud has operated during Covid-19 travel restrictions, thus limiting opportunities to meet in person. One stakeholder stated, “the capacity building is always very good but because of Covid 19, it is also challenging...[RMU] have been very patient with us.” It should be noted that a few NECs noted that the limited regional learning opportunities are not only a result of Covid-19 but may also be due to the absence of a Regional Coalition in the Africa region and Education Out Loud’s relative inactivity thus far in promoting NEC participation in regional dialogue venues.

Covid 19’s dramatic disruptions to in-person learning globally have also been a significant and unanticipated opportunity for NEC participation in sector policy influencing. The need for rapid response to Covid 19 has in fact created openings for many NECs to influence high-level decision-making at crucial moments. According to Education Out Loud reporting, “in the Covid-19 emergency regulations of education, the NECs were actively participating in reminding the decision takers about the need to not rely only on IT-based distance learning since it tends to widen the gap between rich and poor families and students.” The leveraging of this unexpected opportunity for influencing was confirmed by some NECs; one stated that “the impact of the pandemic is that is hard to do advocacy but it gave us urgency and eagerness to do more in our advocacy work, in these 1.5 years in the pandemic... the alternative learning systems is now a law ...and another [inclusive education] law is also in the congress...these are two advocacies we have identified for passage because of Covid.” Other examples of participation by Education Out Loud-supported NECs in policy responses to Covid-19 are presented below in table 12.

Table 12. Examples of Covid-19 related policies promoted or influenced by OC1-supported NECs

Country	Examples of policies for which the NEC has participated in the discussion
Burkina Faso	National Strategy for Education in Emergencies from 2019 to 2024, signed in December 2020. Response plan for educational continuity during COVID-19 adopted by Ministry of Education and support program for the implementation of the response plan for educational continuity approved in May 2020.
Gambia	Strategic Framework for the COVID-19 Safe Reopening of schools and Catch-up Plan on Learning Loss approved during the 2nd semester of 2020.
Kenya	Kenya Basic education COVID- 19 Emergency response plan; Guideline for reopening of schools; National Guideline for school re-entry in Early Learning and Basic Education.
Malawi	Guidelines for the re-opening of primary and secondary schools, teachers training colleges (TTC) during Covid-19 pandemic. National education sector investment plan 2020-2030.
Nepal	Emergency Education Plans at the Municipality level that have so far helped in the continuity of education activities in each of the rural municipalities during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Niger	Operational Program for the Implementation of the Global Response Plan to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was adopted by Government of Niger on April 28, 2020.

Nigeria	Covid-19 Schools reopening Guidelines approved by the government on 13 July 2020. School Readiness template for Covid-19 School reopening approved in August 2020. Guidelines for states: take home ration distribution a covid-19 palliative intervention approved in May 2020.
Sierra Leone	Adoption of COVID-19 Preventive Plan and measures for schools reopening approved during the 2nd quarter of 2020.
South Sudan	Response to Covid-19 education framework on distance learning. The new Inclusive Education and Gender policy which is being developed is now in draft form and is to be presented in parliament for debate.
Sudan	National Covid-19 Response plan.

4.3.7 Support of OC1 towards grantees to generate non-GPE co-financing (RQ3.4)

This sub-section explores the extent to which Education Out Loud programming has supported NECs to seek and secure additional non-GPE co-financing.

Considerations of the sustainability of NECs beyond GPE funding is present in the design and implementation of Education Out Loud OC1. OC1 was designed with the sustainability of NECs beyond Education Out Loud funding in mind. The Blueprint states that one of the key determinants of success for Education Out Loud is the extent to which CSOs, including NECs, can endure and sustain themselves beyond the project life cycle of Education Out Loud. The sustainability of NECs is especially important based on GPE's long-time support of civil society, with 10 years of CSEF and now Education Out Loud. A few global stakeholders also highlighted the 'onus' on CSOs to diversify their funding space in response to valid questions from funders like GPE Committee members and others about the effectiveness of funding thus far, demonstration of substantive results, and sustainability of past approaches.

Financial sustainability is a prominent and well-received theme in OC1 capacity building, but its effect depends on the capacity and engagement of NECs. Much of OC1 capacity building efforts organized by the Grant Agent and facilitated by learning partners have been focused on financial sustainability, proposal preparation, and budgeting. The capacity building is primarily delivered at the regional level through trainings and one-on-one coaching. The grant application and Year Zero feedback processes at the start of OC1 also provided an opportunity for NECs to gain informal learning on preparing applications to funders. Some nascent NECs remarked that it was the first time they had to submit such a detailed proposal. Many of the NECs sampled appreciated the trainings on fundraising financial sustainability provided by learning partners in Education Out Loud and a few stated they had begun applying the knowledge. For instance, one NEC remarked that, "We are working on our strategy for 2021-22 with Education Out Loud and preparing a financial proposal to go with it; we learned this from our capacity building and training on fundraising." However, a couple of the learning partners interviewed expressed concern as to whether some NECs were yet capable or even engaged sufficiently in these trainings. This points to a potential need moving forward for a more nuanced approach to financial sustainability support based on the capacity and engagement of the NEC.

According to preliminary self-reported data, there is variation in the level of co-financing on Education Out Loud among NECs but overall, there is a high dependency of most NECs on OC1 funding. The Grant Agent has not yet systematically verified financial data from all NECs on the extent of their dependence on GPE funding. However, self-reported data on co-financing has been collected by the GMU and RMUs through informal telephone interviews with NECs. According to the reporting of the telephone interviews, more than 37 percent of all supported NECs were from 90 percent to 100 percent dependent on OC1 funding in 2020. In other words, OC1 was essentially the only source of funding for 37 percent of NECs, and they would be highly

unlikely to survive financially without OC1 in 2020. For at least 37 NECs (69 percent of NECs), the OC1-budget signified 50 percent or more of their total budget in 2020. Only 11 of the OC1-supported NECs stated that OC1 comprised less than 50 percent of their budget. This is presented in detail in table 13 below.

