Basic Education, Civil Society Participation and the New Aid Architecture:

Lessons from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali and Tanzania

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Introduction

New efforts to revitalize and expand basic education systems have become central to the national development plans of many African countries over the past decade. These new efforts are different from the past on three counts. First, national efforts are supported by the international community on a larger scale than ever before, often through innovative sectoral approaches that fund national education sector plans rather than individual projects (Buchert 2002; Lavergne & Alba 2003). Second, such changes are occurring in a context of political liberalization and democratic consolidation (Stasavage 2005). Finally, new education sector plans now routinely recognize an important role for civil society in the realization of national basic educational goals (Lexow 2003; Kruse 2003; Ratcliffe & Macrae 1999). Civil society organizations (CSOs) are increasingly expected to be partners in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national educational plans and policies.

In this study, we explore the current capacities and challenges facing civil society organizations as they attempt to engage effectively in these new governance roles, based on fieldwork in four countries: Kenya, Mali, Tanzania and Burkina Faso. We map the key non-governmental actors active in education and explore their experiences as policy actors in each country. We also ask how these actors are affected by a new architecture for aid to education and for educational governance: one in which bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, national governments and civil society actors are attempting to partner around a recently developed plan for achieving basic Education for All. As we shall see, this new architecture has created both important opportunities and significant challenges for civil society participation and engagement.

Forward to this Report

This report is intended for a mixed audience, of international development agency staff, education development experts, and those interested more broadly in civil society roles in international development and in the evolution of education sector reforms in our four case countries. Readers looking for a summary of findings and policy implications will find this in Chapter 5.

The study is organized into five chapters, as described below:

- Chapter 1 introduces the report's goals, conceptual frame, and research design.

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the education policy context in each of the four case countries. Here we describe the new sector programs and the roles they ascribe for civil society actors.

- Chapter 3 begins with an overview of the legal and political context for civil society actors in each of the case countries. It then offers an "audit" of civil society actors in each case country, comparing the relative strength and capacity of key types of civil society actors: NGOs, unions, parents' associations, faith-based organizations, private providers, and national Education for All (EFA) networks.

- Chapter 4 looks more specifically at the dynamics of CSO engagement in the new education sector plans in our four case countries. Here we document CSO engagement in the design and implementation of sector plans, and the evolution of relationships between CSOs, government, and donors. We also assess the challenges and opportunities CSOs perceive within the new policy context.

- Chapter 5 provides a synthesis of the research. It also outlines some of the major lessons that can be learned from a comparative analysis of civil society actors' experiences in education sector programs in the four countries, and their implications for CSOs and policy makers.

Defining and Assessing Civil Society Roles in a New Architecture for Development

For the purposes of this research, the term "civil society" is used to refer to organized groups or associations that "are separate from the state, enjoy some autonomy in relations from the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests, values or identities." This is the definition employed by Manor, Robinson and White in their Ford Foundation study of civil society and governance. It draws on the sociological conceptualization of civil society as a realm situated between the state and other basic building blocks of society (individuals, families and firms) (Manor, Robinson & White 1999; Mercer 2002; Edwards 2004).

A wide range of civil society organizations might be expected to be active in education. In this research we thus focused primarily on formal civil society actors operating within the national educational policy arena: non-governmental organizations, parents' associations, teachers' unions, faith-based organizations, private provider groups, and networks or coalitions. We recognize that by doing so we may have excluded forms of civil society organization that are unique to African cultural contexts, or that are located at the local or community level (Hyden 2006; Mercer 2003; Lewis 2002). One of the recommendations from our study is for further research on the interface between formal civil society organizations in education and the local citizens, members and communities they purport to represent.

Civil society has been described by political theorists as playing a key role within the democratic polity, primarily by representing citizen interests, enhancing civility and trust, acting as a government watchdog, and introducing transformative, oppositional, or innovative ideas and models. Civil society organizations have also long been the direct providers of social services within communities, and especially of education. In keeping with recent work on civil society and aid effectiveness, we can thus typify civil society actors in education as contributing to development in three distinct ways:

- by enhancing educational services for citizens;
- by contributing to the fabric of formal democracy;
- and by empowering citizens to make educational claims– especially those that are poor or marginalized (AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b).

As many others have noted, these three types of contribution draw on different organizational attributes and require different repertoires and skills. Service-related roles, for example, require technical and sector expertise and an ability to work with government. On the other hand, the contributions to democratic practice and citizen voice require autonomy, capacities for mass mobilization and advocacy, and some form of coordination among CSO actors themselves. These roles can also yield conflicting expectations or outcomes (CEF 2005a, 2007a, 2007b; Cornwall & Gaventa 2001; Nelson 2006; Mundy 2007b).

This is especially true in the context of new efforts to achieve basic education, which are increasingly characterized by governmental ownership and control of sector-wide programs, decentralization reforms, and donor harmonization through pooled funding and budget support (OECD/DAC 2003, 2005). In such contexts, civil society actors are expected to act as independent watchdogs and critics, as well as complementary service providers, subcontractors, and partners to government. CSOs also face daunting challenges related to the focus and financing of new sector programs. Education sector plans in all our case countries reflect an emerging international consensus about the importance of primary schooling over other types of educational investment within development processes. Behind them is also the idea that a universal right to education ("Education for All") is essential for democratic development and good governance, embodied in the Millennium Development Goals, international human rights conventions, as well as in the Dakar Framework on Education for All. However, despite two decades of promises, the international community has never come close to funding the gap between the resources our case country governments

can reasonably expect to make available for education, and what would be needed to achieve the right to education (UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, various years; Mundy 2007b). The absence of strong international resource commitments to the universal right to education has led the donor community itself to send mixed messages about the best approach for achieving EFA – for example, whether through gradualist or more rapid approaches to universalization; through public or a mixture of public and private resources; on the basis of budgetary containment (such as cuts in the costs of teachers), reallocation from other sectors, deficit spending, or external commitments (Rose 2005a, 2005b; Sperling 2001).

Over the past decade, education sector plans in many developing countries have recognized a role for partners and stakeholders (Bray 2003). But education sector plans rarely establish a clear framework for civil society engagement at the national level. As our studies and others have shown, there is limited assessment of which actors matter and why in Education Sector plans; no regular or transparent processes for choosing civil society interlocutors in formal policy processes; and a tendency to exclude CSOs that have potentially critical or destabilizing points of view (Kuder 2004; Murphy 2005, Doftori & Takala 2005; Kruse 2003; Lexow 2003; Mia 2004; Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond & Wolf 2002). Instead, governments and international development partners have tended to focus on the service-enhancing functions of civil society, and to assume relative harmony among civil society actors themselves (DFID 2001; Mundy 2007a; Rose 2003, 2005b; Archer 1994; Bray 2003). Furthermore, sector plans include a broad and controversial assumption that decentralization reforms will enhance the potential for democratic deliberation of education policies (Mundy 2007a).

If we accept the proposition that civil society participation should not only enhance educational services, but also contribute to formal democracy and empower the disempowered, we need to look again at sector programs and the aid effectiveness principles CSO participation engenders. This time, we should be asking not simply: are civil society actors included in Education Sector programs, but also: why some CSOs and not others, in some aspects of the program and not others? More fundamentally, does the presence of CSOs lead to new capacity and effectiveness in citizen-led claims-making? Do civil society efforts scale up at the national level in the sense of consolidation of formal democratic oversight of the education system?

Our study explores these issues. It also begins to map the political contests that inevitably unfold where autonomous civil society actors, representing varied societal interests, take up policy, advocacy and watchdog roles in the national educational policy arena.

Goals and Design of the Study

This report presents a comparative analysis of research on the role of civil society organizations in national education sector programs in four case countries. All research, including four country field cases, eight desk studies and two cross-case analyses, was sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency, the International Development Research Centre and the Comparative International and Development Education Centre at the University of Toronto.[1]

Our central goals in this research are to provide:

1. A baseline audit of civil society actors in the education sector in the four countries;

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[1] *The following country case studies are available on the project website* <http://cide.oise.utoronto.ca/civil_society> : Tanzania (Haggerty, Manion & Mundy 2007); Kenya (Sivasubramaniam & Mundy 2007); Mali (Cherry & Mundy 2007); Burkina Faso (Maclure, Kabore, Meyong & Lavan 2007).
In addition, see also the background desk studies: Tanzania (Haggerty 2006); Kenya (Sivasubramaniam 2006); Mali (Cherry 2006a); Burkina Faso (Maclure & Meyong 2006); Mozambique (Manion 2006a); Zambia (Manion 2006b); Bangladesh (Poulson 2006); Senegal (Cherry 2006b); Discussion Paper (Mundy 2006).

2. Insights into the quality and effectiveness of civil society participation in the planning and implementation of sector-wide reform initiatives; and,
3. A framework for exploring mechanisms to enhance the participation of national civil society organizations in the development and implementation of national education sector plans.

Conceptually, this study draws from a range of efforts in political mapping within the field of international development as well as recent efforts to assess the changing shape of civil society engagement in national policy processes. In keeping with political mapping exercises, we look both at the historical and formal policy contexts for civil society participation, and the informal policies and practices shaping CSO engagement – which together form the "political opportunity structure" for civil society engagement in education within each case country (Grindle 2004; Nash, Hudson & Luttrell 2006; CIVICUS 2006; DENIVA 2006). We also provide a political map of CSO actors themselves, including a description of the main players in the national policy arena, their history, capacities, interests, values, resource base, degrees of influence, and levels of coordination. Finally, we look at the dynamics of engagement itself, through narrative accounts of the CSO experience in the design and implementation of new education sector programs in each country, and an analysis of CSO-government and CSO-donor relationships. Here we draw from Lister and Nyamugasira (2003) and others to explore whether CSOs have been "invited" to the policy table or have themselves "created" new policy spaces (Manor, Robinson & White 1999; Tomlinson & Foster 2004; Brock, McGee & Ssewakiryanga 2002; McGee, Levene & Hughes 2002; Gould & Ojanen 2003). Cross-case comparison is employed throughout to allow for better understanding of the sources of variation in the character, capacity, and scope for civil society participation in education sector policy and governance activities.

Each chapter in this study draws from four field-based case studies completed in 2006/7, as well as from a series of background studies completed in 2006.[2] Burkina Faso, Mali, Kenya and Tanzania were chosen as the locations for our field research both because they are countries that have recent sector-wide programs in education, to which Canada contributes, and for the variation in the structure and experiences of civil society actors in education within them. Each of the four countries selected has made the achievement of the universal right to education an important national priority.

The primary focus for our field research was a series of interviews with civil society actors widely recognized as active in the education sector. During 3-12 weeks of fieldwork in each country we began with a list of civil society organizations that we expected to be active at the national level in the development of new sector plans addressing basic education. These included faith-based organizations, national parent/teacher associations, national and subnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), teachers' unions or associations, professional bodies, parliamentary organizations, business associations, community-based organizations (CBOs), research organizations, organizations representing the rights of women or children, coalitions focused on debt relief or economic justice, as well as research and policy institutes. Using a snowball methodology, we asked government officials, donors and CSOs to identify additional key actors in the education sector. We also decided to include a small sample of school management committees (or Parents' Associations, in the Burkina Faso case), because these were identified as key sites for subnational civil society and citizen engagement in the new sector programs.[3]

Ultimately a small but diverse sample of organizations was contacted and interviewed in each country, yielding a map of the main actors, their educational activities and their responses to the new sector

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[2] See footnote 1 for details.
[3] School management committees are "hybrid" spaces that operate between the state and individuals. Much recent research considers this type of direct user committee as at least partially belonging to civil society (Manor 2004b).

reform programmes in their countries.[4] In total, 176 civil society informants were interviewed (30-50 organizations in each country); along with 60 interviews with international technical and donor organizations and government officials. Relevant government policy documents, research reports, annual reports, CSO media advocacy and other related materials were also collected and reviewed to complement the primary data. The interviews were transcribed and coded for emergent themes, by category of respondent, whether CSO, government or donor, using both qualitative data analysis software and manual sorting. The team used an iterative approach – drafting a series of data summaries and then developing a set of common issues, for which the interviews and supplementary data was then re-coded and further triangulated to ensure validity of analysis and interpretation.

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[4] Appendix I outlines our final interview sample by type of organization and country. Research was conducted between January and September 2006 in each case country. While most interviews were conducted in capital cities, at least one regional location and several schools were visited in each country. All interviews were transcribed and coded according to themes to allow for comparison across cases. Further information about our research design, including interview schedules and the research proposal, is available on the project website at http://cide.oise.utoronto.ca/civil_society/

Chapter 2: The Education Policy Context

Introduction

Understanding the formal policy context and the political and historical background of our four case studies is a crucial starting point for assessing the evolving roles played by civil society actors in the education sector. This chapter begins by offering basic demographic and political data on the four countries. It then turns to a more detailed examination of the national education sector policies and priorities. It also describes the specific roles awarded to civil society actors in new education sector plans, including the crucial assumption that decentralization reforms will lead to greater accountability and citizen participation at the local level.

