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January-June 2015

Civil Society Education Fund 2013-2014/5

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1. Background

On 18 December 2012, the GPE Board of Directors approved “an allocation of up to US\$14.5 million from the Global Partnership for Education Fund to fund the proposal submitted by the Global Campaign for Education” (the “CSEF Proposal”), with “UNESCO serving as Managing Entity” (BOD/2012/12-1). UNESCO’s role was later changed to that of **Supervising** Entity (confirmed by the letter dated 6 May 2013 from the Chair of the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) to UNESCO). UNESCO’s understanding of this role, as developed in dialogue with GCE and the GPE Secretariat, was defined in a document submitted with a costed plan for supervision to the GPE Secretariat on 9 April 2013.

In April 2013, the World Bank as Trustee of GPE and UNESCO signed a Financial Procedures Agreement. At its 19 April Meeting, the FAC approved UNESCO’s Costed Plan for Supervision (US\$ 648,454) and Agency Fees (US\$ 1,016,157) for the total project duration, and authorised disbursements related to the first tranche of the CSEF.

UNESCO signed an Implementation Partner’s Agreement (IPA) with GCE on 17 July 2013, covering the first tranche of funding released by the GPE and totalling US\$ 7.25 million for the period 17 April to 31 December 2013. Upon approval of the second tranche of funding by the GPE Board of Directors in November 2013 (BOD/2013/11-12), an amendment to the IPA was signed in February 2014 to reflect the additional amount of US\$ 7.25 million. At the same time, taking into account the delay at the start of the project in 2013, the implementation plan and disbursement schedule were revised, and the project extended, at no extra cost, from 31 December 2014 to 31 April 2015, in order to maintain a total duration of 24 months as initially planned.

Following GPE Secretariat’s suggestion on 22 October 2014 and the subsequent decision of the GPE Board of Directors (BoD) in December 2014 (BOD/2014/12-13), the current phase the project was extended, at pro rata cost, from 1 May to 31 December 2015 in order to allow for a continuity of the programme between the end of the current phase and the beginning of the next, three-year, phase and to allow time to address issues related to GCE’s application to become a managing entity for the CSEF. At the same October 2014 meeting, the GPE BoD delegated the assessment of the 2016-2018 proposal to GPE’s Country Grants and Performance Committee (CGPC) before approval. The May 2015 BoD meeting delegated the authority to the CGPC to review and approve the revised proposal preferably prior to but no later than its 27-29 October 2015 meeting.

This report¹ covers the period from January to June 2015 and is based on the analysis of GCE’s global summary report², UNESCO’s independent monitoring and observations as well as tentative results of the CSEF final evaluation and a bilateral programme review meeting between UNESCO and GCE³. Key activities and milestones achieved are listed in Annex 1.

2. CSEF activities from January to June 2015

The CSEF Implementation phase (July 2013-December 2015) focuses on activities at national level as well as on technical support, capacity-building, and promotion of cross-country learning and collaboration at regional and global levels. The following is a summary of key activities at national, regional and global levels during the reporting period. Progress towards objectives and expected results will be covered in chapter 4.

¹ Previous progress reports were submitted to GPE Secretariat in October 2013, April 2014, October 2014 and June 2015.

² The report covering the period January-June 2015, submitted to UNESCO on 4 September 2015, is in Annex 2.

³ Johannesburg, 1-2 March 2015.

2.1 Global activities to support the CSEF programme

A major focus of global activities during the reporting period was the development of plans for CSEF 2016-2018 by GCE and GPE, in collaboration with regional partners. Following the GPE Board of Directors' delegation of the approval of the CSEF 2016-2018 proposal to CGPC and as per the CGPC recommendations, the GCE has continued to revise specific aspects of the 2016-2018 funding proposal for it to be approved by the CGPC in October 2015. At the same time, the Global Secretariat coordinated the proposal development and supported the finalisation of the plans for the May-December 2015 extension phase.