Table 13. Level of dependence on OC1 funding, according to NEC self-reporting to RMUs

What was the % of EOL-budget-amount of NEC-budget-amount in 2020?	Number of NECs	Percentage
Less than 10%	0	0%
10-19%	4	7%
20-29%	2	4%
30-39%	2	4%
40-49%	3	6%
50-59%	4	7%
60-69%	5	9%
70-79%	0	0%
80-89%	8	15%
90-100%	20	37%
No Data Provided	6	11%
Total	54	100%

Methodologically, it is important to note that this data is based on an estimation of the percentage of OC1-budget amount in relation to the NECs' overall budget amount as of 2020, as well as self-reported data. It should also be acknowledged that some NECs were somewhat reluctant to share this type of information and only provided an estimate. Six out of the 54 NECs did not provide any information.

Education Out Loud is often the only donor present for NECs operating in a shrinking civil space. In the interviews, many global, regional and national respondents emphasized that GPE through Education Out Loud is often the only donor present in a shrinking civil society space and highlighted that GPE's contribution to core financing of NECs is especially significant. All respondents sought GPE funding for OC1 to continue while supporting co-financing efforts as Education Out Loud is a 'unique type of funding that promotes accountability in the sector, among donors and governments.' One NEC described the urgency of financing well, stating "education and civil society financing, we have found that donor funding is dwindling worldwide so there needs to be a move to generate domestic financing for support of CSOs and continue donor financing. We need greater innovation in future education financing."

6 Questions that remain for future evaluation and research

The findings and analysis thus far are based on the review questions included in the initial Terms of Reference for the rapid review and refined in the inception report. While a rapid review is still rigorous and systematic in its analysis, there are certain limitations present due to the inherent nature of the review's rapidness. Additionally, the scope of the review has been the first 1.5 years of Operational Component 1 of Education Out Loud. As of August 2021, grantees in Operational Components 2 and 3 are also beginning to come into Education Out Loud.

Therefore, this rapid review highlights some questions and tasks that may be well-suited for inclusion in the upcoming Mid-Term Evaluation (MTR) or other future MEL, and some questions that have emerged because of the rapid review's analysis as well.

- **To what extent are Education Out Loud's three operational components linked in their design and implementation, to leverage and support Education Out Loud's overall goal to contribute to enhance civil society capacity?** This question arises for two reasons: firstly, the scope of the rapid review is solely OC1 and the extent to which OC1's overall objective is reinforced by – and reinforces – OC2 and OC3 will inform future programming. Secondly, this rapid review recommends a review of the Education Out Loud ToC to clearly theorize reinforcing mechanisms between the three OCs. As such, this question is well-suited for inclusion in the MTR and will inform refinements to the existing ToC. The question can also be expanded into sub-questions as to what extent Education Out Loud implementation has supported OC1 grantees working with OC2 and OC3 grantees, and vice versa.
- **How do Education Out Loud-supported NECs perceive the support provided by Education Out Loud thus far?** Due to time limitations, only a sample of 10 out of 54 coalitions were included within the scope of the rapid review. As discussed above, most of the NECs have only one current donor – Education Out Loud – and have been grantees in CSEF as well. However, there is currently a gap in the data as to how grantees perceive the support of Education Out Loud and its actors, including the Grant Agent (both GMU and RMU), Regional Coalitions and GPE Secretariat. Therefore, additional data collection – most likely through an online survey – of the perceptions and reflections of all NECs according to geography/context, capacity, length of existence and thematic focus, is recommended for inclusion in the upcoming MTR. Findings from this question also have the potential to directly inform adaptations to capacity building and training support to NECs.
- **To what extent has the Year Zero process contributed to the effective implementation of Education Out Loud?** One question that arose from the rapid review's analysis is the deviation of the Year Zero process from its original intent. There were also significant operational inputs to implement Year Zero for both the Grant Agent and participating NECs. The value of the existing Year Zero process in comparison to other types of capacity support processes for proposal applicants may be included within the MTR's exploration of efficiency.
- **What actions are being taken by grantees to diversify their funding sources to reduce their dependence on GPE's funding and ensure the financial and organizational sustainability of the grantees?** This question was initially presented in the Terms of Reference as a 'Sustainability' question. However, the 'sustainability' question was re-framed to explore the extent that the Grant Agent has supported co-financing training because Education Out Loud has not yet systematically verified financial data from all NECs on the extent of their dependence on GPE funding. The only data available is self-reported data on co-financing that has been collected by the Grant Agent's RMUs through informal telephone interviews with NECs. This data is based on an estimation of the percentage of Education Out

Loud support-budget amount in relation to the NECs' overall budget amount as of 2020, as well as self-reported data. It should also be acknowledged that some NECs were somewhat reluctant to share this type of information and only provided an estimate. Six out of the 54 NECs did not provide any information. If this question were to be included in the MTR, the Grant Agent should begin to collect this data regularly from NECs as soon as possible, and such information may be able to be confirmed through existing financial reporting requirements as well.

- **What is the role of Education Out Loud in the Global Campaign for Education's wider advocacy movement?** One recommendation that emerges from the rapid review's analysis of Education Out Loud's governance architecture is the dynamic roles of GCE and the RCs, in relation to Education Out Loud (recommendation 12, see below). This question is not well-suited for inclusion in the MTR but may instead be well-placed in relation to GCE's grant in OC3 for transnational advocacy. The small formative research piece would explore the role of Education Out Loud in GCE's wider movement building and seek to identify opportunities to leverage GCE's flexibility as a leader in global advocacy.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

Relevance review (MRQ1)

Conclusion 1. Education Out Loud's strategic design is OC1 is logical, informed by evidence and CSEF, and relevant to national education coalitions in GPE partner countries. While OC1 critically fills a gap for civil society support in the education sector, how Education Out Loud will link activities with other development partners is not yet clear. Education Out Loud OC1's strategy is ambitious and well informed by a detailed review of evidence on what works to strengthen civil society engagement, particularly the experiences of 10+ years of CSEF implementation, and a clear understanding of challenges faced by NECs. OC1's activities appropriately respond to those challenges and are very relevant to the overall goal of supporting the capacity of civil society to strengthen their engagement in the education sector. However, the ambition and relevance of OC1's design is hindered somewhat by the lack of articulation of how OC1 will be linked and reinforced by the newer components, OC2 (national accountability and transparency actors) and OC3 (transnational actors) and this is reflected in implementation as well. Additionally, OC1 fills an important gap in the sector, as few other donors and development partners are engaged in national education accountability, and GPE's prominence as a global actor is well leveraged. However, it is important to recognize that other actors are present, and it is not evident how OC1 seeks to interact or connect with other development partners in the area for an increased impact.