Background to the Four Case Countries

The four case countries we have chosen for this study are quite different in terms of culture, geography, politics and economics, and indicators of development. Such differences in turn affect the shape of civil society in each context. Burkina Faso is a country of 12.8 million, with a GDP per capita (PPP)[5] of $1169, ranked 174/177 on the Human Development Index. After repeated military coups, it moved towards a democratically elected government in 1995, but until recently that government has remained under the leadership of a former military dictator who has held power since 1987, and the political opposition has remained weak. While close to half of the elected representatives came from the opposition in the most recent elections, the president retains strong control and has recently overturned constitutional limits on the length of his term in office. Among all of our cases, Burkina Faso has the lowest rates of primary enrolment and primary-level completion. Fewer than one in three Burkinabe children complete primary school (*see Burkina Faso case study*: Maclure, Kabore, Meyong & Lavan 2007).

Mali is also a former French colony, with a population of 13.1 million and a GDP per capita (PPP) of $998. As in Burkina Faso and Tanzania, the vast majority of its citizens live on less than $2 a day. In Mali, democratic elections were first held in 1992, and the Konare government was praised for respecting human rights and establishing religious and political freedoms (Pringle 2006; Danté, Gautier, Marouani & Raffinot 2001). However, opposition parties remain highly fragmented, so that as in Burkina Faso, the president retains strongly centralized control of the political system.[6] Since 1991, there has been an explosion of non-governmental organizing in Mali, with no reported examples of governmental deregistration of NGOs. While two-thirds of children are enrolled in schools in Mali, only 44% complete the full primary cycle. Many of these children attend non-governmental community schools, which mushroomed in the 1990s (*Mali case study*: Cherry & Mundy 2007).

Tanzania is the poorest of our case countries, with a GDP per capita (PPP) of $674. Close to 90% of its population of 37.6 million lives on less than $ 2 a day. It held its first multi-party elections in 1995, which led to the continuation of leadership by the former socialist ruling party, Chama cha Mapinduzi. Thus Tanzania, like Mali and Burkina Faso, has seen a limited movement towards political pluralism and competitive party politics. However, political freedoms and non-governmental organizing have expanded rapidly since 1995. Despite its relative poverty, Tanzania was one of the first African countries to achieve universal primary enrolment, in the late 1970s. However, economic crisis and structural adjustment programs led to a deterioration in primary school participation that has only recently been reversed. Today,

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[5] Purchasing power parity (PPP) is "an exchange rate that accounts for price differences among countries, allowing international comparisons of real output and incomes" (UNESCO, EFA-GMR, 2007). PPP is often used to compare the standards of living across countries, giving a better picture than GDP per capita alone.

[6] Under the current Amadou Toumani Touré government (in power since 2002), there is no organized political opposition and the government rules based on consensus and collective decision-making (AfDB/OECD 2005).

Tanzania enjoys relatively high rates of participation at the primary level and high levels of adult literacy. However, as of 2005 fewer than 60% of Tanzanian children completed the full primary cycle (*Tanzania case study*: Haggerty, Manion & Mundy 2007).

Kenya, our final case country, has a GDP per capita (PPP) of $1140, similar to Burkina Faso, but its population of 33.5 million enjoys a significantly higher standard of living, as reflected in its HDI Index of 152/177. In 2002, the election of the multi-ethnic National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) ended almost 40 years of rule by the Kenya African Union, and marked a sharp opening in political freedoms and saw efforts to control previously high levels of government corruption. Kenya has the highest rates of participation in primary education of any of our case countries: more than 90% of Kenyan children complete the primary cycle. Nonetheless, there are sharp variations in quality and access, with new informal urban settlements and communities along the eastern coast sharply disadvantaged (*Kenya case study*: Sivasubramaniam & Mundy 2007).

Table 1: Basic Statistics from the Four Case Countries

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
Government	Multi-party democracy (Leadership by former military dictator from 1987)	Multi-party democracy 1992 (Leadership changed in 2002, but no organized opposition)	Multi-party democracy 1995 (De facto rule by single party, CCM)	Multi-party democracy 1992 (De facto single party rule until 2002)
Population	12.8	13.1	37.6	33.5
GDP/Capita (PPP- 2004)[7]	1169	998	674	1140
ODA as % GDP	12.6	11.7	16.1	3.9
HDI Ranking 2006 (of 177 countries)	174	175	162	152
% Population on less than $2	71.8	90.6	89.9	58.3
Gross Primary Enrolment Ratio*	58	66	106	112
Primary Completion Rate*	31	38	54	95
Adult literacy rate - %**	22	19	69	74

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2006; Except for: * World Bank, EdStats, (n.d.) Data for 2005; and,
** UNESCO, EFA GMR 2007. Data for 2000-2004.

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[7] Purchasing power parity (PPP) is "an exchange rate that accounts for price differences among countries, allowing international comparison of real output and incomes." (UNESCO, EFA-GMR, 2007). PPP is often used to compare the standards of living across countries, giving a better picture than GDP per capita alone.

Education for All and the New Architecture for Development

Despite some important differences in their economic, political and educational contexts, these four countries share several broad similarities. All four have moved towards greater political freedom in recent years, and all four have developed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that emphasize the importance of basic education (RoK 2005; GoM 2002; URT 2000, 2005; GoBF 2000). All four countries also recognize a legal right to education. An important reinforcing relationship between democratic consolidation and access to basic education is unfolding across each of these countries (Bratton 2007; Stasavage 2005; Nelson 2006). In all four case countries, citizens appear to view basic education as one of the primary services they expect governments to provide (Bratton 2007; Afrobarometer Network 2006).

However, there are sharp differences in the way these four countries approach the provision of universal free primary education. Both Kenya and Tanzania have recently made a public commitment to abolish primary school fees, at the time of national elections. Burkina Faso and Mali, in contrast, have not made a political commitment to universal free primary education, in part because they start from a much lower rate of access than the two Anglophone case countries. Instead, the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso have put in place national plans that promise rapid expansion of access over a defined period. Thus while Kenya and Tanzania have promised that the state will fully finance the right to education at the primary level, Mali and Burkina Faso have addressed the question of finance more cautiously in their legislation on education. Burkina Faso leaves financial responsibility in the hands of "the state, local communities, families and the people" (Loi d'orientatiation de l'education 1996, article 45). Similarly, while Mali's 1992 constitution states that education should be "obligatory, secular and free," governmental policy continues to allow schools to levy parents for contributions (République du Mali 1992; Bentaouett 2006; Bender, Diarra, Edoh & Ziegler 2007). In both Mali and Burkina Faso, a large share of the improvement in access to basic education is expected to come from the establishment of private, community or NGO-funded schools. While this is less the case in Tanzania and Kenya, national sector plans do recognize the value of the contributions made by private partners.

In all four countries, recent national education sector plans focusing on improvements at the primary level provide for an increasing degree of coordination among donors, and between donors and governments (*see* MEBA 1999; MOEST 2005; MEB/MESSRS 2000; URT 2001a, 2001b). In all countries, international partners participate in an annual joint sector review; many also contribute to government-led thematic working groups and hold regular donor meetings on education. Three of the countries under study have been approved for the Fast Track Initiative, which creates another mechanism for donor review and oversight (Tanzania has not yet applied). However, there remains considerable variation in the approaches taken by the main international partners to each country's sector plan. Not all donors have committed to sector-level financing, direct budgetary support, or the pooling of resources. Governments and non-governmental actors in all three countries continue to receive some project-type aid to education, most notably from USAID and JICA. Furthermore, per capita levels of aid to basic education vary substantially by country, as do levels of dependency on foreign contributions. Poverty (as measured by per capita GDP) is clearly only one among several criteria predicting per capita levels of aid to basic education across the four countries (*see* Table 1 *above*).

Table 2: Basic Education Sector Reform Programs in the Four Countries

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
Free Primary Education	Constitutional right – but fees in place	Constitutional right – but fees in place	Abolition of fees announced 2001	Abolition of fees announced 2003
Sector plan	PDDEB(1999) *Plan décannal du développement de l'éducation de base*	PRODEC (1999) *Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation*	PEDP (2001)[8] Primary Education Development Plan	KESSP (2005-10) Kenya Education Sector Support Program
Key targets	70% gross enrolment ratio by 2010 (+ improved quality and administration)	95% gross enrolment ratio by 2010 (+institutional restructuring and adjustment)	Expanded enrolment; Quality & Capacity building; Institutional strengthening	Equity of access; Improved quality & administration; Expanded opportunities for further education
Donor Sector Support	PDDEB in 2002 **Sector funders**: World Bank, Netherlands, Canada, Sweden, Denmark (15% of basic education budget)	Sector program (PISE), 2001 **Sector funders:** Netherlands (representing Sweden and Norway) France, Canada, World Bank (other donors through T.A. and projects)	PEDP in 2002 **Sector funders:** Canada, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, UK and EC and World Bank	KESSP in 2005 **Sector funders:** World Bank, DfID, UNICEF, CIDA, USAID (with major project support from USAID, JICA)
Donor oversight	• Annual Sector Review • Joint thematic groups: access; quality; capacity • Joint sector reviews held in regions every 6 months	• Annual joint sector review • Monthly donor meetings • Joint thematic groups	• Represented on government-led Basic Education Development Committee • Annual joint sector review • Monthly donor meetings • Joint thematic groups	• Annual joint sector review • Education Donor Coordination Group (EDCG) Monthly meetings • Joint thematic groups
Aid to basic education/per child[9]	$18.2	$19	$8.4	$12.8

New roles for partnership in official sector plans

A fundamentally new direction in the national education sector plans for each country in our study is their emphasis on partnership with non-governmental actors and the engagement of citizens. The terms "partnership" and "participation" are employed extensively, while community-level and private sector inputs into achievement of goals set out in the national plans are viewed as essential.[10] All sector plans emphasize the value of civil society participation at decentralized levels of educational governance. This is often "locked in" with donor conditions that require that internationally provided funds for sector programs to be disbursed to decentralized authorities. National education sector plans in our four case countries also acknowledge a new role for civil society in contributing to the development and monitoring of national policy goals, though often this is conceptualized as facilitating accountability at newly decentralized levels of authority (especially true in Mali).

However, reference to partnership in most sector plans tends to be aspirational and to assume harmonious, collaborative interaction with CSOs. There is little discussion of competing interests or goals.

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[8] PEDP is focused on the primary sector; a costed plan for the whole education sector plan was under development during the period of our field research in 2006. The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) of 2001, although covering the whole sector, was not costed and therefore not frequently referred to by participants.

[9] UNESCO, EFA GMR 2007. Annual average 2003-2004.

[10] For example, the Mali sector plan states that the Third Republic "in opting for a liberalized economy, gives an increased role to the private sector through its expansion and promotion;" the plan also includes progressively privatizing textbook design (MEB/MESSRS 2000:5).

Nor are the relative responsibilities of the central state, subnational authorities, and CSOs in guaranteeing access and quality to basic education services stated with precision. In particular two questions – whether private funding is "unfortunately necessary" or "inherently desirable" for educational improvement; and who has the responsibility and mandate to raise and control finances for basic education – are left vague in all four sector plans. Finally, while all sector plans mention the value of stakeholder consultation, none of the sector plans we reviewed provided clear frameworks or benchmarks for civil society consultation and engagement in national policy settings.

Table 3. Civil Society Partnerships in Official National Sector Plans

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
Goal of partnerships with civil society	Improved administration via coordination among international, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Shared responsibility for access and quality goals. Includes raising resources and providing services.	Civil society to contribute financial resources, capacity-building of local government and school-level actors, mobilizing communities for participation in education, preventing disruptions to the system.	Participate as a joint stakeholder in planning, implementing and monitoring sector program; contribute experience and resources; facilitate community participation; conduct education policy analysis and advocacy (URT PEDP: 22).	Enhanced national ownership and partnerships through teamwork and collaboration. Delivery of services with CSOs playing a complementary role to the government.
Key mechanisms identified for engagement of civil society and citizens	Parents' Associations (with mandate to fundraise). Stakeholder consultations on regional action plans (required for disbursement of sector funds). FONAENF (Non-formal education fund) given 10% of sector funds, managed jointly by government, donors and CSOs.	Consultation structures at national, provincial, and local levels planned. Locally elected governments to work with CSOs in planning. School management committees.	Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC). School management committees (which manage sector funding to schools).	School management committees, (which manage sector funding to schools).
Key civil society partners identified	INGOs, NNGOs, private & faith-based organizations, teachers' unions, research associations, CBOs, parents' associations.	Communities, parents' associations, school management committees, NGOs, teachers' unions, students, the private sector.	NGOs and civil society organizations, teachers' union, communities and school committees. Private sector only in relation to procurement.	NGOs, faith-based organizations, parents, communities, teachers' unions, the private sector.

Decentralization Reforms and their Implications for CSO Participation

A second defining feature of national education sector plans in our four case countries is the emphasis they place on decentralization reforms. Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania and Kenya have each made decentralization a centerpiece of their national basic education sector strategies, and it is these reforms, more than any other factor, that have ushered in a discourse about partnership between civil society actors and the state. Decentralization reforms are heavily supported by international agencies, to provide the local oversight and accountability necessary for improvements in educational access and quality (Gershberg & Winkler 2004; Land & Hauck 2003; De Grauwe 2004; De Grauwe, Lugar, Balde, et al. 2005).[11] Many decentralization reforms are "locked in" by donors, through funding conditionalities that require governments to disburse a significant proportion of sector funding to decentralized authorities.