A programme milestone was reached with the organisation of the CSEF Global Learning Event in connection to the GCE World Assembly from 27-28 February 2015. The event brought together representatives of nearly 50 coalitions, all the regional secretariats and fund management agencies, as well as partners and donors. The purpose of the two-day event was to share experiences, learn from each other's challenges and successes and reflect on the progress of the CSEF programme, as well as to share information on the May-December 2015 extension phase and the next full phase of the CSEF from 2016-2018. The partly CSEF funded GCE World Assembly, organised from 23 to 26 February, brought together the wider GCE constituency to agree on GCE plans and core focus areas for 2015-2019 and to plan participation in the World Education Forum 2015, among others.

Another key moment was the commissioning of the external evaluation of the current phase of the CSEF in order to assess CSEF impact and efficiency as well as to reflect on lessons learned for the benefit of the next, 2016-2018, phase of the programme. With the support of UNESCO as member of the selection panel, the evaluation team was selected and started its work in April. Data gathering processes have involved in-depth case study explorations with seven coalitions across the regions, on-line surveys with national coalitions, and in-depth key informant interviews with the global and regional CSEF structures, members of the International Partners' Group (IPG), representatives of UNESCO as the SE and the GPE Secretariat and Board of Directors as well as other regional and international partners and stakeholders. The final evaluation report is expected in mid-October 2015. The evaluation findings⁴ mostly confirm UNESCO's observations and the content of its reports as Supervising Entity and the recommendations address many of the issues already highlighted by UNESCO throughout the programme period. While the draft evaluation report does not, in UNESCO's view, sufficiently assess the impact, in general the evaluation found progress on all four objectives (discussed below in chapter 4), though the performance and quality of work has varied across coalitions and Regional Secretariats.

Due to the management issues in the Africa secretariat (discussed below in chapter 5), the Global Secretariat has continued to exercise financial oversight and direct management of regional CSEF activities in Africa. While the recruitment was delayed, the CSEF Africa Programme Manager has been in place since 27 July and the CSEF Africa Finance & Administration Assistant took office on 22 June to support this additional role of the Global Secretariat. GCE has also continued to act as the regional fund management agency for the Middle East and Eastern European region.

Initiated in 2014, GCE finalised a coalition membership representativity survey to address previous data gaps and to be able to report with confidence on the representative realities of CSEF membership, including on coalitions' representation of marginalised groups.

2.2 Regional activities to support the CSEF programme

Altogether 55 national coalitions⁵ were involved in the CSEF in 2014. The regional secretariats and fund management agencies continued to disburse grants and support 48 coalitions⁶ in terms of project

⁴ As per the draft final evaluation report dated 23 September 2015.

⁵ Of the 55 countries, 28 are in Africa, 17 in Asia and the Pacific, five in Latin America and the Caribbean and six in the Middle East and Eastern Europe region.

⁶ In addition, the grant implementation of the coalition in Lesotho continued to be suspended due to internal governance issues.

implementation, budget execution and reporting, as well as the May-December extension period planning and budgeting. They also continued to support the development and planning processes or specific activities of nascent coalitions in six countries⁷, with view to their later joining the CSEF.

A focus of regional support during the reporting period was the preparation of proposals for both the May-December 2015 extension phase as well as the next phase for period 2016-2018 with the global secretariat. Coalitions were invited to submit their proposals for the 2015 extension phase in April and Regional Secretariats and Fund Management Agencies supported national coalitions in the planning and submission process. Altogether 51 coalitions' May-December extension period plans and budgets were approved during the reporting period. Regional secretariats also supported national coalitions' participation in regional and global post-2015 advocacy (covered in more detail below under Objective 4).

2.3 National Coalition activities

All of the 48 coalitions that implemented funded plans (as explained in section 2.2) focus on strengthening their participation and influence in policy processes, in particular through engagement with local education groups (LEGs), technical working groups and sub-national as well as national decision-makers. In order to influence these forums and decision-makers, coalitions are carrying out research and monitoring of education sector plans, policies, budgets and activities, and endeavour to convert findings into policy proposals and submissions. Through the engagement of coalition members, communities, media and the general public, CSEF activities are aimed at creating awareness and encouraging participation of citizens in order to strengthen their voice and influence in education debates, not only nationally, but also at regional and global level.