Recommendation 1. Review the full Education Out Loud Theory of Change to clearly theorize the connection and reinforcing mechanisms between the Operational Components for planning and implementation (i.e., how does OC1 support and build on OC2 and OC3, and vice versa). This task may be well-suited to be conducted alongside the upcoming mid-term review.

Recommendation 2. Conduct a stakeholder mapping of relevant government, development partners, and civil society actors in each GPE partner country where a NEC is supported by Education Out Loud to identify opportunities and challenges to partnership. This activity was expected to be a part of NEC proposals but based on varying quality thus far, NECs should be supported more substantially by RMUs, as it has the added benefit of being a capacity building exercise in research for NECs. All of which could strengthen and widen the relevance of OC1 in a country.

Conclusion 2. OC1's original strategic design is closely aligned and relevant to the past GPE2020 strategy, directly contributing to the achievement of GPE's objective to support mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring in partner countries. Education Out Loud in its design seeks to contribute to many of GPE2020's strategic objectives – education sector planning, implementation, financing, and monitoring – but most clearly and substantively contributes to the strategic objective on supporting civil society and mutual accountability. The program is also relevant to GPE's existing country level operational model and other global programs, such as KIX, though the linkages to KIX are not yet fully realized at this early stage. Opportunities for creating stronger alignment is well acknowledged and intended by all GPE actors involved.

Recommendation 3. Continue OC1's strategic focus on supporting mutual accountability and civil society actors and identify additional opportunities to better connect Education Out Loud with GPE's country-level operational model and other global programs. For example, some of the Grant Agent and NEC stakeholders requested having more regular

communication with GPE Secretariat's Country Team Leads. Additionally, determine if any of Education Out Loud's tools and resources can be shared through KIX's digital learning platform to strengthen dissemination and reach.

Conclusion 3. While OC1's strategic design is highly relevant, this lessens somewhat in implementation due to varying levels of capacity among NECs, challenging and often fragile or conflict-affected contexts, and coordination timing challenges between OCs (discussed in Conclusion 1). Despite this, OC1's design and focus on institutional capacity building is perceived as relevant to local contexts to most NECs sampled. This is especially true for nascent, weaker NECs. However, OC1's relevance varies for a few NECs, as Education Out Loud is less relevant to more established NECs or those in FCAS contexts.

Recommendation 4. Develop more tailored capacity building approaches and learning plans for three cohorts of NECs: more established and capacitated NECs; nascent NECs; and NECs operating in FCAS and severely constrained contexts. This should not seek to replace or erase all existing regional learning opportunities (as weaker NECs seek to learn from other NECs) but create greater opportunities for NECs to connect and learn cross-regionally and increase the relevance of OC1 to their specific context. This may be informed by a systematic understanding of the space for civic engagement in education policy in the GPE partner country (see Recommendation 2 above), which will shape the types of approaches developed.

Conclusion 4. Education Out Loud OC1 is well placed to be both relevant and crucial to the realization of GPE2025's future focus on transformational change, country ownerships, and gender and social inclusion. Though Education Out Loud and OC1 were designed prior to the development of GPE2025, they appear to be well aligned to GPE2025's strategic vision and objectives. This is especially the case regarding promoting an aligned domestic sector in support of transformational change. Civil society actors, including national education coalitions, are not only a part of Education Out Loud but are often already established actors in country-owned sector planning, dialogue, and monitoring of implementation.

Recommendation 5. Emphasize in GPE Secretariat and with GPE country partners that NECs are not solely grantees in Education Out Loud but critical actors already engaging in domestic policy spaces. To do this, the Grant Agent, once informed about GPE2025 and the new country model (see recommendation 6) should identify and provide additional capacity building opportunities for NECs that respond to national needs identified in GPE tools. For example, if a gender needs assessment is identified as a recommendation in a country Compact, provide learning to strengthen the capacity of the NEC to conduct or verify this type of monitoring. This should not determine or define all NEC learning and strengthening but partially inform opportunities for alignment of GPE2025 strategy at the country level.

Recommendation 6. GPE Secretariat should conduct a series of workshops with the Grant Agent, RCs, NECs and other CSOs to bring all stakeholders on board to the new operating model, explain the shift to GPE2025 and articulate its logic, and highlight NECs crucial role in new ways of working to empower the presence of CSOs in policy dialogue. This workshop series should be reinforced by a feedback loop in Education Out Loud reporting so NECs can report on how they perceive the new operating model to be working and all space for them to provide recommendations.

Process efficiency review (MRQ2)

Conclusion 5. The Grant Agent is perceived by global stakeholders and NECs to have instituted rigorous and thorough due diligence protocols to ensure the adequate stewardship of resources in Education Out Loud OC1 thus far. Education Out Loud has transitioned to a new Grant Agent, Oxfam IBIS. In their role of ensuring the fiduciary management of funds, all stakeholders agreed that the GA has developed a thorough due diligence assessment system at the start of the application process (leading to a pause in granting to four NECs and one regional coalition) that has been maintained in regular reporting and assessments. Additionally, these processes have also provided informal capacity building to NECs for financial reporting to other future donors.

Recommendation 7. Continue the existing due diligence assessments through regular reporting. Identify how existing financial controls can be formalized into learning opportunities, for example through the development of manuals and identification of best practices for Education Out Loud-supported NECs to utilize with other donors in the future.