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[11] To get a sense of the scale of support for such reforms, one only need look at the World Bank's own lending portfolio, where a large majority of current projects in primary education include two reform goals: financial decentralization to local government (80%) and the introduction of school-level management mechanisms (90%) (WB/IEG 2006: 43).

As can be seen in Table 4 below, decentralization reforms vary across our case countries. All countries have experienced some form of administrative deconcentration (decentralization of ministry staff). Many have also seen the devolution of authority for planning and financial management, which now rests with provincial, regional, and/or locally elected authorities. In addition to main decentralization reforms, a variety of cross-cutting experiments in citizen engagement in educational improvement are also occurring across our case countries.[12]

However, the Francophone and Anglophone countries differ in three significant ways.

- In Mali and Burkina Faso, control over teacher hiring and placement has been decentralized (MATCL 2003; World Bank 2002); it remains centralized in Tanzania and Kenya (Therkildsen 2000; MOE Kenya 2007).[13]
- Secondly, while direct user committees exist in all four countries (i.e., school management committees (SMCs), parents' associations in Burkina Faso), they appear to be better supported and institutionalized by the education sector plans in Anglophone contexts, where they receive direct funding from the sector budget and are required to post their budgets and expenditures to the school community.[14] In contrast, sector funding in Mali and Burkina Faso had not been disbursed directly to the schools at the time of our field research, but instead to regions (Burkina Faso) or to region, cercle and commune levels (Mali) to support their newly decentralized responsibilities.[15]
- Finally, the overlay of two contrasting motives – the first for direct resource-mobilization and the second for legitimation through the provision of citizenship entitlements – plays out differently at decentralized levels in our case countries. As noted above, while all four countries welcome resources from civil society actors, only Mali and Burkina Faso actively promote the collection of parental contributions by decentralized actors.

Perhaps not surprisingly, education decentralization reforms are frequently contested and unevenly implemented in all four of our case countries (again, a trend widely noted in other developing country contexts – *see* Nelson 2006; Grindle 2004, 2007; Corrales 2006). Teachers, their unions and Ministry staff often resist their implementation (De Grauwe et al. 2005; Grindle 2004, 2007); local communities lack capacity to take up new responsibilities and receive too little support or funding; and there is no guarantee against corruption and undemocratic practices in local-level structures (De Grauwe et al. 2005; Manor 2004a, 2004b; Hyden 2006; Cornwall & Coelho 2007). Our interviews in each country suggest that decentralization reforms have introduced an unclear distribution of responsibilities and authority, creating ambiguity around the central state's traditional role in resource mobilization and effective planning.[16] To offset some of this confusion, the transfer of authority, particularly those related to school management committees, is often so tightly scripted by government and donors that only minimal local autonomy in decision making is achieved.[17]

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[12] For example the use of "social development funds" and/or parliamentary constituency funds for educational purposes is common. In some countries, international organizations are also piloting new school accountability mechanisms, like USAID's "community school report cards" initiative; or its work in the development of district education sector plans (Kenya). A unique experiment in Burkina Faso sees 10% of the sector funds distributed through a jointly managed fund for non-formal education (FONAENF).

[13] However discussions about decentralizing Kenya's National Teachers Commission (the body responsible for teacher hiring and placement) were underway during our research. The teachers' union has strongly opposed the decentralization proposal.

[14] In Tanzania, Kenya and Mali some sector funds are also available for training of SMCs. In Burkina Faso this applies to parents' associations.

[15] In Mali disbursement of sector funds directly to schools, for management by SMCs, is planned for 2007 (World Bank/IDA 2007).

[16] This is in keeping with the findings of Manor and others, that confusion over the mandates and relationships between direct user committees and locally elected authorities, and between locally elected authorities and Ministry staff, are common in decentralization reform programs in developing countries (Manor 2004b; Ahmad, Devarajan, Khemani & Shah 2005).

[17] As an example, funding to school management committees in Tanzania and Kenya is accompanied by instructions that detail what supplies should be purchased for each pupil, leaving little room for local deliberation and prioritization.

Advocates of decentralization generally argue that it has "great potential to stimulate the growth of civil society organizations…prevent widespread disillusionment with new policies from turning into rejection of the entire democratic process…[and] boost legitimacy by making government more responsive to citizen needs" (Diamond 1999, quoted in Hiskey & Seligson 2003: 66). However, in our case countries there is no explicit description of how educational decentralization relates to democratic consolidation in the education sector plans. While structures exist to represent the community within the school, such structures are widely criticized for only weakly representing broad-based parental voice and oversight, and being prone to domination by local elites (De Grauwe et al. 2005). Furthermore, the tendency to use such decentralized structures for parental resource mobilization can lead to both increasing inequalities across districts, and distortions in parental participation itself.

Decentralization reforms thus appear to have contradictory implications for the engagement of citizens and civil society organizations in educational policy and implementation. While formally encouraging greater participation, the reforms create a disjointed and sometimes confusing arena for citizen and CSO engagement.

Table 4. Decentralization Reforms in National Sector Plans

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
General character of reform	Deconcentration and devolution slowly implemented due to centralized state. Weak local capacity.	Detailed legislation and directions for transfer of competencies slow. Some organized opposition (especially over teacher hiring and new SMCs).	Central state retains control of hiring and financing while local levels plan and spend. Greater emphasis on direct user committees. No organized opposition.	Central state retains control of hiring and financing while local levels plan and spend. Greater emphasis on direct user committees. No organized opposition.
Main Components				
1. Deconcentration of Ministry Staff	Yes – administrative, financial and staffing roles at regional and commune levels.	Yes – administrative and staffing roles at region, cercle and commune levels.	Some – Primary school implementation under the Prime Ministers Office – Regional Administration and Local government (PMO-RALG).	Some – however Ministry still most centralized of the four countries.
2. Devolution of authority to locally elected officials	Basic education planning and administration increasingly devolved to commune levels, including management of transferred funds. However, commune-level teacher hiring is limited for semi-autonomous community schools.	Primary schools transferred to commune level, which manages planning, construction, equipment, hiring, etc. Community schools are to be overseen by communes.	Elected local authorities have oversight over schools and planning, but not tax/fundraising or teacher hiring. In practice PMO-RALG and Ministry control schools.	Minimal – hiring and financial control remains centralized apart from sector funding channeled to SMCs (below).
3. School Management Committees	Parents' and Mothers' Associations predate sector program but have received renewed attention.	SMCs required as of 2004. Composed of parents' association representatives, pupils, NGOs, teachers, and head teachers. Authority to raise funds, develop school plans and budgets, assist in hiring of teachers. Overlapping mandate with Parents' Associations.	Increased power and responsibility under the sector program. Composed of heads, teachers, elected parents. Receive direct financial support from sector funding for materials and maintenance, regulated by Ministry. No control over staffing and no fundraising except for construction.	Increased power and responsibility under the sector program. Composed of heads, teachers and elected parents with a gender equity target. Receives direct financial support for materials and maintenance, but scripted by Ministry. No control over staffing. Must have permission to fundraise.
4. Other decentralized governance mechanisms	Jointly managed fund for non-formal education (FONAENF). Regional annual planning process, involving CSOs	No evidence found.	The World Bank funded TASAF can be accessed by communities wishing to build schools – was not integrated with PEDP.	MP Constituency Development Funds (CDF) can be used for education/school improvement.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have explored the political-economic context of our four case countries, pointing out the reinforcing relationship that has appeared between processes of democratic consolidation and access to basic education. We have also outlined the formal goals established for basic education as set out in each country's new education sector program, noting in particular that while Tanzania and Kenya have made a formal commitment to universal free access at the primary level, Burkina Faso and Mali have adopted a more gradualist approach, in part because they start from a much lower rate of access than the two Anglophone case countries.

We have also explored the way that civil society engagement is described in the education sector plans of the four case countries. In all four cases, we found that reference to partnership or stakeholder participation tends to be aspirational and to assume harmonious, collaborative interaction with CSOs. The relative responsibilities of the central state, subnational authorities and CSOs in guaranteeing access to quality basic education services are not stated with precision. In particular two questions – whether private funding is "unfortunately necessary" or "inherently desirable" for educational improvement; and who has the responsibility and mandate to raise and control finances for basic education – are treated with some vagueness in all four sector plans. Finally, while all sector plans mention the value of stakeholder consultation, none of the sector plans we reviewed provided clear frameworks or benchmarks for civil society consultation and engagement in national policy settings.

We also note that Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania and Kenya have all made decentralization a centerpiece of their national basic education sector strategies. Decentralization reforms have played a central role in ushering in a discourse about partnership between civil society organizations and the state. However, the goals laid out for civil society within education decentralization reforms revolve around the expansion of complementary service provision and resource mobilization, and only vaguely address civil society's role in the expansion of citizen voice. Furthermore, decentralization reforms have mixed implications for greater citizen and CSO engagement: they introduce confusing and sometime overlapping authority structures; they lack clarity about balance between CSO roles in mobilizing local resources as versus citizenship voice; and they are often resisted by key actors in the sector. As we will note later in this study, although decentralization reforms are often regarded as inherently democracy-supporting, they present specific challenges for CSOs interested in engaging in national policy debates and processes.

Chapter 3: An Audit of Civil Society Actors in Education

Introduction

In this chapter, we answer several questions. First, what legal and political features of our case countries frame the opportunity structure for civil society participation in the education sector? Second, who are the key actors in the national education policy arena, and what are their main activities, values and interests? Third, how would we rank their political strengths – in terms of their independence or autonomy from the state, their organizational capacities, their ability to represent distinct constituencies or values, and their capacity for coordination around a coherent policy agenda? As described below and summarized in Table 5, we find both considerable variation and substantial similarities across our cases.

Political Context for Civil Society Actors in Education

Each of the countries we looked at has experienced a rapid expansion in formally-organized civil society – influenced primarily by the introduction of formal multi-party democracy and other forms of political liberalization in the 1990s. A second important factor shaping the current configuration of civil society actors in each country was the extent to which international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) began to channel their funds and funding from bilateral donors into direct service provision in the late 1980s and early 1990s – a period when structural adjustment reforms saw stagnation and deterioration in governmental provision. This occurred extensively in the education sector in Mali where the community schools movement blossomed; but characterized educational civil society in Burkina Faso, Kenya and to a lesser degree, Tanzania. The rapid expansion of INGOs and NNGOs characterizes civil society in all four case countries over the last decade. At the national level, NGOs represent the largest discrete number of civil society actors.

Other traditional civil society actors in education, perhaps with the exception of private service providers (including faith-based owners of school) fared less well in the period between the late 1990s and early 2000, with considerable variation in different national political contexts. In Tanzania, where socialist rule and a one party state had seen many traditional civil society actors incorporated into the state, parents', teachers' and students' organizations were underdeveloped (Lange, Wallevik & Kiondo 2000; Mercer 2003). Political regimes in Kenya, Mali and Burkina Faso, intent on maintaining their own power, limited the autonomy of oppositional civil society actors. However, in both Kenya and Mali, teachers' unions and students' organizations played powerful oppositional roles that contributed to the transition to democracy (Brown 2004; Smith 2001). They continue to represent large constituencies that at least in theory, can be mobilized in opposition to government policies, although policies aimed at containing their capacities for destabilization have reduced their overall strength in policy processes (*see below*).

In all four of our case countries, civil society organizations must be registered as legal entities either as NGOs, trusts, companies, or unions. Such registrations are typically controlled by government ministries (except in the case of Kenya, which delegates this role to a national NGO council). These legal frameworks assure some autonomy and status for CSOs, but they often limit the extent to which CSOs can engage in advocacy and political mobilization. National CSO registration practices carry the threat of deregistration by governments. Historically, this threat was used in Kenya to silence oppositional actors, and there is still considerable fear among NGOs in particular, despite the installation of a government widely regarded as NGO friendly. Also in Kenya, the national NGO council (which has the official authority to register NGOs) has been the site of ongoing controversy over a split between its board members and chairperson, rendering it nonfunctional since 2005; and the legal framework for NGOs (which restricts NGOs from being affiliated with any foreign political organization or group), has also sometimes been interpreted by government officials as giving the government the right to check the power of NGOs funded directly by donors (Maina

1998). Somewhat different tensions have emerged in Tanzania, where the CCM government has threatened or carried out deregistration on several occasions over the past decade, especially where CSOs appeared to criticize the policies promulgated by the ruling national party (Tripp 2000; Iheme 2005).

In all four countries, the introduction of coordinated sector programs and national poverty reduction strategies is changing governmental attitudes towards CSOs. There has been considerable pressure to adopt models for public sector reform promulgated by leading donor agencies: both the World Bank and DFID (in Anglophone Africa), are strong supporters of New Public Sector Management approaches, which among others things call for governments to better manage and engage stakeholders in decisions-making (Morgan & Baser 2007). At the same time, CSOs reported to us that there is a clear desire by governments in all four countries to retain centralized control of planning and implementation. The confluence of the two has led government officials in Mali, Tanzania and Kenya to express new interest in tapping NGO resources for national development plans, or at least to have NGO contributions formally evaluated as part of sector plans. (In the Mali case, CSO respondents informed us of a failed proposal by the *Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et des Collectivités Locales* to have NGOs contribute 1% of their budgets towards governmental monitoring; in Kenya and Tanzania, officials expressed an interest in seeing NGO resources "on plan"). Governments are clearly attempting to flex their leadership in the education sector as a result of donor-government sector coordination and the aid effectiveness agenda.