Although each coalition plan and thematic focus is driven by its national context, some trends stand out during the reporting period. In addition to policy advocacy and public engagement on EFA, especially around the post-2015 education agenda and the Global Action Week in May, there was a strengthened focus across regions on engagement with parliamentarians and on research, as per the May-December extension phase plans. In Africa and the Middle East and Eastern European region, a majority of the coalitions carried out internal capacity building for the national coalition secretariats and member organizations. A focus for the coalitions in Latin America and the Caribbean was the World Education Forum 2015 in which all of them participated. Coalitions from Asia and the Pacific also participated in the WEF 2015 in numbers.

As mentioned above, national coalitions were invited to submit their May-December extension phase proposals in April. A majority of the plans were approved in May.

The results of national and regional activities are covered in chapter 4.

3. UNESCO's activities as Supervising Entity

Following the costed extension of the programme period until December 2015, UNESCO confirmed the new programme timelines with the GPE Secretariat and revised the IPA with the GCE accordingly in April. The IPA between UNESCO and GCE foresees that funds are paid in instalments on approval of agreed deliverables. During the reporting period, UNESCO reviewed and provided feedback on quarterly financial and biannual narrative reports as well as numerous other documents submitted as deliverables for two⁸ payments totalling US\$ 2,577,000. Based on GCE's January-June and July-December 2014 progress reports⁹, UNESCO prepared and submitted its fourth supervision and progress report to the GPE Secretariat in June 2015.

⁷ Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Angola, Madagascar and Myanmar

⁸ A third payment (US\$ 1,456,000) made in 2015 was already included in UNESCO's last report as it had been initiated in December 2014 while the bank transfer took place in early January 2015.

⁹ Submitted by GCE to UNESCO in September 2014 and March 2015, respectively.

Throughout the reporting period, UNESCO worked closely with GCE in order to improve the programme, in particular through substantial inputs to the CSEF final evaluation, inputs to the GCE proposal for the May-December 2015 extension period, as well as guidance on budget revision and financial reporting.

UNESCO also participated in the CSEF Global Learning Event to observe CSEF implementation and to share information and lessons learned regarding the national EFA 2015 reviews and the post-2015 agenda and processes, in particular the World Education Forum 2015 and the 2015 NGO Forum, and opportunities for civil society engagement, through presentations and informal exchanges with participants.

A bilateral UNESCO-GCE programme review meeting was held during the reporting period¹⁰ to facilitate the supervision and impact evaluation of the CSEF, to discuss the IPA amendment, programme activities, deliverables and management as well as progress towards expected results. UNESCO also continued to follow up with GCE on the recommendations of UNESCO's Financial Risk and Control Assessment which assessed the adequacy of the CSEF financial and administrative framework at the start of the programme. All ten recommended actions have been completed.

In addition, UNESCO, in its different roles as the global EFA coordinator, GPE Board Member and as the Supervising Entity for the CSEF, provided suggestions and comments to different aspects and drafts of the CSEF 2016-2018 proposal developed by GCE in collaboration with the GPE Secretariat.

4. Progress towards CSEF objectives and expected results

The first round of reporting against expected results in January-February 2014 established baselines (partly for April 2013 and partly for December 2013) against which progress can be monitored throughout the project period. On the request of the CGPC, additional global targets were established for the May-December 2015 extension period. The following is a summary of progress against the CSEF objectives and expected results during the January-June 2015 reporting period.

Objective 1 - Policy participation: Formal civil society participation in education sector policy and review processes and engagement with policy-makers and parliamentarians is strengthened and better recognized

Under this objective, national coalitions report about their participation in and contribution to policy forums and dialogue such as Local Education Groups (LEGs), technical working groups and other political and policy spaces.