Conclusion 6. OC1's initial start-up and application process for both Education Out Loud and national education coalitions is reported to be intensive and thorough but sometimes inefficient and overly rushed. This, along with the significant variation in the quality of NEC applications, limited the ability of global and regional stakeholders to plan for implementation. As mentioned above, Education Out Loud is coordinated by a new Grant Agent. This required all new systems and processes to be set up, which was done in an impressively quick time according to global stakeholders. All NECs that were invited to apply in the restricted call were previously supported by CSEF and there was substantial variation in the quality of NEC applications, which came as a surprise to the new GA. Additionally, some members of the Grant Agent felt rushed and overly focused on the proposal application itself instead of the overall strategy of Education Out Loud. Some NECs also felt the application was overly intensive and detracted from programming.

Recommendation 8. For future phases with NECs that are already funded by Education Out Loud, institute a lighter-touch application process that prioritizes strategy and the unique nature of advocacy programming. It will be important to strike the right balance between internal application requirements and a lighter, swifter process for NECs.

Conclusion 7. The independent selection panels are an effective mechanism to support the quality of NEC applications at the start of OC1. In contrast, the Year Zero process has not fulfilled its design as an incubator for innovation testing and strategy development in NECs, due to limitations of many NEC applications. The four RISPs and one GISP played an integral role at the start of OC1, independently reviewing all grantee applications and providing feedback and recommendations for funding. Though originally envisioned as focused only on the application process, there is much interest and willingness among RISP members to expand their role throughout the grant lifecycle; this is already beginning at the GISP level. In contrast, the Year Zero was intended to be an opportunity to help NECs plan and strategize for innovative programming in Education Out Loud. However, the GA and RISPs found about 50 percent of all NEC applications to be severely lacking and the GA reconfigured Year Zero towards basic proposal development strengthening for those NECs.

Recommendation 9. Survey all RISP and GISP members to determine the appetite and preferences for wider engagement beyond solely reviewing grant applications but also engaging in a 'critical friend' role. For example, RISP members may be invited to review annual reporting of NECs to determine consistency with the original ToC, provide technical feedback, and suggest recommendations. However, the Grant Agent will have to

strike the right balance of expanding the role of the RISPS/GISP in a continuous learning cycle while maintaining their carefully crafted independence.

Recommendation 10. Conduct discussions with the Grant Agent and GPE Secretariat, and request feedback from those NECs that did and did not participated in Year Zero to determine the following: 1) whether the purpose of Year Zero should remain proposal-focused or re-prioritize innovation and experimentation; 2) what worked well and what did not work well in the support provided by Education Out Loud to NECs in Year Zero; and 3) the willingness and feasibility for all grantees to experience Year Zero, and the pros/cons of this expansion.

Conclusion 8. Efficient governance of OC1 is hampered by confusion across stakeholders on expectations, roles, and responsibilities. There is also a lack of distinction in capacity and roles of actors, especially regional coalitions, across the regions of Education Out Loud. The transition to a new Grant Agent was a significant change from CSEF to Education Out Loud. The strategic design sought to maintain the presence and leverage the experience of the previous Grant Agent, the Global Campaign for Education, and the Regional Coalitions. The initially expected roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, namely the current GA and the GCE/RCs, were outlined in a RACI. However, the RACI and other design documents did not acknowledge the significant variance in capacity between RCs nor anticipate that the RC in the region with the most Education Out Loud-supported NECs, Africa, would be absent from Education Out Loud for due diligence concerns. Additionally, there are concerns around ‘appreciate inquiry’ and duplication of efforts.

Recommendation 11. Conduct participatory consultative process with all stakeholders – including the GA’s GMU and RMU, GCE and RCs, and NECs themselves – on what responsibilities should sit with which stakeholder according to each specific region, the capacity of actors and the desires of NECs. These discussions should be facilitated by an actor not engaged in Education Out Loud’s day-to-day implementation, such as GPE Secretariat or a learning partner. The objective of the consultations is to develop living, regional-specific RACI matrices based on the comparative advantage of each stakeholder. The matrices will be jointly reviewed and updated on a regular basis by Oxfam IBIS, GCE/RC, and GPE Secretariat.

Recommendation 12. GPE Secretariat and GCE should commission a small formative review to explore the role of Education Out Loud in GCE’s wider movement building and identify opportunities to take advantage of GCE’s new opportunity as a flexible leader in advocacy, instead of grant management. This has the potential to also inform GCE/RCs’ transnational efforts in Operational Component 3.

Conclusion 9. Regional management units, and their adaptive management, are an integral component of Education Out Loud management and strengthen OC1’s support of NECs. However, duplication of efforts between RMUs and RCs and the bottom-up approach of NEC-level reporting can sometimes be inefficient. RMUs are adaptive, supportive partners to NECs. OC1 has integrated CSEF lessons in the multi-level management approach (global-regional-national) and NECs appreciate the flexibility and responsiveness of RMUs. This is especially in relation to RMUs’ rapid disbursement of funds and flexibility according to NEC needs and changing contexts. However, the bottom-up approach sometimes leads to a fragmentation of activities and time-consuming reporting. This is especially a concern for the efficiency of RMUs as more OC2 and OC3 grantees come on board. Many of NECs sampled also find the reporting to be overly rushed and heavy.

Recommendation 13. GMU and RMU should review reporting requirements and frameworks to create a lighter, swifter process for both RMUs and NECs. For example, identify what indicators may become optional, reported with less frequency to GMU, or self-reported by NECs. Additionally, Education Out Loud should plan on how provide additional time for NECs to submit their reporting to their respective RMUs.

Effectiveness review and synthesis of results (MRQ3)

Conclusion 10. At this early stage, overall OC1 is mostly on track to achieve its expected results at the intended outcomes and objective levels and is continuing to contribute to GPE's strategic objective of supporting civil society and policy dialogue. The four intended outcomes of OC1 collectively aim to ensure the fulfillment of its primary objective: to strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring. According to quantitative and qualitative data sources, overall OC1 appears on track to achieve this (though there is variation at the indicator level. Success thus far is a result of many factors but is in part due to productive adaptive management by RMUs, Oxfam IBIS' successfully building on the strengths of CSEF, and the focus on the individual needs of NECs.