More generally, PRSP processes across Africa have been criticized for the limited way that civil society organizations have been consulted in their design – for example, a Kenyan analyst describes the process as "consultative" rather than participative, because CSOs were asked to respond to pre-prepared agendas (Owinga 2006), while in Mali, one analyst notes that NGO presence did not equate with influence (Danté et al. 2001). In Tanzania, more radical NGOs were marginalized in the first PRSP process and some claim they were only consulted due to donor insistence (Gould & Ojanen 2003; Kuder 2004). However, funding from the donor community has allowed for far better organized CSO participation in the second round PRSP processes – in turn contributing to national momentum for CSO coordination (Booth 2003; ActionAid/CARE 2006; CEF 2005a).[18]

INGOs and NGOs in Education

All countries in our sample have a very large INGO/NGO sector, with a wide spectrum of activities in education. There are considerable similarities across contexts, with some organizations focusing on the construction of schools and provision of materials, equipment, school meals, and scholarships. Other major organizations focus on curricular and pedagogical innovation, especially in relation to mother tongue literacy and non-formal education (particularly in West Africa); civics education (especially in Kenya), and curriculum for rural or nomadic populations. Gender equity and early childhood education are also a major focus for NGOs in all countries.

Two general trends characterize INGO/NGOs across our case countries. First, even organizations that continue to work on independent projects now see a need to work within a national policy arena. A majority of NGOs see the need to align their programs with the sector plan, and many also wish to adopt stronger evidence-based advocacy roles. Second, many have also recently adopted a "rights-based approach" to their work. Though this takes on quite varied inflections, there is a growing trend towards conceptualizing core mandates as the political mobilization of citizens for their rights.

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[18] For example, in Kenya, CSO participation made a difference in the PRSP process in two distinct areas. The first involves marginalized pastoralist communities. The Interim-PRSPs did not incorporate the concerns of pastoralism, so pastoralists at the PRSP meeting established the Pastoralist Strategy Group and successfully lobbied the government to have pastoralist concerns incorporated in the PRSPs. Their efforts ensured that the government allocated a higher budget for education bursaries for girls. Another success was that of the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development who managed to ensure the PRSPs were engendered (CEF 2005a).

However, not all NGOs have moved at the same pace or in the same direction on these two issues, and there is considerable variation in the shape and character of the INGO/NGO sector across our case countries. In all countries, some organizations take a systems approach, targeting their work to improvements in the reach and effectiveness of the national education system; while others continue to target specific localized issues and problems. The tendency among NGOs, large and small, to work in project mode with local communities in service provision, to the neglect of sustained engagement in the national policy arena and in national CSO coalitions, seemed to be most pronounced in Mali and (to a lesser degree) in Kenya, which have large and diverse but more weakly coordinated NGO sectors in education. Direct provision of primary-level education by NGOs also receives stronger governmental support in Mali and Burkina Faso than in our two Anglophone African cases, likely contributing to their less oppositional stance.[19]

We also noted that in all four case studies a small number of the most powerful international and national NGOs have moved into leadership roles in the context of new sector plans. These NGOs have increasingly recast their work as complementary service providers and policy advocates within the new sector plans. Some have developed programs that support regional and local authorities in their new governance roles; as well as training programs for teachers and school managers.[20] In a few cases, these groups are subcontracted by governments to undertake these activities. However, for the most part they continue to rely on direct funding from bilateral donors or their own resources. Across our case countries, it is this small coterie of "complementary" NGOs that receive the most regular invitation to government and donor meetings and that play leadership roles in thematic groups and other sector planning bodies. They have the capacity to conduct or commission research. They also tend to be active within national CSO coalitions in the education sector.

Across our case studies, we sought to explore whether tensions between international and domestic NGOs were amplified by new sector programs. Our findings suggested, however, that while such tensions do exist, the usual description of them in the literature may under-represent how important context is to North-South dynamics in the NGO community. In all our studies major INGOs frequently support and act as incubators for local NGOs and community-based organizations. Many INGOs are also staffed by local nationals –some of whom have held senior positions in the Ministry and who view their roles as quite complementary to "national ownership" of INGO programs. Furthermore, there are an increasing number of established national and/or African NGOs in education with impressive track records (for example, HakiElimu in Tanzania, Tin Tua in Burkina Faso; and FAWE in all four of our case countries). Each of these factors mutes (though it does not fully displace) the longstanding tension between domestic and international actors over issues of control and ownership.

However, in both Mali and Kenya, where strong national CSO coalitions have not yet emerged, national NGOs did indeed complain about the dynamic between INGOs and domestic NGOs.[21] In Mali, this complaint seems to be related to extensive channeling of bilateral funding for community schools and other forms of service provision to INGOs during the 1990s: Malian NGOs argued for direct funding and less subcontracting through INGOs. In Kenya, INGOs were blamed for their failure to support local ownership of the Elimu Yetu CSO coalition. As we will suggest below, such tensions seem to be heightened where mechanisms for national- and regional-level INGO/NGO coordination are underdeveloped – and muted where coalitions boast strong domestic leadership.

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[19] Community schools in Mali are presently being absorbed into the formal school system; they have received limited government funding since the mid 1990s but are now being administratively transferred to communal authorities.

[20] As an example, the Aga Khan Foundation has played a lead in the development of KENSIP (Kenya School Improvement Program) in partnership with government, and piloted a similar program in Tanzania, a part of which has since been expanded by the Tanzanian government (STEPS).

[21] In Mali's case, an EFA coalition was launched only recently (2005-2006).

Teachers' Unions and Associations

Teachers' organizations are clearly among the most powerful organized actors in any education system. They represent large constituencies and have historically mobilized these constituencies around both educational and political issues. However, across our case countries, we found that teachers' organizations appeared to have relatively limited engagement in the planning and implementation of sector programs, particularly in comparison to major INGOs and NGOs.

For a variety of reasons, the power and capacities of teachers' unions seems to be quite muted across our case countries. Historical factors explain some of this: for example, in Burkina Faso, teachers' unions were disbanded in 1984 under the Sankara government, and never regained their former strengths (Pilon & Wayack 2003); while in Tanzania their incorporation as a body of the ruling socialist party limited autonomy and development (Swai 2004). In all our case countries, the status of teachers has been under threat; their salaries have not kept up with inflation and hiring has been subject to civil service wage caps. In Mali the introduction of contractual teachers has also undermined the traditional basis of the unions' bargaining power vis-à-vis the central government; and bargaining power is diffused across a number of different unions (including a new union representing contractual teachers). Bargaining power has also been eroded by the decentralization of teacher management to local authorities in Mali and Burkina Faso, which unions opposed. However, unions still retain considerable reach and organizational integrity. In the Kenya case, for example, we were told by a governance expert that the national teachers' union (KNUT) is among the largest, most democratically organized and vibrant of existing unions.[22] To some extent, then, teachers' unions continue act as a democratic counterbalance in presidentially-centralized political systems, with implications far beyond the education system itself.

In all four countries, teachers' unions have formally endorsed the goals of expanded access and improved quality in national sector plans, despite the fact that governments and donors have tended to exclude or marginalize them in the design and planning of current sector reforms programs. However, unions also continue to make the protection of their members' interests their main focus, addressing not only wage issues but also questions of class size, in-service training, and hiring of contractual teachers. These issues figure centrally within existing national sector plans, placing unions in a confrontational or oppositional position to some aspects of current sector plans.

All the teachers' unions we visited have some in-house capacity for research and policy analysis, and for professional training of their membership. They maintain links to international teachers' unions, often with a focus on professional development and policy issues. However, by and large, teachers' unions seem to be focusing their main energies on direct bargaining rather than on evidence-based advocacy, system oversight, and member professionalism. Their autonomy, political bargaining power, and democratic reach each suggest enormous potential to shape the fate of EFA programs. However, unions have not yet been engaged in a pro-active and positive way in the achievement of EFA goals. Governments and donors alike have tended to neglect their potential contributions to democratic engagement in the sector, instead focusing on the resource implications of teachers' salaries and the need to contain their oppositional roles.

National Parents' Associations (and their Subnational Counterparts)

National parents' associations have a checkered history across our case countries. By and large, these associations are governmentally-mandated constructs, whose origins lie in legal decrees, in which all

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[22] KNUT is also the largest union not belonging to Kenya's Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU). In Kenya there are 42 unions representing approximately 600,000 workers, approximately one-third of the country's formal-sector workforce.

schools were required to have some type of parent or parent-teacher association. Among the main governmental objectives for the establishment of these organizations, the mobilization of parental and community contributions to the education system figured highly. Mali and Tanzania mandated the creation of parent-teacher associations soon after independence; Kenya in 1988; and Burkina Faso in 1991. National federations of these school-based organizations followed in 1984 (Mali), 1991 (Burkina Faso) and 1999 (Kenya). Tanzania's national parent association, WAZAZI, originated as an arm of the ruling socialist party, primarily to facilitate the interaction between government and a growing number of community-initiated secondary schools; WAZAZI does not have the scope or membership-base of national parents' associations in our other countries.

Parents' associations should be viewed as what Manor calls "hybrid spaces" operating at the interface of the state and civil society (Manor 2004b). In Kenya and Mali they are in fact parent-teacher organizations, and their national associations represent both parents and school administration interests.[23] Even where these organizations are entirely parent-run, they follow mandates and objectives laid out for them by government – both in terms of fundraising, and community awareness. They are often dominated by local elites and school administrators (De Grauwe et al. 2005). However, the focus of their activities differs: in Tanzania and Kenya, they are centrally engaged in the issue of secondary-level expansion, while mobilizing primary-level enrolments is more central in the two Francophone African cases. In Burkina Faso, Mothers Associations were introduced in the mid-1990s to address problems in gender representation.

To make matters more confusing, in their new sector-wide plans, the Malian, Kenyan and Tanzanian governments (but not Burkina Faso) have either mandated the creation of, school management committees (SMCs) or given such management committees greater responsibility.[24] In Kenya and Tanzania, school management committees have direct control over funds from the sector program (this is planned for 2007 in Mali, according to World Bank/IDA 2007). In other ways, SMCs appear to have mandates that overlap and displace those previously assigned to local parents' associations – including fundraising for school construction (in all cases except Kenya)[25] and local community mobilization around national education goals. This has led to considerable confusion at the local level, and, in Mali, heated opposition from the national federation. However, there does not appear to be any plan to create national or regional coordinating bodies for school management committees in any of the four countries under study. Without such aggregation, such bodies are unlikely to develop a view of equity and quality issues across the entire system, and cannot effectively amplify local-level voice in key policy setting arenas.

Who then do national parents' associations represent, and what type of political capacity do they have? These are difficult questions to answer, especially given the appearance of SMCs with competing mandates. There appears to be considerable variation in their effectiveness as representative organizations. National parents' associations in Kenya and Mali collect membership fees and have some degree of organizational effectiveness – e.g., membership lists, newsletters, an executive, regular meetings, etc. In Mali, FENAPEEM has an estimated membership of 5,000 parents' associations, and has been particularly active in opposing the issue of school management committees. However, we were told by many state and non-state actors in Mali that parents' associations lacked democratic practices and had limited engagement in day-to-day issues at the school (*see also* De Grauwe et al. 2005). In contrast, Kenya's KNAP seems to be especially active, with 23,000 paid members (schools and individuals), and a range of activities that includes training of school management committees; working with government to develop standards for procurement and reporting systems for corruption; and advocacy for free primary education. The situation is mixed in Burkina Faso. There parents' associations are routinely present at the school level, but their activities are

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[23] Interestingly, in Mali we found that some teachers feel better represented in school management committees than in parent-teacher organizations.

[24] In Tanzania SMCs are known as school committees, and in Mali they are referred to as "*comités de gestion scolaire*" or school management committees.

[25] In Kenya, the government prohibits fundraising by SMC's, offering one-year exceptions to this rule for specific projects.

carefully guided by government directives. Burkinabe parents' associations are linked in a confederated structure at the national level which has provincial and regional representation, but this umbrella body has very limited political clout, in contrast to the *Syndicat National des Enseignants de Base* (SYNATEB). This is partly because of the vastly disparate nature of parents' groups throughout the country in terms of literacy levels, language and ethnic groups, and organizational capacity.

In summary, national parents' associations vary considerably in terms of their representativeness, autonomy from the state, and organizational capacity. Kenya's national parents' association appears to have considerable political clout; followed by Mali, Burkina Faso and (trailing far behind) Tanzania. However, in both the Mali and Burkina Faso case, a longstanding focus on fundraising from parents (as opposed to on parental voice), and the introduction of new representative organizations at the school level, has limited the power and policy leverage wielded by parents' associations at the national level.