Of the 43 coalitions that reported a LEG in existence in their country, 37 were engaging with it during the reporting period. Twenty-seven out of the 37 coalitions are full members of the LEG, with verbal or written agreement, and another ten coalitions report being invited to LEG meetings on regular or ad hoc basis. Overall, therefore, the number of coalitions engaging with LEGs is slowly increasing, with some coalitions' sustained efforts to engage bearing fruit (such as in Zimbabwe during this reporting period). However, while these figures give some indication as to the level of recognition of the coalitions as policy partners, four coalitions (Rwanda, Djibouti, Mauritania and Honduras) remain outside the LEG despite their efforts to engage and in two countries (Albania and Haiti) the LEG was reported not to be fully operational. As reported previously, some LEGs do not meet the GPE's proposed guidelines on participation. For example, groups may take on LEG characteristics around the time of GPE grant approval but then lapse to being more exclusive forums. On the other hand, 34 coalitions report 'always' or 'often' being given the opportunity to contribute to drafting agendas of education policy planning and to review dialogue.

GCE reports that in addition to their engagement with LEGs, as of June 2015, coalitions participate in a total of 310 other relevant education sector policy and review forums. This continues the upward trend that has been reported in previous reports and indicates progress in civil society participation in education sector and

¹⁰ GCE Secretariat, Johannesburg, 1-2 March 2015

policy dialogue beyond LEGs. Altogether, 178 oral or written submissions were made to government, parliamentary or technical working groups, representing an increase since previous reporting periods, and nearly all coalitions made at least one submission during the reporting period.

Considering the importance of parliamentarians as duty-bearers for the right to education, UNESCO insisted that the May-December extension period plan include increased focus on the engagement in parliamentary fora, information on which has been lacking in previous reports. As per an additional target for the May-December 2015 extension period, every coalition in a country where a relevant parliamentary commission or committee exists is expected to present at least one submission to it, and all coalitions where such bodies do not exist, are expected to engage with parliamentarians about their possible creation. During this reporting round, GCE put more effort into reporting on this, collecting information on the coalitions' engagement and on lessons learned from this engagement. Across the regions, between 50 and 80 per cent of coalitions were engaging in parliamentary fora, totalling 32 coalitions globally. This is a positive development as during the last reporting period the number was 17, though this may also be due to more detailed information being collected. Twenty-nine written or oral submissions were made by 16 coalitions during the reporting period. More work is therefore needed to reach the target for the extension period.

The final evaluation found that the regional and global CSEF structures provided strong support for coalitions' participation in education sector policy development, implementation and monitoring and that decision makers increasingly recognised the inclusion of civil society in education policy development as essential. However, participation as such, the quality of participation, as well as the recognition of coalitions by their government counterparts, was found to be inconsistent across the programme.

Objective 1 is inter-related with Objective 4 as concerns the expectation that regional and global structures draw on national coalition activities, priorities and achievements to inform relevant advocacy processes and discussions at regional and global level, and these will be reported under Objective 4 below.

Objective 2 - Public awareness and coalition building: National Education Coalitions are actively strengthening grassroots capacity to access and participate in education sector debates, through building awareness, knowledge and skills, and opening opportunities to participate

Achievement of this objective relies on the expansion and diversification of coalition membership and building coalition capacity and democratic character, as well as building public awareness regarding education through media and "public facing" activities.

Globally, there has been an expansion in coalition membership: the total number of coalition members, mostly grassroots organisations, increased from 4,166 in December 2014 to 4,302 in June 2015. Overall, the number of coalition members has increased by 50 per cent since April 2013. A coalition membership survey launched by GCE at the end of 2014, and finalised during the reporting period, provided a better understanding of the target groups represented and targeted by coalitions. Further, it prompted some coalitions to review and consolidate their membership, for example categorising members into "full" and "affiliate" members. Coalitions are also reporting lessons learned on strategies to increase the number and participation of coalition member organisations and reaching out to marginalised groups.

As well as increasing the number of coalition members, the aim of this objective is to increase the representative function of coalitions, especially of historically disadvantaged groups and their perspectives. Thanks to the membership survey and new reporting tools, GCE has been able to gather information that enable tracking, analysing and reporting on the representation of the diverse interests and groups in civil society, including marginalized populations. An additional extension phase target was already achieved during this reporting period as 90 per cent of coalitions include member organisations representing women and girls, youth, and people with disability, and all coalitions represent at least two of these populations. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that the inclusion of historically marginalized groups, especially in terms of gender equality, is still an area for further improvement.