Recommendation 14. Continue the funding and support of OC1 implementation (i.e., capacity building, training, informal support), as well as begin to develop nuanced approaches for greater impact (See Recommendation 4 above). Additionally, facilitate more tailored training opportunities for higher-capacitated NECs in technical and advocacy areas (as requested by those NECs) while maintaining the focus on governance capacity building for nascent NECs. Also, identify opportunities for NECs and CSOs to provide training on specific topics (such as gender and social inclusion) to other NECs and CSOs for greater cross-regional and cross-OC coordination.

Conclusion 11. There is substantial support by Education Out Loud for NEC-level learning. However, there is a lack of progress on a systematic synthesis and dissemination of high-level lessons learned on what works and what does not work in education sector accountability. Oxfam IBIS has implemented a thorough plan for NEC-specific learning that includes Year Zero, learning plans, partners, and collaboratives. The grantee-level learning is well planned and positively received by most NECs but often views coalitions as solely recipients of learning and not producers of evidence (beyond bulleted lists in regular reporting and the website) nor promotes testing of innovative practices and mechanisms. However, the most significant weakness is the lack of collation and generation of high-level, field-building learning. Global learning plans have been delayed and are often deprioritized, with a common perception that it is something that will be 'gotten to eventually.'

Recommendation 15. Develop a high-level learning agenda (across all OCs) that will complement the existing learning framework but also identify overarching learning strategy, objectives, and questions for Education Out Loud, GPE Secretariat and sector-wide learning; for example, through the identification of synergies with KIX. To do this, commission an Education Out Loud global learning partner as soon as possible that will be responsible for working with the GA, GPE Secretariat and GCE to create and refine the learning agenda, surface and synthesize lessons learned from and for NECs, feed learning back into adaptive management, and disseminate learning beyond Education Out Loud.

Conclusion 12. Education Out Loud has promoted co-financing efforts of NECs beyond GPE by proving financial sustainability trainings and informal capacity building in financial and governance management. OC1's initial design acknowledges the long-running support of GPE for civil society, including the 10 years of CSEF and now Education Out Loud. OC1 is continuing this focus in implementation by facilitating trainings in financial sustainability, budget planning and

proposal writing. NECS are also aware that they should diversify their funding. However, GPE is often the only funder of civil society in many countries – Education Out Loud is the sole or primary funder for the majority of NECS – and civil society spaces themselves are shrinking.

Recommendation 16. Continue the technical support for co-financing efforts by facilitating trainings according to the capacity and engagement of the NEC, as well as through informal capacity building. Additionally, request NECs conduct a stakeholder mapping (See Recommendation 2 above) to identify actors in the national context who may be potential donors, funders, or partners in applications.

Annex 1. Rapid review matrix

Revised review question	TOR review question	Method	Judgement criteria / indicators	Data source
MRQ1. To what extent is EOL OC1 relevant, appropriate, and aligned with GPE2020 thus far and GPE 2025 moving forward?				
RQ1.1. To what extent has EOL OC 1 been relevant, in its strategic approach and design, to allow for an increase in the representation, engagement, and ‘voice’ of civil society in GPE’s partner countries?	RQ1.1. To what extent has EOL OC 1 been appropriate, in its strategic approach and design, to allow for an increase in the representation, engagement, and ‘voice’ of civil society in GPE’s partner countries?	Relevance assessment	<p>EOL OC1’s strategy is relevant to international and national understandings, evidence, best practice, and standards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets aimed at increasing representation and engagement • Objectives aimed at increasing representation and engagement • Monitoring of specific targets and objectives vis-à-vis increasing representation and engagement • Distribution of funding amounts across outcomes and sub-outcomes • Granting mechanisms • Content of technical areas <p>EOL OC1’s approach is appropriate and relevant to international understandings, evidence, best practice, and standards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of OC1 to international and national understandings of accountability, civic representation, and engagement in education, particularly through national coalitions 	<p>Literature review</p> <p>KIIs/FGDs with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE Stakeholders (esp. Country Leads) • GA stakeholders • LP stakeholders • Small sample of grantees

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of OC1 to what other major initiatives are doing in this area • Relevance of OC1 to what other international funders are doing in this area • Relevance of OC1 to international and national norms, policies, and standards • Relevance of OC1 grantees sampled to their national context • Degree to which OC1 has adaptively managed and remained relevant given shifts in the international context (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic) • Degree to which OC1 has adapted based on lessons learned <p>EOL OC1's design is appropriate and relevant to national context, understandings, evidence, best practice, and standards</p>	
<p>RQ1.2. To what extent is EOL OC1 relevant to the policy goals and objectives of the GPE's GPE 2020 strategic plan related to inclusive sector dialogue, including through the GPE country-level operational model?</p>	<p>RQ1.2. To what extent is EOL OC1 relevant to the policy goals and objectives of the GPE's GPE 2020 strategic plan related to inclusive sector dialogue, including through the GPE country-level operational model?</p>	<p>Relevance assessment</p>	<p>OC1 implementation and design documents and sampled grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have objectives that plausibly will contribute to the GPE 2020 objective(s) • Have a network of partners that are relevant to the GPE 2020 strategy <p>Across the sampled grants there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of coordination • Examples of capacity building 	<p>Document review, including sample of grants</p> <p>KIIs/FGDs with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE Secretariat stakeholders • GA stakeholders