Faith-based Organizations

Faith-based organizations are certainly among the longest standing civil society actors in the education sector in our case countries. They play a two-fold role. First, to varying degrees, they continue to play their traditional roles as direct service providers and owners of schools – a role that has expanded considerably in recent years in light of new government policies supporting an expanding role for private providers. (Many African governments absorbed primary-level schools owned by faith groups into the public system between 1960 and 1990, only to reverse this trend in some cases in the 1990s.)[26]

At the same time, faith-based groups represent the values and goals of their faiths and membership within the public sector. In some instances (notably Kenya) faith-based groups have been strong advocates for political liberalization and the protection of human rights, as well as for improvements to the public education system. Here they have tended to work in collaboration with NGOs and other civil society actors. Faith-based organizations also advocate for specific types of moral education in schools – an issue not generally taken up by secular INGO, NGOs or unions. They also play a considerable role in the training of religious education teachers.[27]

While difficult to assess, faith-based groups appear to wield considerable authority and bargaining power in Kenya and Tanzania, based on their growing memberships and their ability to leverage external resources. In Kenya, this has been reflected in the success of a campaign to include religious education in schools; though a more recent effort to regain ownership of previously church-owned primary schools was rebuffed by government.[28] Faith-based groups in Tanzania are less powerful and well-resourced than in Kenya, but still wield considerable moral authority. In Kenya and Tanzania, Muslim organizations, representing some of the poorest populations in each country, told us that they feel somewhat marginalized. However, in both countries national Muslim associations seemed to be working effectively within national EFA coalitions alongside their Christian and secular counterparts – sometimes, as in Kenya, playing a leadership role. In Mali and Burkina Faso, the situation is somewhat different. Although there has been consistently high parental demand for Islamic education, as well as substantial funding from Arab states for

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[26] The situation varies by country – in Tanzania church schools were originally absorbed into the public system but later allowed to support community secondary schools; in Kenya the government took over primary mission schools but jointly manages secondary levels ones; while in Mali the government provides teacher salaries and some of the costs of existing Catholic schools. In Mali and Burkina Faso, with majority Muslim populations, medersas are by far the most popular of the faith-based schools. However, unlike Christian schools they have received limited funding from government.

[27] Some faith-based groups felt that government should provide more support to allow them to do this (e.g., Tanzania's main faith-based organizations).

[28] In Kenya faith-based groups successfully opposed the government's decision to replace religious education with a "social ethics" curriculum.

the development of medersas and Franco-Arabic schools, Islamic faith-based organizations appear to have quite a limited seat at the national policy table.

Private School Owners and the Business Community

As mentioned above, an encouraging policy framework for private providers, as well as parental demand for access, has led to a substantial rise in the number of private primary schools across our case countries. While religious organizations account for much of the growth in private provision, school ownership by private entrepreneurs is also on the rise in Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania and Kenya.

Private school owners in Kenya, Tanzania and Mali have formed associations to represent their interests in the national policy arena, and as such now exist as legitimate civil society actors within this arena. In some instances, they receive support from international private sector advocacy organizations.[29] These organizations have different memberships and goals. They often include schools owned by faith groups described above, as well as commercial proprietors. Sometimes (as in Kenya) they are also linked to the business community itself. Again, there is considerable variation by country:

- In Tanzania, TAMONGOSCO was formed at the request of government, to act as an interface between government and the owners and managers of 600 non-governmental secondary, 350 primary and 18 teachers' colleges, several of them run by religious bodies. Although it operates with limited personnel, this organization is growing in strength and becoming a regular participant in policy processes.

- In Kenya, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), a private sector umbrella organization formed in 2003, has an Education Sector Board with membership from the National Council of Churches, the Private Schools Association, private universities, international schools, booksellers and publishers. KEPSA is concerned both with the legal and regulatory framework for school ownership in Kenya and with more general issues of importance to the business sector, such as the job-skills match in the country. A separate association representing the approximately 600 non-formal schools serving informal settlements around Nairobi, is also active in Kenya (Elimu Kwa wananvijiji – ELKW).

- In Mali, the *Association des Ecoles privées Agréées du Mali* (AEPAM) represents 80% of Malian private schools (Diallo 2005). Since 1995, there have been tensions between the Malian government and AEPAM over the state's fluctuating payment of support to private schools, including during the 2006-2007 school year (Fofana 2007); however, private schools have increased in number and now account for about 8.6% of the total students attending the first and second cycles (Public World 2004). The AEPAM has had regular dialogue with the Malian government; and was an active participant and one of the signatories in the 2005 Agreement for Peaceful and Performing Schools [*Accord pour une école apaisée et performante*] (Diallo 2005). However, the role of private schools and their funding seems set to spur further debate, especially in the context of emerging debates about the abolition of school fees.[30]

- In Burkina Faso, where private schooling has expanded haphazardly in response to widespread demand for educational opportunities that the state cannot meet alone, there is no formal association

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[29] For example, in Kenya an association of non-formal schools operators in the Nairobi informal settlement areas has received assistance from academic James Tooley and, through him, is linked to various US and British think-tanks that support privatization of education.
[30] See for example the lively debate documented during the June 2007 International Conference on the Abolition of School Fees, held in Bamako, Mali (Le Mali. Fr. 2007).

of private schools, nor do they participate any significant way in the national education sector plan and its policy processes. This may partly reflect the fact that private schools are highly diverse, ranging from those that cater to the children of urban elites to those that operate clandestinely as examination cram schools for young people striving for a school certificate. However, Burkina Faso does have a Permanent Secretary to Private Education and an accreditation process.

In general, activism around basic educational issues by national business associations and private providers appeared quite limited in all our case studies, with the exception of Kenya. Efforts by the Commonwealth Education Fund to get the national business community engaged in national EFA coalitions in Tanzania and Kenya have had limited success (CEF 2005b; Abagi 2005).

Networks and Coalitions

Advocacy and policy-oriented civil society network coalitions are young but increasingly common phenomena in developing countries (Perkin & Court 2005). In our case countries, such organizations are novel in several ways, particularly in contrast to the NGO umbrella organizations of the past.

- First, most national EFA coalitions attempt to bring together a diverse group of civil society actors – their membership is not confined to INGOs and NGOs, but also includes national parents' associations, teachers' unions and other groups.
- Second, these new coalitions have a different kind of focus than in the past: rather than information sharing and coordination among NGOs, they explicitly take on issues related to the adequacy of government provision of education, advocating for education as a right, and undertaking monitoring and community mobilization activities to support their advocacy roles.

Such organizations have often been created and supported by a small group of international non-governmental organizations (Oxfam, ActionAid, Save the Children and the Commonwealth Education Fund) that have made supporting national advocacy and popular mobilization a core pillar of their development activities (CEF 2007a). Civil society networks in education are often networked with regional and global groups (e.g., the African Network Coalition on Education for All – ANCEFA; and the Global Campaign for Education – GCE) in such as way to allow for transnational mobilization and campaigning.

However, the ability of national coalitions to represent citizens or specific constituencies, their organizational capacities, their autonomy from government in the national policy arena, and the degree to which they incorporate and are led by members of national civil society, varies substantially across our four case countries.

Tanzania's CSO coalition, the Tanzanian Education Network (TEN/MET) seems to be relatively strong on all four counts. Formed in 1999 by 39 members, it now boasts a total membership of 171 organizations, with representation from INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, parents' associations, faith-based groups and the teachers' union. Among the four national coalitions we studied, TEN/MET seems have the greatest organizational capacity and rooted-ness in national civil society – housed in its own office, it has a carefully balanced Board of Directors and Secretariat to ensure representation from national NGOs and subnational organizations; clear operating procedures and policies both for its own meetings and for its interactions with government; and documentation on issues and practices for its members. Two of its earliest members, Maarifa ni Ufunguo and HakiElimu, have played an important role in evolution of the organization's ability to act as a policy watchdog. The former organization played a key role in the government's decision to

abolish school fees.[31] Several regional and thematic education sector coalitions have also developed in Tanzania, often with links to TEN/MET.[32] Our interviews confirmed that TEN/MET is widely seen as the representative voice for education CSOs in Tanzania, even though its reach into poorer, more rural areas of the country is somewhat limited, and its relationship with government is at times oppositional.

Kenya has the second oldest national EFA civil society coalition, Elimu Yetu (EYC). Formed in 1999 under the auspices of ActionAid, EYC initially targeted the challenges of universal primary access in the lead up to the Dakar World Education Forum, carrying out a number of important policy studies on fees, as well as budget tracking exercises. However, despite an estimated membership of 120, and regional chapters in all 8 of Kenya's provinces, Elimu Yetu does not seem to have the same organizational capacity, representative character and policy clout as TEN/MET.[33] Once the Kenyan government had announced the abolition of fees in 2003, EYC seemed to lose its ability to advance a common CSO platform or vision within the education sector (Agg 2006). Many CSOs we interviewed cited a change of leadership as the main cause of EYC's weaknesses, but ongoing dependency on a single INGO for funding and management was also faulted. However, since TEN/MET was also once highly dependent on a single external donor (CEF), and has had leadership change, we believe that EYC's weaknesses are also linked to deeper structural causes. These include the competitive and entrepreneurial history of CSOs and CSO networks in Kenya (which often represent conflicting policy interests and different ethnic or regional groups); ongoing debates about who should control education and the strength of organized interests supporting expansion of resources for secondary and higher levels of schooling; and a possibly different level of public support for redistributive (pro-poor) public policies than in formerly socialist Tanzania.[34] The threat of government reprisals for critical CSO activism may also have played a part; one interviewee told us:

> *Right now Kenya is very sensitive about coalitions, because CSOs have been pressuring government and checking on corruption. So if you say you are a coalition, they are not registering [a] mass movement. So we were advised to consider registering as a trust not an NGO* (CSO Representative, Kenya).

Mali and Burkina Faso also have national coalitions representing civil society actors active in the achievement of Education for All. Here, however, movement into policy advocacy has come somewhat later than in the Anglophone cases. In Burkina Faso, the *Cadre de Concertation en Education de Base* (CCEB) was initially formed in 1995 at the behest of government, under the leadership of a national NGO affiliated with Save US, to facilitate the work of CBOs and NGOs in the delivery and administration of basic education. Although its early work focused primarily on the coordination of service delivery activities among CSOs, it has more recently taken up a stronger policy monitoring and advocacy role, particularly in the areas of gender equity; school fees and costs; HIV/AIDS; and curricular reform (especially towards mother tongue literacy). CCEB now routinely acts on behalf of its members in joint evaluation and planning activities at subnational and national levels. However, in contrast to both the Tanzanian and the Kenyan experiences the CCEB has not made the abolition of school fees a central part of its agenda – it endorses the governments more gradualist plans.

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[31] Maarifa Ni Ufunguo's 2000 research on primary school user fees was picked up by American NGOs in a campaign to halt World Bank user fee conditionalities, and contributed both to a shift in World Bank policies and to the Tanzanian government's decision to abolish fees (Maarifa ni Ufunguo 2000).

[32] These include FemAct (f. 1995); Arusha Education Network (f. 2002); Aru-Meru Network (f. 2004) and Tanga Coalition of Disability and Non-Disability CSOs (f. 2004).

[33] For example, when we visited EYC it appeared to have a very weak management structure, no regularized mechanisms for ensuring representativeness among members or regular communications (not even a clear membership list). Its activities tended to comprise ad hoc consultations as governmental policies appear rather than proactive pursuit of research or advocacy goals.

[34] A difference between Tanzanian and Kenya in terms of in public support for collective goods and redistributive social policies is supported by recent research – see for example Miguel (2004). The Afrobarometer surveys (2006) also suggest that citizens in Tanzania were more willing to support the policy of free basic education, even if it meant a decline in quality, than their Kenyan counterparts.

For its part, Mali has only begun to form an effective umbrella group that speaks on behalf of civil society organizations in the education sector. Several earlier umbrella bodies lost their former influence and capacity in the sector, though for differing reasons. The *Groupe Pivot Education de Base* (which at its apex in the late 1990s represented more than 2,000 schools, and over 31% of operating primary schools in the country) declined in part due to a loss of international funding, as donors shifted attention to the sector program (CLIC n.d.; Cissé, Diarra, Marchand & Traoré 2000). The *Conseil de Concertation et d'Appui aux ONGs* (CCA/ONG), which has a longstanding education thematic group, has faced ongoing tensions between national and international NGOs over leadership and North-South subcontracting relationships (Glenzer 2005). Although often invited to national consultations, the CCA/ONG has a wide sectoral mandate, and does not play the role of focusing education NGOs around a common platform. A more recently formed coalition for EFA (2005-2006), bringing together international NGOs committed to Education for All with teachers' unions, parents' associations and other NGOs, is still working to establish itself, despite widespread acknowledgement across our Malian interviews of the need for an effective body to represent civil society actors in the national educational policy arena. As in Kenya, the creation of an effective civil society coalition in the education sector in Mali seems to suffer from a highly competitive and diverse CSO sector, though in Mali's case the problem seems to stem from tensions and lack of coordination within the NGO sector, as well as from the oppositional views some major CSOs hold on specific components of the national sector program (e.g., decentralization and contract teachers).

Conclusions: Assessing the Structure and Capacity of Civil Society

As we have seen in this chapter, enormous variation exists across our case countries, both in terms of the capacities and interests of different types of CSO actors, and in terms of intra-CSO relationships and CSO capacity to mobilize around a common agenda or policy platform for education. Such variation has important policy implications: it suggests that efforts to support civil society engagement in the education policy arena will need to be carefully tailored to specific country contexts; and must not assume harmonized interests or abilities among CSOs.