Further, women's participation in coalition boards has during this reporting period decreased from 38 to 34 per cent since December 2014. While 53 per cent of Board members in the MEEE region are women, the other regions have moved further from gender parity, women making up 31-32 per cent of Board membership. The picture for coalition secretariats is more balanced, gender balance being within 10 per cent of parity in all regions.

In addition to increasing the number and diversity of coalition members, the CSEF aims at strengthening the democratic character of coalitions through effective involvement of their constituencies. As of December 2014, 43 coalitions (an increase of three since December 2014) reported having systems in place for all members to review policy documents before they are finalised and 36 coalitions report 'always' or 'often' consulting their members in advance of attending policy forums such as LEGs. Further, 43 of 48 coalitions reported providing opportunities for members to make inputs to major coalition documents before they are distributed or presented. While on the increase since April 2013, this reporting period saw a reduction in the number of thematic working groups operated by coalitions to ensure informed coalition engagement. Coalitions also reported newly initiated engagement with 178 relevant stakeholders outside coalition membership, such as development partners and INGOs.

With regard to building and sustaining public awareness on education issues, the level of public and media outreach and engagement has been steadily increasing every six months until December 2014 (1,366 media interventions in July-December 2014). However, the current reporting period saw only 272 media interventions, which is disappointing considering the opportunities for media engagement provided by the occurrence of the Global Action Week and the World Education Forum 2015, in addition to other processes around the post-2015 education agenda, during the reporting period. Despite the low number of media interventions, coalitions claim reaching altogether 3.5 million people through their "public-facing" and media interventions. However, this count cannot be fully verified. In general the actual media coverage and the impact of coalitions' activities on public awareness are difficult to gauge and the final evaluation unfortunately provides little indication in this respect. The evaluation did however find that coalitions are stronger, with improved members' engagement contributing to improved capacity and sophistication of coalitions.

Objective 3 - Quality research, monitoring and analysis: Civil society research and analysis effectively contributes to national government plans, policies, financing and practices that better achieve the right to quality education for all and the six EFA goals

Building civil society coalitions' capacity to back up their advocacy with evidence from research or monitoring exercises is a major element of the programme and influences the achievement of all of the CSEF objectives. The objective is for all coalitions to complete research or monitoring exercises in the areas of (i) budget, finance, expenditure, (ii) governance, transparency, social accountability, or (iii) a self-selected EFA related policy or implementation issue, in order to be able to make substantive contributions to education debates and planning processes.

In previous reports, UNESCO has expressed concern regarding progress towards this objective, mainly due to the lack of information on research carried out by national coalitions. As an important improvement, GCE's last two progress reports¹¹ have included a list of studies completed during the reporting period, as well as indication of how studies have been used to inform advocacy, or disseminated to relevant stakeholders. Ultimately, it needs to be tracked whether activities under this objective have resulted in specific changes in policy, legislation or practice.

All coalitions are due to carry out at least one research exercise during the project period, and all but two (Burundi and Ethiopia) have already completed or started a study. Thanks to the added focus on research during the May-December extension period, a number of coalitions will be carrying out additional research during the period. Exceeding the extension period target of 12 new studies, at least 26 are planned, including by the Burundi and Ethiopia coalitions. While the research reports are still not being systematically collated

¹¹ July-December 2014 and January-June 2015

as per CSEF plans, the Global Secretariat has now developed a full list of all research started during the 2013-2015 period. Further, most coalitions report being increasingly able to see their (evidence based) input taken into account in debates. Although the impact and quality of the research has not been systematically analysed, the final evaluation also confirmed that at national level, its value is increasingly recognized by government counterparts. Overall, the evaluation identified CSEF support to research one of the major contributions of the programme.

Objective 4 - Cross-country learning and networks for change: The CSEF project builds the quality and impact of civil society engagement in the education sector through promoting partnerships, strengthening South-South collaboration, sharing learning, and facilitating impact on global policy processes

Learning and capacity support is an essential component of the CSEF. Under this objective, the regional and global secretariats are due to facilitate needs-based capacity building and shared learning and networking, as well as to provide coalitions with means to engage in global advocacy. In recent reports, UNESCO highlighted a number of challenges and delays in this area at the global level, and an update of the challenges is included in Chapter 5.