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of improved policy dialogue within GPE country partners 	
RQ1.3. To what extent is OC1's strategic approach and design aligned with GPE 2025, including issues of gender and social inclusion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What practices should be continued or expanded? What practices should be adapted or discontinued? 	RQ1.3. Drawing from EOL OC1, which sound features of strategic approach and design should be considered if OC1 funding is continued for another 2 years in line with GPE 2025? Which less pertinent features should be adapted or changed?	Relevance assessment	OC1 program and design documents and sampled grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have designs that address the underlying causes of the problem identified in the GPE 2025 strategy 	Document review, including sample of grants KIIs/FGDs with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE Secretariat stakeholders GA stakeholders
MRQ2. How efficient are existing processes and available resources in implementing OC1?				
RQ2.1. To what extent has planned and applied grant management supported the successful stewardship of OC1 resources?	RQ2.1. To what extent has EOL OC1 planned for and applied the following to ensure that adequate stewardship of resources and successful partnering be realized: (a) appropriate grant management and administration principles; and (b) sound institutional relationship building and management, based on the different layers of the EOL architecture from the national to the global levels?	Process review	For OC1 HQ and grant management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent that EOL OC1 links to and creates synergies with other OCs in EOL Timeliness of grant activities Degree to which financial processes are understood by all parties Degree to which financial processes are clear, straightforward, and well-managed Key blockages / challenges in the process Areas for improvement 	Document review KIIs/FGDs with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE Secretariat stakeholders GA stakeholders OC1 Grantees
RQ2.2. How efficient are OC1's institutional relationship building and management processes, including governance		Process review	For OC1 HQ and grant development, implementation, and review:	Document review KIIs/FGDs with

architecture from the national to the global levels?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which roles and responsibilities are understood by all parties What works well and why Key blockages / challenges in the process Areas for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE Secretariat stakeholders GA stakeholders LP stakeholders
RQ2.3. To what extent did management arrangements support the implementation of EOL OC1? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What practices and conditions should be continued or expanded? What practices and conditions should be adapted or discontinued? 	RQ2.2. Drawing from EOL implementation, which sound parameters and conditions for efficient implementation should continue if this component is extended (in terms of grant management, programmatic implementation, and maximization of the value-added of the relevant actors, e.g., grant agent, grantees, regional coalitions, independent selection panels)? Which unproductive ones should be flagged for adjustment?	Process review	For OC1 HQ and grant development, implementation, and review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which roles and responsibilities are understood by all parties What works well and why Key blockages / challenges in the process Areas for improvement 	Document review KIIs/FGDs with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE Secretariat stakeholders GA stakeholders LP stakeholders Small sample of grantees (TBC Getting grantee input makes sense)
MRQ3. Is EOL OC1 achieving its intended outcomes and, ultimately, objectives?				
RQ3.1. To what extent is EOL OC1 (on its way to) fulfilling its objectives? (<i>Referencing annual targets and overall targets</i>)	RQ3.1. To what extent is EOL OC1 (on its way to) fulfilling its objectives?	Synthesis of emerging lessons and results	Progress made towards implementing OC1 objectives/meeting implementation targets of current/most recent plan within expected timeframe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on changes relevant in view of GPE 2020 envisaged impact and outcome areas 	Document review for OC1 and sample of grants EOL's results framework, reporting, and M&E-related documents
	RQ3.2. What has been the overall level of success in meeting the program's objectives since its inception?			

			<p>Relevant EOL OC1 RF indicators for Objective 1 and Outcomes 1.1 – 1.4, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome Indicator 1.1.1. Level of diversification of member base • Outcome Indicator 1.2.1 Percentage of national coalitions’ development plans improving their organizational, thematic and advocacy capacity • Outcome Indicator 1.2.2. Effective technical and advocacy support to NECs provided by Global Secretariat of GCE and Regional Secretariats • Outcome Indicator 1.3.1. Proportion of grantees that are on track achieving their targets in their own results framework • Outcome Indicator 1.3.2. Number of changes in education policies – and in their financing and delivery in practice – that are influenced by EOL grantees • Outcome Indicator 1.4.1. Number and types of learning collaboratives on CSO institutional capacity building established 	
RQ3.2. Are there unanticipated results for OC1 – positive and negative – that need to be considered?	RQ3.3. Are there unanticipated results for OC1 – positive and negative – that need to be considered?	Synthesis of emerging lessons and results	Ad hoc as unexpected findings emerge	<p>Document review for OC1 and sample of grants</p> <p>KIIs/FGDs with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE Secretariat stakeholders

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA stakeholders Grantees
RQ3.3. To what extent has adaptive management contributed to the effective implementation of OC1?	RQ3.4. Adaptive management has been built into the design of EOL. How has it been applied to the implementation to contribute to the effectiveness of OC1? Did it help make OC1 more successful?	Process review	For EOL OC1 adaptive management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear understanding of what adaptive management entails What works well and why Key blockages / challenges in adaptive implementation (i.e., generation and uptake of rapid evidence) Areas for improvement 	Document review KIIs/FGDs with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE Secretariat stakeholders GA stakeholders LP stakeholders Grantees
RQ3.4. To what extent has the GA and learning partners supported grantees to generate additional co-financing beyond GPE?	RQ4.1. What actions are being taken by the grantees and supported by the grant agent and the learning partners to diversify their funding sources to reduce their dependence on GPE's funding and ensure the financial and organizational sustainability of the grantees?	Synthesis of emerging lessons and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which EOL OC1-supported grants have been co-financed by other actors or are part of pooled funding mechanisms Stakeholder views on extent to which GPE funding requirements (likely) having influenced changes in domestic education financing Changes in relative size of GPE financial contribution in relation to other donor' contributions Amounts and quality of additional resources likely mobilized with contribution from GPE advocacy efforts at country or global levels Amounts and sources of non-traditional financing (e.g., private, or innovative finance) that can be linked to GPE leveraging 	Grantee-level data review in EOL Systematization documents KIIs/FGDs with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA stakeholders Learning partner stakeholders Small sample of grantees