Nonetheless, when looking across different categories or types of civil society actors active in the education policy arena, some general patterns emerge.

- INGO/NGOs are continuing to work in project mode, but there is an increasing recognition of the need to work at a systems level, and within emerging sector plans. Furthermore, INGO/NGOs increasingly adopt a rights-based approach that implies an important commitment to the political mobilization of citizens for their rights. There is a clear perception among INGOs and NGOs that a small subset of actors, namely those that have repositioned themselves as complementary service providers and who have international connections, are more frequently invited to the policy table in the context of new sector programs. It is still common for NGOs to operate in project mode, with limited reference to the national sector plan (especially in Mali and Kenya). Tensions between INGOs and national NGOs are less prevalent in the education sector than the wider literature on North-South civil society relationships might suggest. This is at least partly because leadership in both types of organization is often drawn from highly qualified nationals, and because most INGOs work to support Southern counterpart organizations. In addition, the existence of functioning civil society coalitions with leadership from national organizations appears to support a sense of local ownership and control among domestic NGOs in two of our cases.

- Teachers' unions are among the most powerful, well-organized, and representative of civil society actors in all the education systems we studied, though especially so in Mali and Kenya. In addition, these organizations have played a powerful historical role in advocating for democratic transitions. However,

our research suggests that they remain somewhat marginalized players within sector programs, primarily because of their focus on terms of service. In Mali in particular, government efforts have focused more on containing the disruptive capacity of unions. However, even in countries like Mali, where teachers' unions have opposed major aspects of the sector program, unions are now committed to working towards the expansion of basic education with government. Our research suggests that the time has come to reconsider the role of teachers' unions in sector programs – focusing both on their capacities for professional socialization and mobilization, and their broader contribution to the fabric of democracy.

- Faith-based organizations again bring considerable resources and capacities to the policy table. They represent large constituencies in each of our case countries, as well as running their own schools. However, the engagement of faith-based organizations in national sector plans is quite varied. In Tanzania and Kenya, Christian and Muslim organizations are routinely consulted by government and work effectively with national CSO education coalitions. In Mali and Burkina Faso, faith-based organizations are more marginalized in the policy process. We also noted, drawing on the Kenya case, that inherent tensions can arise between secular national education systems and faith-based bodies, around control of schools and school curriculum. Like teachers' unions, faith-based groups represent both general citizen interests and the particular interests and values of their members.

- Private providers and the business community. There have been a rising number of private educational providers in all four of our case countries over the past decade, supported in part by the new openness to private provision in new education sector plans. Mali, Kenya and Tanzania each have an active civil society organization that represents the interests of private providers within the educational policy arena. In addition, Kenya has a coalition of private providers from informal urban settlements. While governments tend to consult with these new provider groups, tensions sometimes emerge over their demands for increased government subsidies for private schools.

  It is also interesting to note that despite efforts by at least some civil society coalitions and their supporters to engage national business communities in advocacy and engagement with basic educational issues, Kenya was the only case country in which a national business association appeared to be active in the education sector program (and this was primarily focused on secondary, technical and vocational education).[35] There was limited evidence of direct business community or private provider engagement in sector programs or basic education advocacy in any of the other cases.

- National coalitions and intra-CSO relationships. While some type of CSO coordinating group exists in each of our countries, their histories, capacities and effectiveness are extremely varied.

    o Tanzania's TEN/MET appears to be the most effective in mobilizing a wide range of members around a common policy platform; it also is the most effective critic and watchdog over basic education commitments. Though it includes INGOs in its membership, its leadership is primarily drawn from national and subnational NGOs and significant attention is paid to building links to subnational groups. As we shall explore further in the next chapter, one way in which TEN/MET has distinguished itself is in its effective mobilization of international support and linkages to leverage domestic policy change. However, TEN/MET's effectiveness has engendered tensions with government, especially when it has adopted a critical or watchdog role over government.
    o Kenya's national Elimu Yetu Coalition is quite weak; since the declaration of universal free primary education it seems to have lost the capacity to mobilize its members around a common agenda for basic education. EYC does not seem to play an effective watchdog role

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[35] The Commonwealth Education Fund (which is financed by DFID and managed by a group that includes ActionAid, Oxfam and Save) has long advocated for the engagement of the business community in basic education issues (CEF 2007b).

in the context of the new sector program, and has remained highly dependent on its hosting organization, the INGO ActionAid. Competition and varied views within education civil society seem to explain its deterioration. The threat of government reprisals for critical CSO activism may also have played a part.

o   Similarly, in Mali education CSOs have only begun to develop an effective coordinating body or common platform on basic education. Although a number of coordinating groups have emerged in Mali over the last 10 years, CSOs tend to bargain individually rather than collectively.

o   Burkina Faso, with the youngest of the national education CSO coalitions, appears to be developing a somewhat more cohesive and effective coalition, the *Cadre de Concertation en Education de Base* (CCEB). In contrast to TEN/MET, however this organization has not made the achievement of universal, equitable access to basic education its central platform; with the support of both INGOs and domestic NGOs, it embraces the government's more gradualist approach and focuses its efforts on specific issues, such as gender, curricular reform, and regional planning processes.

In the next chapter, we look again at these civil society actors through a somewhat more dynamic lens, exploring their experiences in the policy processes that have unfolded around each country's new education sector plan. Here our concern has been to identify main civil society actors, their capacities, interests, values, and inter-relationships.

Table 5: Key Civil Society Actors in Education

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Tanzania	Kenya
National Coalitions	Cadre de Concertation en Education de Base (CCEB) • f. 1995 • 123 members • Expanded into policy advocacy after 2000 • Has seat at the policy table	Several coalitions: • Groupe Pivot Education de base - originally NGOs advocating for community schools • CCA/ONG -f. 1983 by INGOs, 165 members; ed. subgroup • EFA coalition - f. 2005, with Aide et Action unions, parents, INGOs &NGOs • CAFO - f. 1991, women's NGOs and associations	TEN/MET • f. 1999. Initial focus on access and school fee, now on quality/equality • 171 members • Engaged in research, budget tracking and advocacy • Has seat at policy table	Elimu Yetu •f. 1999, hosted by Action Aid and CEF •120 members in the coalition (approx.) •Original focus on abolition of fees and budget tracking, but has seen a decline in effectiveness and loss of focus since 2004
INGOs/NGOs Key Actors	**150** [estimated] INGOs = Plan Intl, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide (OSEO), Care Int'l, Aide et Action, Oxfam UK, World Vision, World Education, Save (UK and USA) NGOs = FAWE, Tin Tua, Association Espace Koamba, Association Mwangaza, CIEFFA–B-F, Six-S, and many others	**123** [registered] INGOs = Care Int'l, World Vision, World Education, Plan Intl, Save (UK and US), Aide et Action, Oxfam UK, *Fondation Stromme*, Africare, German Agro Action, BORNEfonden, *Eau Vive*, Sahel 21, SIL NGOs = FAWE, IEP, OMAES, AMAPROS, AADeC, AID-MALI and many others	**148** [documented] INGOs = World Vision, Save, Care Int'l, Oxfam, Aga Khan, ActionAid, Plan Int'l NGOs = FAWE, HakiElimu, Maarifa ni Ufunguo, Hakikazi Catalyst, Maadili Centre, Amani Child, Kuleana, Mkombozi, and many smaller groups	**307** [registered] INGOs = World Vision, Save, Care Int'l, Oxfam, Aga Khan, ActionAid; Christian Children's Fund; VSO; Concern World Wide NGOs = FAWE; GCN; WERK; ANPPCAN; KAARC; Cobades and many smaller groups
Major activities	• Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials) • Literacy training & curriculum development • Other forms of non-formal education (extension work, health education) • Capacity development in the formal system – training for teachers and local educational administrators	• Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials) • NGOs in the areas of mother tongue literacy and non-formal education, gender equity • More recently, capacity development in the formal system – training for teachers and decentralized authorities • Some civics/human rights ed.	• Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials, running of schools) • Advocacy for marginal populations (nomadic, slum, refugee, disability, HIV/AIDs) • Advocacy and monitoring of quality and other issues • More recently, capacity development in the formal system – training for school committees and staff • Some civics/human rights ed.	• Schooling in poor communities (construction, feeding, materials) • NGOs in the areas of child protection and gender equity • Education for marginal populations (nomadic, slum, refugee) populations • More recently, capacity development in the formal system – training for teachers and decentralized authorities • Some civics/human rights ed.
Teachers' Unions	• *Syndicat national des enseignants de base* (SYNATEB) roots in the 1970s over 19,000 members	• *Syndicat National de l'Education et de la Culture* (SNEC) • *Fédération de l'Education Nationale* (FEN) • *Syndicat des professeurs contractuels de l'enseignement secondaire* (SYPCES) • *Le Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (SNESUP)	• Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU), f. 1991 Estimated membership is 90-110,000 of 120,000 teachers (1998)	• Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) f. 1957 200,000 members (primary and secondary teachers)
Parents' Associations	Fedération des APEs et des AMEs	FENAPEEM – representing estimated 5000 Parents' Associations	Tanzanian Parents' Association (WAZAZI) – operates a few private secondary schools	Kenya National Parents' Association (KNAP), 23,000 members ELKWY – private slum schools
Faith-based orgs.	Islamic CSOs and umbrella orgs; Catholic and Protestant Churches	Islamic CSOs and umbrella organizations; Catholic and Protestant Churches	National Muslim Council of Tanzania,(BAKWATA); Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC); smaller Christian NGOs	National Council of Churches Kenya (NCCK); Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM)
Private Providers		*La Ligue Nationale des Ecoles et Etablissements d'Enseignement Privé (LINEP) ; L'Association des Ecoles Privées Agréées du Mali* (AEPAM)	Tanzania Association of Managers and Owners of Non-governmental Schools and Colleges (TAMONGOSCO)	Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA)

Chapter 4:   CSO Engagement in Education Sector Programs

Introduction

In this chapter we explore how the civil society actors described in Chapter 3 have been engaged in and affected by the introduction of new education sector plans and donor-funded sector-wide programs focused on the achievement of basic education. We look briefly at four dimensions of civil society engagement:

- the patterns of CSO engagement in the design, planning and management of the current national education sector programs;
- changes in government-civil society relationships;
- changes in donor-civil society relationships; and,
- the challenges and opportunities posed by the new sector programs.

Many analysts have argued that broad changes in the architecture of aid – especially the movement into sector programs and budget support – are diminishing the space available for civil society actors in national development processes by creating a tight, centralized relationship between donors and governments (Tomlinson & Foster 2004; Brock et al. 2002; McGee et al. 2002; Gould & Ojanen 2003). However, as this chapter suggests, when we look specifically at the engagement of civil society actors in the design and management of sector programs, a much more nuanced story of both improvements and challenges emerges.

CSO Engagement in the Design and Management of Sector Programs

The level and shape of CSO engagement in the design and management of education sector programs (and in particular their basic education components) varies considerably across our case studies. For the most part, national sector plans seem to have created a context within which civil society actors are "invited to the table" for consultation in a more regular and routine way by governments than had been the case historically. However, roles and expectations for CSO-government engagement vary considerably across the countries, as do levels of CSO autonomy, coordination and mobilization. Both sides of the CSO-government equation shape the degree to which CSOs participate in the national education policy arena. In the terms suggested by Lister and Nyamugasira (2003), it matters both whether CSOs are "**invited**" to the policy table by government, and whether CSOs have the autonomy and resources to "**create**" and define their own policy roles and spaces.

Below, we look in more detail at the CSO experience of engagement in the design and subsequent management of sector programs in each of our case countries. We begin with what we might describe as the two more successful cases of CSO engagement in sector plans, in Tanzania and Burkina Faso (acknowledging that these experiences are nonetheless mixed). We then turn to two cases in which the experiences of CSO engagement in the policy processes surrounding new sector programs seems to have diminished (Kenya and Mali).

Tanzania

In Tanzania, the character of CSO engagement in the country's education sector plan (PEDP) revolves much more unequivocally around watchdog and advocacy functions than in any of our other countries. Tanzania boasts the longest standing and most robust CSO coordinating body in the education sector of any of our four case countries, TEN/MET. TEN/MET predates the sector program, and has the

most well-developed organizational structure in terms of membership, communications, and regularized processes for interaction with government.

TEN/MET had already established itself as an independent and critical voice in the education policy arena before the negotiations began on the PEDP in 2001, through the research and advocacy work around abolishing primary-level user-fees undertaken by some of its leading members. By the time the PEDP was in the design stage, TEN/MET had already helped to "create" a new kind of policy space for CSOs in the education sector, and it was able to use its past experiences get new roles for CSOs written into the PEDP. Some of these roles echoed approaches supported by the international community in other country programs (e.g., creation of the school capitation grant for management by SMCs). But other aspects were quite unique. Thus, for example, Tanzania's sector plan gives a relatively high level of attention to the policy, research, advocacy and accountability roles to be played by CSOs. PEDP is the only sector plan that specifically mentions "advocacy" as a legitimate role for civil society organizations in the sector.