As part of its work on shared learning and capacity support, GCE collected data and information through the LME framework, finalised the coalition membership survey launched in 2014, fine-tuned reporting templates and data monitoring tools, published and disseminated two newsletters, and shared information and various materials online. Further, GCE supported civil society participation in the GPE Board of Directors by organising elections for civil society representatives to the Board during the GCE World Assembly in Johannesburg at the end of February 2015.

In terms of technical and management support to coalitions, regional and global secretariats continued to support the capacity and learning areas identified at the start of the programme. Regional secretariats shared newsletters, case studies and lessons learned online and facilitated learning exchanges between coalitions. The Global Secretariat also gathered coalitions' feedback on the usefulness of the support they had received. During the reporting period, regional secretariats made altogether 16 capacity support visits to national coalitions, 10 of them by the Regional Secretariat for the Asia-Pacific region which has consistently been the most active in carrying out support visits. During these visits, technical support was offered on different aspects of the coalitions' work, from internal management matters to advocacy planning and implementation. Additional support and remote accompaniment was provided through email and phone. In the other regions, regional secretariats and fund management agencies relied on the opportunities to meet coalitions during the GCE World Assembly and the CSEF Global Learning Event in February. Many also met during the 2015 NGO Forum and the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 in the Republic of Korea, and a number of African coalitions had the opportunity to meet prior and during the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post 2015 in Kigali in February. Nine coalitions also reported receiving support from the IPG.

In terms of ensuring national coalitions' contributions to, and participation in, global advocacy, GCE and the regional CSEF secretariats have continued to coordinate civil society inputs to post-2015 processes. Altogether 42 coalitions reported having participated in regional and/or global consultation processes on the post-2015 framework or other regional or global advocacy processes and 23 reported that their information or stories have been shared in global or regional platforms.

A milestone event for the entire EFA movement was the WEF 2015 organised by UNESCO in May. Among the approximately 1,600 participants, around 250 were representatives of civil society. Through UNESCO's CCNGO/EFA, regional and global secretariats assisted in coordinating and supporting national coalitions' participation in the WEF 2015 and its NGO Forum, which provided a unique opportunity for coalitions to engage in global education policy. Throughout 2014, coalitions had been encouraged to plan for participation

in the WEF 2015¹², and many were eligible to apply for accreditation. However, there was regional variation as to grasping this opportunity – whereas all coalitions from Latin America and the Caribbean and nearly all from Asia and the Pacific participated, many African coalitions had not planned for participation, a symptom of weaknesses in regional coordination (FMAs having advised coalitions not to include participation in their budgets as travel to Korea is expensive). In the end, altogether 25 CSEF funded coalitions participated in the events, 21 with full/partial CSEF funding. Some of the CSEF funded coalitions were also among the 50 NGOs whose participation in the events was financially supported by UNESCO.

The final evaluation confirmed that the CSEF support to engagement and networking at regional and global level has contributed to increasing credibility of coalitions in the education sector. However, the programme has not been effective in ensuring cross-country shared learning and South-South collaboration as planned (see Chapter 5 below).

5. Challenges

UNESCO's previous reports have highlighted a number of challenges related to the learning component of the CSEF and to management issues in the CSEF Regional Secretariat for Africa. The UNESCO-GCE bilateral Review Meeting in October 2014 resulted in a related work plan and several measures to address the challenges have since been taken by GCE. An update on these issues is provided below.

5.1 Regional variation in CSEF management and implementation

During the programme period it has become clear that there is regional variation as concerns the level and quality of activities and management capacity, and this has been confirmed by the final evaluation. UNESCO has previously highlighted the need for more cross-regional analysis, and during the current reporting period, GCE has more consistently disaggregated reporting by regions. However, the analysis of regional variations and of challenges posed by them is still missing. This issue is linked to the need to streamline reporting responsibilities between the different levels. Until now all reports from the national level have been consolidated by the Global Secretariat, rather than the regional secretariats who should also be in charge of verifying the data and providing regional analysis of trends, lessons and challenges, for global level cross-regional comparison and analysis. The final evaluation also highlighted the reporting process as inefficient and ineffective, and as one that side-lines the Regional Secretariats, whose designated role is intended to include support for monitoring and reporting. For the CSEF 2016-2018, GCE reports planning to take steps towards improved reporting responsibilities between the different levels to address this.