Annex 2. Summary of Education Out Loud OC1 grantees

Country	Language	Region	National Education Coalition
Afghanistan	English	APAC	Afghanistan National Education Coalition Organization (ANECO)
Bangladesh	English	APAC	Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)
Benin	French	WCA	Coalition Beninoise des Organisations pour l'education pour Tous (CBO-EPT)
Bolivia	Spanish	LAC	Campaña Boliviana por el Derecho de la Educación (CBDE)
Burkina Faso	French	WCA	Coalition Nationale Pour l'Education Pour Tous du Burkina Faso
Burundi	French	WCA	Coalition Education Pour Tous Bafashebige (EPT BAFASHEBIGE)
Cabo Verde	Portuguese	WCA	Rede Nacional Da Campanha de Educação Para Todos (RNCEPT-CV)
Cambodia	English	APAC	NGO Education Partnership (NEP)
Cameroon	French	WCA	Cameroon Education For All Network (CEFAN)
Democratic Republic of Congo	French	WCA	Coalition Nationale de l'education pour tous en République Démocratique du Congo (CONEPT DRC)
Cote d'Ivoire	French	WCA	Réseau Ivoirien pour la Promotion de l'Education Pour Tous (RIP-EPT)
Ethiopia	English	ESA	Basic Education Network Ethiopia (BEN-E)
Eswatini	English	ESA	Swaziland Network Campaign on Education for All (SWANCEFA)
The Gambia	English	WCA	Education For All Campaign Network (EFANet)
Ghana	English	WCA	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC)
Guinea- Bissau	Portuguese	WCA	Rede da Campanha da Educação Para Todos-Guiné-Bissau (RECEPT-GB)
Honduras	Spanish	LAC	Foro Dakar Honduras
Kenya	English	ESA	Elimu Yetu Coalition
Kyrgyz Republic	English	APAC	Association for Education Development in Kyrgyzstan (AED)
Lesotho	English	ESA	Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN)
Madagascar	French	WCA	Coalition Nationale (CONAMEPT)
Malawi	English	ESA	Civil Society Education Coalition

Mauritania	French	WCA	Coalition des Organisations Mauritaniennes pour l'Education (COMEDUC)
Moldova	English	APAC	Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection (APSCF)
Mongolia	English	APAC	"All for Education!" National Civil Society Coalition
Mozambique	Portuguese	WCA	Movimento de Educação Para Todos
Nepal	English	APAC	National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-Nepal)
Nicaragua	Spanish	LAC	Asociación Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Iniciativa por Nicaragua (FEDH-IPN)
Niger	French	WCA	Coalition nigérienne des Associations, Syndicats et ONG de Campagne EPT (ASO-EPT Niger)
Nigeria	English	ESA	Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA)
Pakistan	English	APAC	Society for Access to Quality Education
Papua New Guinea	English	APAC	Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network (PEAN)
Philippines	English	APAC	Civil Society Network for Education Reforms Inc. (E-Net Philippines)
Rwanda	English	ESA	Rwanda Education For All Coalition (REFAC)
Samoa	English	APAC	Samoa Education Network (SEN)
Senegal	French	WCA	Coalition des Organisations en Synergie pour la Défense de l'Education Publique (COSYDEP)
Sierra Leone	English	WCA	Education For All Sierra Leone Coalition (EFA-SL)
Solomon Islands	English	APAC	Coalition for Education Solomon Islands (COESI)
Somalia	English	ESA	Education For All Somalia Coalition (EFASOM)
Somaliland	English	ESA	Somaliland Network on Education for All (SOLNEFA)
South Sudan	English	ESA	South Sudan National Education Coalition
Sudan	English	ESA	Sudanese Coalition for Education for All (SCEFA)
Tajikistan	English	APAC	Alliance of CSOs in Tajikistan for Education (ACTE)
Tanzania	English	ESA	Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania (TEN/MET)
Timor-Leste	English	APAC	Civil Society Education Partnership (CSEP)
Togo	French	WCA	Coalition Nationale Togolaise pour l'Education Pour Tous (CNT/EPT)
Uganda	English	ESA	FORUM FOR EDUCATION NGOS IN UGANDA (FENU)
Vanuatu	English	APAC	Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen

Vietnam	English	APAC	Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA)
Yemen	English	ESA	Yemeni Coalition for Education for All
Zambia	English	ESA	Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC)
Zimbabwe	English	ESA	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI)

Annex 3. Summary of data collection and sampling of national education coalitions

The findings and the evidence in which they are based are drawn from mixed-method research and triangulated data sources. A summary of the primary data collection, as well as the sample of national education coalition grantees included in the review, is presented below.

Summary of primary data collection

Stakeholder Group	Role	Region	Method	Total Number
GPE Secretariat	Education Out Loud Team	Global	KII	3
GPE Secretariat	Other stakeholders, including KIX, CTLs and Strategy	Global	KII/FGD	6
Grant Agent	GMU and Virtual Teams	Global	KII/FGD	5
Grant Agent	RMU	LAC/ESA/WCA/AP	KII/FGD	5
Grant Agent	GISP/RISP	Global	KIIs	4
Grantees	National Edu Coalitions	LAC/ESA/WCA/AP	KII/FGD	10
Grantees	Global Coalition for Education/Regional Coalitions	Global	KII/FGD	4
Grantees	Learning Partners	LAC/ESA/WCA/AP	KIIs	2
Total				38

Sample of national education coalitions included in rapid review

Region	Language	Country	National Education Coalition
APAC	English	Philippines	Civil Society Network for Education Reforms Inc. (E-Net Philippines)
APAC	English	Nepal	National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-Nepal)
APAC	English	Bangladesh	Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)
ESA	English	South Sudan	National Education Coalition in South Sudan
ESA	English	Kenya	Elimu Yetu Coalition
ESA	English	Zimbabwe	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI)
LAC	Spanish	Nicaragua	Asociación Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Iniciativa por Nicaragua (FEDH-IPN)
WCA	French	Benin	Coalition Beninoise des Organisations pour l'EPT (CBO-EPT)
WCA	English	Sierra Leone	Education For All Sierra Leone Coalition (EFA-SL)
WCA	Portuguese	Guinea-Bissau	Rede da Campanha da Educação Para Todos-Guiné-Bissau (RECEPT-GB)

Annex 4. Assessments of Education Out Loud OC1's relevance to NECs' national contexts

Overall, OC1's strategic approach and design, particularly its focus on institutional capacity building, is relevant to the national contexts and capacities of sampled NECs. However, Education Out Loud OC1 is less relevant to more advanced NECs and NECs in contexts affected by fragility and conflict. Ten of the 54 national education coalitions participating in OC1 were sampled for inclusion in the rapid review.

This annex provides a high-level initial assessment of the relevance of OC1's strategic approach to their national contexts and capacity. Additional data collection and analysis of the activities and impact of a wider range of NECs, particularly in terms of geography, capacity, and length of existence, as well as their linkages (if any) with OC2 and OC3 is recommended for inclusion in the upcoming Mid-Term Review of Education Out Loud. Additionally, more detailed context analysis and stakeholder mapping should be collected by Education Out Loud for each NEC, beyond what is included (often only briefly or missing) in biannual results reporting by the NEC, before the MTR.