Subsequent to the launch of the PEDP, civil society actors in Tanzania appear to have retained both an independent capacity to critique government through evidence-based policy research, and a regular presence within the formal (and largely centralized) mechanisms established for consultation under the PEDP, including the annual joint evaluation missions and a variety of thematic groups.[36] CSOs have also developed impressive ability to leverage moral and material support from external partners, both bilateral donors and non-governmental actors.

However, the enlarged and autonomous space for civil society in relation to Tanzania's basic education sector program established in the design phase of the PEDP, has faced significant challenge in the implementation stage of the program. Overall, while CSO participation in national policy deliberations has become an expected feature of national policy processes, the Tanzanian government still sets the terms for CSO engagement, and has not established transparent mechanisms for selecting its partners and interlocutors. Some organizations – especially well-established complementary service providers, FAWE and Aga Khan Foundation, have developed a special relationship with the government. Furthermore, when CSOs have taken a critical stance towards PEDP's implementation, the Tanzanian government has made considerable effort to contain CSO voice by limiting CSO engagement in PEDP, banning publications, amplifying the threat of deregistration that is broadly perceived by CSOs in all sectors in Tanzania (Haggerty et al. 2007). Thus in 2005, the government threatened to ban HakiElimu and prevented it from participating as a CSO representative in various sector meetings, after it published a report critical of the government's efforts to reach PEDP goals.

Many other CSOs in our Tanzanian field study reported that government seems to limit or delay access to information, send out late invitations, change meeting dates, and selectively invite CSO participants in a manner favoring complementary service providers over more critical organizations. In this context, the ability of Tanzanian CSOs to use relationships with external actors to leverage greater policy space and voice has proven an invaluable asset. Broad commitment of different types of CSO actors to the TEN/MET agenda has also been important: for example, in the HakiElimu incident, less contentious members of the coalition were willing to represent the coalitions' views to government.

The Tanzanian CSO experience offers an especially important illustration of the challenges to CSO advocacy and watchdog roles that emerge in the period after broadly endorsed free primary education commitments are made by government with the support of donors. It alerts us to the fact that when CSOs turn their sights to the public monitoring of quality and equity issues within a putatively free and universal

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[36] Interestingly, CSOs have been much less involved in the Secondary Education Development Plan, which has been developed largely between the government and the World Bank.

system, they may face a new round of challenges from government over the legitimacy of their advocacy and monitoring roles.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, CSO involvement with the national education sector program (PDDEB) has moved from very limited engagement to much more active participation. However, in contrast to the Tanzania case, CSOs in Burkina Faso have adopted a far more collaborative and supportive approach, and are still only at the early stages in defining a common platform or agenda for CSO engagement in the sector program.

In the country field study prepared for this report, Maclure et al. (2007), found that CSOs were very much marginalized in the design stage of the PDDEB. Although individual experts from CSOs were invited to participate as consultants, and national dialogue and consultations were held before the finalization of the plan, many Burkinabe CSOs told us that the central focus of the PDDEB – on decentralization reforms and budget support – was primarily the result of a compact between government and three main donor organizations. Teachers' unions in Burkina Faso were excluded from the design of the PDDEB, primarily because the government recognized the unions' opposition to policies that might contain the costs of teachers' salaries. Yet other actors too felt left out. Ironically, as Maclure et al. note, "CSOs were largely excluded from the formulation of a plan that was specifically designed to increase their involvement." The net result was that when the PDDEB was launched in 2002, most CSO stakeholders regarded it as a well-funded, donor-initiated project.

Despite the top-down orientation of the design phase of the PDDEB, many CSOs subsequently endorsed the sector plan and reoriented their activities to complement its goals. As one NGO representative told us:

> *The PDDEB was brought about by [the Ministry of Education] MEBA and several donor agencies (PTFs), but we acknowledge a role for ourselves in this, so we have participated in dialogue with them and others to see how we can find a comparative advantage in this process* (NGO representative, Burkina Faso).

To a degree that appears to be unique within our case studies, CSOs in Burkina Faso have become particularly active at the regional level, where the sector plan stipulates that annual education plans must be developed around a consultative process that includes teachers, heads, education officials, parents' associations, CBOs and NGOs. They also report active engagement in the joint evaluation missions conducted by government with its major donors. CSOs also actively participate in FONAENF, a fund for non-formal education created under the sector plan (using 1% of its resources) that is jointly managed by NGOs, government and donors. FONAENF has stimulated the growth of community-based educational organizations, but perhaps more importantly, it has also given several national NGOs and a growing number of small local CSOs a tangible stake in the national sector plan. The momentum for CSO engagement has also spilled over into the *Cadre de Concertation en Education de Base* (CCEB), which with resources from INGO members has begun to play more marked advocacy and monitoring roles.

Thus through three mechanisms (joint evaluation missions, regional planning processes, and the FONAENF) Burkina Faso's education sector plan has set the stage for an increased role for CSOs in the educational policy arena. The country now boasts a routine and somewhat regularized set of expectations for CSO consultation; and a broadly shared sense of commitment to the sector plan among CSO actors. In part, this has been possible because of the absence of a well-organized CSO opposition to the sector reform program (as was the case in Mali, for example, *see below*). However, it is also important to note that in contrast to Tanzania, CSOs have embraced the gradualist approach to the achievement of universal primary

education, through an accepted pattern of *faire-faire* (partnership) relationships at decentralized levels that is set out in the PDDEB.

Kenya

Kenya has seen a surprising lack of coordinated CSO engagement in the education sector, after heightened expectations during the period surrounding the 2002 election of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Early on in its campaign, NARC formed a strategic alliance with the Elimu Yetu Coalition, and made universal free primary education one of its central campaign promises. In this context, Elimu Yetu developed a high public and policy profile, both through commissioned studies on user fees and other key issues, and via its alliance with NARC.

However, CSO engagement in the development of Kenya's education sector plan later disappointed the expectations of a new era in government-CSO partnership raised by the early alliance with NARC. In 2003, the new government held a National Conference on Education and Training, inviting input from a broad range of CSOs. However, while recommendations from the National Conference fed into the development of Kenya's education sector plan (KESSP), only a handful of organizations reported actual involvement in the KESSP design. These included FAWE (for gender components); the Undugu Society (non-formal education); and especially the National Council of Churches of Kenya and the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims, who were active in both holding regional consultations and in thematic task forces. As in Burkina Faso, Kenya's National Union of Teachers reported that it was not consulted or engaged in the KESSP design.

CSO engagement in the implementation and monitoring of the KESSP has also been quite uneven. KESSP provides several structures for CSO participation, including an annual Education Stakeholders Forum, a National Advisory Council and a KESSP Steering Committee. However, there are no clear rules guiding government invitations to such fora. CSOs are often invited to consultations on specific policy issues, such as the new legislative framework for the national education system, and on specific thematic issues, such as early childhood education. However, because of the weak leadership and capacity in the Elimu Yetu coalition since 2003, CSO input is ad hoc and relatively disorganized. In some contexts, such as in the government-led National Educational Advisory Council (a body established to advise the Minister on an 'as need' basis), the National NGO Council is named as the lead CSO. Only a few individual NGOs (FAWE, Aga Khan Foundation, the National Parents' Association) have good direct working relationships within the Ministry of Education and are invited to play a leadership role on specific issues within the sector program (notably gender equity, teacher training, and early childhood education). Finally, the National Council of Churches (and to a lesser degree other faith-based groups) also seems to play a proactive role in advocating for greater accommodation of CSO views. Overall, CSOs' capacity to develop coordinated responses to government policies, and to engage in watchdog and accountability activities that mobilize citizens, is much weaker in Kenya than in Tanzania.

There seem to be several reasons for this loss in the momentum for CSO coordination around issues of basic education quality and access. First, the election of the NARC government and its announcement of free primary education left EYC without a strong, commonly shared CSO agenda in the education sector. At that point, different views on who should control schools and curricula began to emerge (for example, the National Council of Churches began to lobby to regain control of its former schools), and several important CSOs (most notably the Kenya Private Sector Association, KEPSA) also argued for more emphasis on higher levels of education. In addition, there remains an unresolved tension between government and CSOs around questions of autonomy and the appropriate role for CSOs within the sector. In our interviews with Ministry staff, for example, we were told by a very senior official that under KESSP, the government's role is to serve as a think-tank, to undertake policy development, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation. In

contrast, CSOs were conceptualized as "implementers" providing services where government cannot reach.[37] The tension between government and CSO role expectations is further amplified by the unresolved status of the National NGO Council, which as we have seen above acts both as the registrar of NGOs and as the officially recognized coordinating body for NGOs.[38] Government efforts to bloc CSO efforts to reform the Council have amplified concerns about CSO autonomy in the country, raising the perceived threat of government reprisals over other critical advocacy and monitoring work. As one NGO representative told us, "Of course in Kenya we know the problem of politics. Because in Kenya we know there is tension between the NGOs and the cabinet. The government believes the NGOs get funding from donors to fight them" (NGO representative, Kenya). In this context, it is not surprising to find that individual CSOs (especially well-established NGOs) concentrate on finding complementary service roles within the sector program, using this to leverage policy change inside the Ministry rather than engaging in active and public forms of advocacy and monitoring.[39]

Overall then, the engagement of CSOs in the sector plan in Kenya seems to be somewhat truncated and weakly coordinated. While some CSOs have emerged as policy partners in specific thematic areas, CSOs showed limited will and capacity to organize a coordinated monitoring and watchdog role vis-à-vis the sector plan once universal free primary education was announced. This absence of CSO oversight is especially significant in Kenya, where governmental failure to enforce free access to primary education has been a recurrent problem (Muthwii 2004), and where current anecdotal evidence suggests that parental contributions are slowly being reintroduced.

Mali

Despite evidence of significant CSO consultation in the design process of Mali's education sector plan (PRODEC), and strong support for CSO engagement from the government itself (Tounkara 2001), in Mali, as in Burkina Faso, a significant number of CSOs told us that they view the PRODEC as a donor-led accord, with donors drawing its central policies from a pre-established policy reform model. As one national NGO representative commented:

> *from one country to another, it's the same thing: in Mali, in Burkina, in Senegal, in Niger, there's PRODEC* (NGO Representative, Mali).

However, in contrast to Burkina Faso, a much wider and more divided view of the engagement of CSO actors in the design and implementation of the PRODEC emerged from our interviews in Mali. On the one hand, civil society actors with strong international linkages, who have traditionally played an extensive role in complementary service provision, tended to describe the PRODEC as the fruit of wide consultation. Some, most notably ROCARE, a regional research network, played a strong leadership role in the process (ROCARE's regional coordinator, who led the PRODEC, was a part of the design team that drafted key sections of the plan itself). Many of these organizations were pleased to see lessons learned from the NGO-sponsored community school movement adopted in the PRODEC design, including the value of building pro-active school-level management structures for civil society participation. Thus INGOs and major national NGOs were supportive of PRODEC's central goals, including its decentralization reforms. In contrast, a second cluster of civil society actors, including teachers' unions, parents' representatives, and some national NGOs, told us that they were not adequately consulted. They spoke of invitations arriving too

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[37] Another comment, by a donor representative, noted that at major KESSP budget meetings the focus is on "who brings [resources]" not on policy input from CSOs. This view of CSOs is carried through in the recent development of a "communications strategy" by the Ministry (supported by donors), which by definition sees CSOs as recipients of governmentally designed efforts.

[38] At the time of our field research, a group that called itself the "Progressive NGOs" was working to resolve governance issues in the NCNGO in Kenya.

[39] The tendency among well-established NGOs to work "within" the Ministry structure for change is also linked to the fact that most major NGOs employ staff who are former ministry officials (often from quite senior posts).

late, unavailable government documents and too few seats available for CSOs. They also strongly disagreed with aspects of PRODEC's decentralization reforms. The overall impression we gained was that civil society engagement in the design of Mali's sector program, while quite high in comparison to Burkina Faso, was nonetheless quite fragmented.

This fragmentation of CSO engagement in Mali continued into the implementation phase of the PRODEC. Our research (and that of others), found that Malian CSOs lack basic understanding of the decision-making spaces established under PRODEC (Aide et Action 2005), with few participating in the consultative structures, joint evaluation missions or joint thematic groups (other than in the area of non-formal education). Furthermore, despite a unique recent effort by the government to engage unions, parents' associations and students' associations in the adoption of a common platform for peaceful and performing schools,[40] and the fact that government meets regularly on an individual basis with unions, the national federation for parents' associations and the national students' association, many actors reported a lack of regular mechanisms for CSO engagement in the PRODEC. The fact that decentralization plans have been implemented without adequate direction, communication and transfer of resources, has also limited CSO engagement and coordination in new local-level policy spaces, producing further fragmentation. Such fragmentation and lack of coordination helps to explain a unique feature of the Mali case – the widespread report, from donors and civil society actors alike, that apart from regular invitations issued to teachers' and parents' associations, there has been a diminishing level of CSO participation (especially from NGOs), in the national education sector policy arena, particularly since PRODEC has moved from design into implementation.

However, we still need to ask why CSO engagement in Mali's education sector program has been so weak in comparison to that in other counties. Our research suggests two major explanations. First, in contrast to Tanzania and Kenya, in Mali organized opposition to key aspects of the sector program (particularly its decentralization reforms), the long history of NGO direct service provision, as well as donor preference for a more gradualist approach to EFA, each worked against the development of a broadly-based CSO campaign around the issue of governmental provision of basic education. Even though many CSO representatives strongly recognize the importance of establishing some kind of coordinating body to interface with government, CSO engagement in Mali's education sector program has continued to revolve around individual bargaining between government and the stronger and better established CSOs.