The evaluation found three of the four Regional Secretariats consistently functioning well, and made note of the management issues with ANCEFA, the regional secretariat for Africa, which have been a long-term concern for the programme and highlighted in UNESCO's previous reports¹³. A Forensic Audit of ANCEFA was finalised in March and made recommendations for strengthening ANCEFA's management capacities. Actions taken by ANCEFA to address the issues were to be reviewed in September 2015, but the parties have not been able to set a date for a review meeting. The MoU will therefore remain in place until the end of 2015. GCE therefore continues to take direct oversight of regional implementation and financial management in Africa while supporting the ANCEFA secretariat until adequate administrative and financial management capacity is in place. This arrangement has been formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding between GCE, ANCEFA and Oxfam GB as the Fund Management Agency for Africa, and GCE has at the end of the current reporting period recruited additional staff at its global secretariat to support the management and oversight of CSEF implementation in the region for the May-December 2015 extension phase. GCE also organised a staff retreat¹⁴ between the Global Secretariat and the regional management structures, ANCEFA and Oxfam (RFMA), in order to review successes and challenges of CSEF implementation and to agree on

¹² And to apply for membership of UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA), through which civil society participation in the two events was primarily invited.

¹³ April 2014; October 2014; May 2015

¹⁴ 3-5 February 2015

actions to strengthen programme implementation in Africa. While it is possible to implement the CSEF through this arrangement, for longer term organisational sustainability the situation has serious implications for both organizations.

5.2 Implementation of the LME system

UNESCO has previously highlighted delays in implementing some of the global level activities under Objective 4, in particular the need to have a system of effective knowledge management and information sharing in place at different levels since learning, and sharing of learning, is a CSEF priority component.

During the second half of 2014, the CSEF global capacity support and learning plan was found to be delayed and unrealistic, and was, on the basis of the October 2014 review meeting, considerably scaled down, with many items postponed to 2015 or removed altogether. Further, ambition on the roll-out of the online resource and discussion forum – a key component which has been delayed throughout the programme period – was scaled down and is now planned to forego more piloting in 2015, in preparation for the 2016-2018 phase. Linked to the revision of the IPA between UNESCO and GCE, the Global Capacity Building Plan was updated for the May-December extension period, and mainly includes the continuation of previous and delayed activities. Therefore, in effect, many originally planned activities have been cancelled, for possible revival in the next phase of the CSEF.

Nevertheless, a lot of work has been achieved at the different levels and there is a wealth of learning from national coalitions that could reap benefits if correctly documented and shared. At the end of 2014, GCE stepped up work in this area, and thanks to the additional staff capacity and focus on these issues, data collection and documentation seem improved. For example, GCE now has a list of coalitions' publications and of research, and these listings have been made available on the GCE website. During the current reporting round, in line with the Learning Goals, GCE also collected coalitions' lessons learned in a number of issues, including strategies for policy participation, for reaching out to marginalised groups and for achieving gender parity in coalition governance; effective public awareness and mobilisation activities, and; effective research methods and ways of communicating research findings.

These lessons now need to be documented in a user-friendly way and shared for the benefit of all coalitions. While GCE reports on planning to increase efforts of transfer and dissemination of the lessons learned, there are no specific plans for this to take place during the current programme period. Neither is the collation of research and publications (as per extension phase plans) likely to be achieved during the programme period. The evaluation confirmed that while the knowledge and experience sharing has been recognized as one of the most important contributions of the CSEF, opportunities for sharing are limited and the approach to delivering has been inconsistent across the ten goals.

In view of the evaluation findings which confirmed weaknesses in gathering and archiving research and evidence, and documenting and sharing learning, the evaluation recommended establishing and maintaining a robust management information system at the GCE level that is able to collect, transmit, process, and store data and programmatic resources systematically at national, regional and global levels. The system should be accompanied by appropriate management processes to ensure learning is translated into management information for use by CSEF programme management.