- **Bangladesh:** OC1 is somewhat relevant to the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE – Bangladesh) as it is one of the longest running and strongest national education coalitions within OC1, in terms of technical skills and capacity. Prior to Education Out Loud, CAMPE had been working closely with The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) on regional advocacy and is the leading civil society voice in the Bangladeshi local education group (known as the Education Local Consultative Group, or ELCG) through initiatives like Education Watch and grassroots mobilization. However, CAMPE has historically expressed learning needs such as around youth advocacy, bilateral cooperation, and ICT in the classroom (Bangladesh cover note) and OC1's early focus has been predominately on institutional capacity building of all NECs as a whole. As such, OC1's strategic approach and implementation is not fully relevant to CAMPE's more advanced technical needs.
- **Benin:** OC1 is very relevant to the capacity and learning needs of the Coalition Béninoise des Organisations pour l'Éducation Pour Tous (CBO-EPT) in Benin. Considering the sometimes challenging context, CBO-EPT is engaged in some advocacy efforts in ministry dialogue, including advocacy for the implementation of basic quality school standards. However, CBO-EPT has often struggled with capacity and their identified learning needs include policy and budget analysis and quality standards for institutional governance. As a result, OC1 is very relevant to strengthening their capacity.
- **Guinea-Bissau:** OC1 is very relevant to the NEC in the country, Rede da Campanha de Educação Para Todos, Guiné-Bissau (RECEPT-GB). The NEC is considered one of the weakest NECs in terms of capacity, as evidenced by CSEF handover notes on their capacity and reporting provided by the NEC and RMU. Additionally, there were significant challenges in the strength and clarity of the OC1 application, resulting in additional support provided by OC1 in the Year Zero phase. Therefore, in terms of providing institutional capacity strengthening, OC1 is particularly relevant. However, OC1 loses its relevance somewhat to the context of Guinea-Bissau due to its lack of nuancing of support for particularly weak NECs, NECs operating in fragile and conflict zones, and some language limitations.

- **Kenya** – It should be noted that a cover note and other documentation from CSEF were not available for Kenya’s NEC, the Elimu Yetu Coalition. This limits the judgement as to whether OC1’s strategic design to the needs and context of the NEC. However, reporting by the NEC according to their M&E framework indicates that OC1 is relevant to their primary activities such as engagement with policy makers, dialogue on educational policies and guidelines (including Basic Education ACT), and budget tracking support. Additionally, national stakeholders reported that Education Out Loud’s strategic objectives were very relevant to their pre-existing goals, particularly in “supporting coalitions and CSOs to make a difference in their space...participate in planning processes and encouraging aspects of accountability” (KII 25).
- **Nepal:** OC1 is somewhat relevant to the National Campaign for Education (NCE) in Nepal, which has grown extremely quickly from its establishment in 2003 with 20 members to over 350 organizations in 2019. It is considered the largest civil society organization in education in Nepal and is the CSO representative in the local education group and government decision-making processes. A significant portion of NCE’s activities in Nepal is conducting research, and its primary learning needs include capacity building on systems approaches and international and regional advocacy engagement. Therefore, OC1’s predominate focus on generalized institutional capacity building is welcome but not necessarily as relevant to such a mature and established NEC.
- **Nicaragua:** OC1 is very relevant to the NEC in Nicaragua, Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Iniciativa por Nicaragua (FEDH-IPN). The NEC, founded in 1996, is seeking to maintain its existence in a shrinking civil space in a context characterizes by socio-political crises. Additionally, FEDH-IPN’s strategic focus areas, including producing reliable data on the national education sector and advocating for the National Agenda for Education, demonstrates how OC1’s objectives are aligned. However, there are significant challenges that limit the relevance of OC1’s current strategic approach to a context such as in Nicaragua. The Education Sector Council (the local education group) is inactive, there have been treats against activists and the existence of the organization itself, and the lack of nuancing of OC1’s approach for such fragile contexts lessons its relevance in the NEC’s context.
- **Philippines:** OC1 is relevant to The Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net Philippines), an NEC formed in 2000 as a policy advocacy and campaigns network. The NEC is a very credible and respective CSO in the educational sector, working closely with government and other development partners. It is an especially strong NEC in terms of capacity and is historically focused on marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable groups. While the technical support and institutional capacity building is appreciated and significant, the maturity and innovative strategy of E-Net, particularly regarding equity and social inclusion means that OC1’s generalized support is not as relevant to E-Net as to other weaker NECs in the Asia/Pacific region.
- **Sierra Leone:** It should be noted that there is no cover note and incomplete documentation for the NEC in Sierra Leone, the Education for All coalition. However, the NEC’s own self-assessment of learning needs indicates that organizational competencies and capacity building is their highest priority for learning. Similarly, KIIs indicate that their primary focus is on basic education advocacy, in alignment with OC1’s own strategic focus. Accordingly, OC1’s strategic design and implementation is very relevant to the learning needs and strategic goals of the NEC. This was confirmed by national and regional level KIIs (KIIs 18, 21 and 42).

- **South Sudan:** It should be noted that there is no cover note and incomplete documentation for the NEC in South Sudan. However, the reporting that is available and KIIs (KIIs 10, 29) indicate that the NEC is in significant need of institutional strengthening and capacity building. This demonstrates the relevance of OC1's strategic approach to the NEC. However, the NEC operates in a very challenging context. Therefore, as discussed for other contexts like Nicaragua and Guinea-Bissau, OC1's generalized approach and lack of nuancing for fragile and conflict zones limits its relevance to the successful operation of an NEC in South Sudan.
- **Zimbabwe:** OC1's design is very relevant to the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) as it primarily focuses on the coalition building the capacity of its 51 members to assist in promoting the grassroots structures in education policy dialogue and its work to influence national, regional dialogue related to SDG 4 and GPE processes (according to the ECOZI cover note).