6. Conclusion and next steps

During the reporting period, there has been progress toward many of the expected results and considerable work was undertaken by GCE and its partners. The collecting and documenting of learning has improved but more needs to be done to share it. Further, a number of challenges identified in UNESCO's previous report, and discussed above, were given focus during the period.

The final evaluation is making many recommendations regarding the next phase of the programme and during the latter part of the year, GCE and GPE will need to work on integrating these to CSEF 2016-2018

plans, in particular to address the evaluation findings regarding the tension between the CSEF as a grant-making mechanism and as a capacity support programme as well as the actions needed to fulfil the capacity gaps to allow GCE to become a Managing Entity.

During the last six months of the CSEF implementation, UNESCO will focus on continued monitoring of progress towards results and impact and on supporting the implementation of the Final Evaluation to ensure learning for the next phase of the CSEF, and provide inputs to the 2016-2018 planning as required.

Milestones/Activities Achieved since April 2013

Improvement of programme design and planning

- ✓ CSEF programme design and detailed budget revised and completed
- ✓ Revised CSEF governance structure finalized, including Terms of Reference for all management and governance structures
- ✓ Guidelines for evaluation of coalition proposals and fund allocation completed
- ✓ CSEF Financial Management Guidelines completed
- ✓ Human resources plan in place
- ✓ CSEF implementation plan completed and revised as per GPE Board decision to extend until April 2015
- ✓ CSEF GCE Global Secretariat staff recruited

Grant agreements and programme management

- ✓ Budget table with clear links to objectives finalised
- ✓ GCE agreements with Regional Secretariats and Regional Fund Management Agencies signed
- ✓ Newly-established Global Oversight Committee constituted and operational
- ✓ CSEF International Partners Group launched (previously called International Advisory Group)
- ✓ Regional structures for Middle East and Eastern Europe region set up (No suitable organisation has been identified and GCE will continue acting as Financial Management Agency until the end of the project.)
- ✓ Planning discussions between UNESCO and GPE
- ✓ Initiate processes for regular review of coalition and regional programme reports and financial management
- ✓ Ongoing implementation of programme reporting, financial management and reporting, and audit activities in line with agreed schedule
- ✓ GCE on-going engagement with UNESCO, Global Oversight Committee, Regional Offices in programme management
- ✓ IPG and regional secretariats' face-to-face meeting

National coalition planning, evaluation of proposals & fund allocation

- ✓ Coalition proposal guidelines and template finalised and circulated
- ✓ Coalitions received a call for CSEF proposals
- ✓ Regions, GCE and IAG provide capacity building support during the proposal development stage
- ✓ Coalitions submit proposals for regional evaluation
- ✓ RFC receive and evaluates coalition proposals, make approval and fund allocation decisions
- ✓ Regions sign contracts with national coalitions
- ✓ First tranche of funding to national coalitions disbursed by FMAs

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- ✓ Approach on capacity support, South-South learning and collaboration
- ✓ Approach on broadening engagement with civil society organisations
- ✓ Coalitions indicate capacity-building needs, through proposal process
- ✓ Collaborative development of shared learning/capacity support plan for CSEF knowledge and experience sharing and technical and management support for national coalitions
- ✓ Mid-term formative evaluation: review of CSEF programme and learning and capacity building support
- ✓ GCE, in collaboration with Regional Secretariats and in conversation with UNESCO, completes detailed MEL plan

Partly achieved:

- ✓ MEL System rolled out (apart from online monitoring system)
- ✓ Production of at least two inter-regional capacity building or learning tools per year (achieved for 2014)

On-going coalition activities

- ✓ Coalitions are on track in implementing their national plans
- ✓ Implementation of activities included in the learning/capacity building plan, regional and global

Additional milestones for the extension period (May-December 2015)

- ✓ Recruitment of CSEF Africa Programme Manager by 15 May 2015 and CSEF Africa Finance & Administration Assistant by 15 April 2015 (achieved in July and June, respectively)

Partly achieved:

- ✓ Completion of 12 new studies (26 new studies are planned for the extension period)
- ✓ Final evaluation of CSEF 2013-2015 (October 2015) (in progress)