Recent events, including both increasing donor support for policies of universal access and fee abolition, and the emergence of a national EFA coalition committed to rapid achievement of Education for All, may signal a shift in this dynamic in the near future.[41] However, the longstanding proclivity of CSOs to work through individual negotiations with government in Mali suggests that Malian civil society actors will face some of the same challenges as Kenya in trying to maintain a cohesive platform for further watchdog and advocacy roles should the government indeed move towards the rapid achievement of universal free primary education.

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[40] The *Accord de partenariat pour une école apaisée et performante* is an agreement seeking to resolve the long-standing state of crisis and frequent disruptions within the education system. In the agreement, government and civil society actors committed to specific actions so as to improve the quality, reach and smooth-functioning of the system. This agreement included a wide group of CSOs, including NGOs, faith-based organizations, private providers and others.

[41] In June 2007, Mali hosted an ADEA, World Bank & UNICEF-convened conference, "School Fee Abolition, planning for quality and for financial sustainability" See School Fee Abolition Initiative (2007) and the website: http://www.adeanet.org/meetings/en_SFAI-2007-Bamako.htm. Aide et Action and Oxfam have also recently begun campaigns focused on abolition of fees.

Changing Government-Civil Society Relationships at the National Level

Changes in CSO-government and CSO-donor relationships are a given feature of the new aid architecture that supports education sector programs in our four case countries. One of the central principles of aid effectiveness is the placement of development funds directly under government leadership, to be used in agreed-upon sector plans. Across all our case countries, there has been a drop in direct funding from bilateral donors to NGOs, a heightened level of policy dialogue between donors and government, and a new (but relatively untested) framework calling for the engagement of CSOs. We were thus not surprised to find many similar trends in CSO-government relationships across our case countries, differing more in degree than in kind.

For example, while an increased level of consultation between government and CSOs was apparent in all of our cases, tensions in the relationships between governments and CSOs were often mentioned. The main root of this tension seems to rest in the different views about appropriate CSO roles and autonomy in relation to government and to the new education sector plans. Governments in all cases seemed to see the greatest role for CSOs in complementary service provision, resource mobilization and especially in the development of capacity at local levels of the system. However, many government officials also worried that CSOs lack capacity, are poorly organized, lack accountability, and are not respectful of government's leadership roles. The officials wanted to see more transparency and direct reporting to government of their activities – in some cases even mentioning the fact that NGO resources should be integrated and reported on as part of the sector plan. Clearly there were winners and losers in the evolution of CSO-government relationships, with internationally-connected NGOs, retooled to deliver complementary services in a decentralized system, awarded a special place at the policy table.

CSOs, for their part, widely acknowledged that they had been given a new place at the national policy table and are benefiting from political liberalization. However, they were still fearful of efforts by government to regulate their activities, particularly in Tanzania and Kenya. Some CSOs also feared government corruption and were skeptical of proposals that might see them operate as direct subcontractors to the government. For example, one respondent, who had managed a direct subcontract with government using World Bank resources, described direct subcontracting as an abject failure, further noting:

> *Government having a pool of money to give out to CSOs is dangerous for Kenya. It will never be. That money will never reach us. Anything that goes to Government is a long process, first to treasury and the different departments…there will be too much money missing* (NGO Representative, Kenya).

Even in Burkina Faso, which appeared to have the most consistently collaborative and cooperative of CSO-government relationships, CSOs raised questions about the degree to which CSOs should be expected to substitute for the state in the delivery of key components of the education system (for example, teacher training), and the extent to which new government-CSO relationships were characterized by cooptation by government and donors.

Finally, we noted across our case countries that civil society actors rarely have direct or sustained relationships with parliamentarians or parliamentary committees, although in both Tanzania and Kenya CSOs indicated some limited recent contact with parliamentary groups. Instead CSO relationships with government revolve almost entirely around the Ministry of Education, with some attention (mainly for fundraising) to local elected officials. Our Tanzanian informants were particularly worried about the CSO habit of concentrating on "within-Ministry leverage" (i.e., engaging with only the Ministry of Education, not other parts of government), pointing out that power wielded by Ministries of Education within government can be quite limited, especially when external funding, in the form of direct budgetary support, is controlled by the Ministry of Finance (NGO Representatives, Tanzania). The concentration of CSO engagement on within-Ministry processes also raises much deeper questions about the nature of democratic politics in our

case countries (ActionAid/CARE 2006; AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b). The centralization of authority and control within the executive branch is a predominant feature in all our case countries. At the moment, the concentration of CSO engagement on within-Ministry government relations neglects formal political and parliamentary channels for representing citizens and guaranteeing that their rights are protected and supported by government. As such, CSOs may actually be contributing to the further underdevelopment of formal democracy.

Changing Relationships in the Context of Decentralization

Across all our case countries, a majority of CSOs see decentralization reforms as a positive opening for civil society. Many are seeking to refocus their activities around the capacity development of decentralized, local-level authorities, responding in part to the existence of earmarked funds for local training of school management committees (or parents' associations) in all our countries. In Mali, we even interviewed several teachers (whose unions have opposed decentralization reforms) who mentioned the value of school management committees as a positive new arena for the expression of teacher voice. Comments such as the following were common in all case studies:

> *Decentralization of governance in education is a step in the right direction. It opens up new avenues for accountability and CSO participation. It makes the system much more open to scrutiny* (NGO representative, Kenya).

> *Decentralization is now a national endeavor – all projects have to be the responsibility of communes which are part of the action plans...The community development approach is based on partnership* (INGO representative, Burkina Faso).

However, in three countries, Kenya, Tanzania and Mali, the relationships between CSOs and local educational authorities (including school management committees) were also highlighted as potentially problematic. Relationships and lines of authority among various local-level authorities (school management committees, elected local governments and decentralized Ministry staff) were still uncertain in many contexts, and are often described as characterized by duplication, lack of resources, and confusion. New donor-funded CSO capacity-building activities at decentralized levels have the potential to add further to this confusion by creating a multitude of CSO-led capacity development initiatives outside of a consistent framework for community-level citizen and CSO engagement. Sector programs, and the governments and donors supporting their implementation, send mixed messages about whether the focus of decentralized CSO engagement should be on 1) the training of school committees and local authorities for enhanced efficiency; 2) enhanced community and citizen participation in watchdog and monitoring roles; or, 3) resource mobilization from communities. Little wonder that we were told in Tanzania and Mali that some recently decentralized local authorities view CSOs as interfering and challenging their authority.

Equally important, there are very few CSOs in any of our case countries with the reach and capacity to engage in nation-wide programs of citizen engagement and mobilization around issues of EFA. Even in Tanzania, with the most well-organized and coordinated CSO coalition, the challenges of developing robust mechanisms for spreading information about educational policies and goals, and creating autonomous forums for citizen engagement in monitoring and implementing EFA programs, appeared quite daunting. Building processes for linking up engagement in the local governance of educational institutions with greater citizen voice in the national-level policy process seems to be an important next step in all our case countries.

Finally, it is worth reiterating the concerns raised Chapter 2. Decentralization reforms are widely imagined as contributing to the fabric of democracy and to citizen voice. However, as a parents' association representative in Burkina Faso eloquently told us:

> *Decentralization policies are very difficult in poor regions...poverty limits people's participation* (CSO Representative, Burkina Faso).

The effects of poverty on participation are especially worrisome in contexts where new local governance structures are seen by government and donors as avenues for parental resource mobilization – as is significantly the case in Burkina Faso and Mali (and to a lesser degree, Tanzania). The emphasis on resource mobilization can lead both to unequal representation of the poor within such structures, and inequality between regions with different socio-economic demographics. In our own interviews and in other research, it is commonly concluded that many parents simply cannot pay dues expected of them by parents' associations or school management committees (Bentaouette 2006; School Fee Abolition Initiative 2007). On the other hand, without such fees, schools have limited resources with which to provide quality services (LaFraniere 2006).

Further research needs to be done on the trade-offs between parental resource mobilization and parental voice in decentralization strategies – perhaps beginning from the starting point proposed by De Grauwe and associates, that widespread signs of parental dedication to the education of their children "can surely be used for better purposes than that of resource mobilization" (2005: 11).

Relationships between Donors and CSOs

Informants in all of our case studies told us that relationships between donor organizations and civil society organizations have been changing rapidly in the context of new sector programs. In Mali, Tanzania and Kenya, many CSOs described a drop in international funding for their activities – sometimes a precipitous one. In Mali in particular, several organizations expressed frustration with the fact that donors still tend to channel funding through their own NGOs rather than directly to Southern groups. In Burkina Faso, CSOs also cautioned that when donors delay disbursements of sector funds, due to government failure to meet conditionalities, CSOs can suffer:

> *We [NGOs] don't have the same way as donor agencies in seeing things... NGOs are more attuned to immediate action, and we see the educational needs of the children. But the donors provide money to the government and they set all sorts of precautions because they don't have much confidence that the government will do what is recommended. So there are all these [donor] conditionalities, and so things advance very slowly. That is why funds from the panier commun [common funding basket] were four months delayed in being released for the 2006 fiscal year. It caused a lot of worry, especially regarding payments for infrastructure building* (NGO Representative, Mali).

CSOs in all countries all noted that a decline in opportunities to meet with international technical and financial partners has characterized the period following the introduction of sector programs. One Burkina Faso NGO representative went so far as to comment:

> *Sometimes one has the impression that the donor agencies consider NGOs a bit of a nuisance...that they see us as either agitors or that we are standing cap in hand for their PDDEB money...*(NGO representative, Burkina Faso).

However, in some contexts CSOs praised donors for helping them to leverage a greater degree of CSO engagement in national policy processes. In the eyes of Tanzanian CSOs, for example, donors emerged as cautious but significant allies of CSOs in the face of government efforts to contain CSO engagement in the HakiElimu affair, keeping the CSOs informed of major policy discussions, making sure they were aware of rescheduled meetings, and circulating relevant documents and information to CSOs. This role was more muted in Kenya and Burkina Faso, where donors nonetheless reported sometimes including CSOs in their donor coordinating meetings and encouraging CSO participation in other joint bodies and evaluations. In

Mali, donors expressed willingness to advocate for decision-making space for CSOs (but gave no example of new spaces that have been created as a result of such efforts).

However, the more surprising finding from our case studies was the degree to which donor organizations lack a well-informed and coordinated strategy for supporting CSO involvement in the education sector. Some donors (a clear minority in our field studies) told us: "it's government's responsibility to build relationships with its own civil society" (Donor Interview, Mali). However, the far wider impression we received was that donors want to support enhanced roles for civil society but aren't sure how to do so in the new policy context unfolding under sector-wide programs. We were surprised how little donors seemed to know about local CSOs and their capacities – or even about the funding given by various branches of their own organizations to education sector CSOs.[42] Even where donor knowledge of CSOs appeared to be quite extensive, there seemed to be no strategic plan guiding their relationships with CSOs. Examples from interviews with donors in Mali and in Kenya illustrate the point:

> *We're very concerned by the weak capacities of civil society, by the fact that civil society doesn't seem to have a platform for action; we are trying to think of projects or programs to support civil society, but civil society is so diffuse and changeable, we don't know what to focus on first […] in education, with budget support, donors will have less and less contact with civil society, this concerns us because we know that civil society has a big role to play in implementing PRODEC; this is a puzzle – how to reinforce civil society to play its role? We haven't figured out a concrete way to do this, so for the moment, we just play an advocacy role […] if you have answers, we'd be interested to know, we and other donors have been juggling with this for years […] the challenge is to bring structure to this disorganized context – we just react to individual proposals […] what is needed is a more holistic, macro-approach* (Donor Interview, Mali).

> *… In reviewing the partnership agreement we are asking, what is it that we wanted from the NGOs? And particularly what should be the role of the coordinating NGOs? Is it advocacy or provision? Are they working to the government plans or are they working to fill in gaps? […] The system we have is not meeting the needs of NGOs themselves. In fact, probably, there is a downplaying, in a way, of the role NGOs can play in their advocacy role and lobbying role* (Donor Interview, Kenya).

In all the countries we studied, (with the exception of Tanzania), donors have generally shown limited interest in providing the kind of core funding that might enable national CSOs to engage in sustained programs of research or advocacy. Many donors prefer to channel funds through their own national NGOs, for reasons of familiarity and trust, and have only begun to experiment with direct funding of Southern organizations. Nor do donors have clear rules or transparent processes for selecting which CSOs they interact with and support. However, despite this general lack of a common framework for supporting CSOs, most donors have begun to experiment with project or (less frequently) programmatic support for CSO engagement with the sector plan. Notably:

- In Burkina Faso, this can be seen in the agreement to establish a fund for CBO-led non-formal education initiatives (FONAENF). Managed jointly by donors, government and CSOs, this effort focuses on expanding CSO service delivery roles. As a side effect, it also seems to have empowered the CSOs that sit on its board.
- In Tanzania, a number of donors provide pooled funding for TEN/MET and a few strong national CSOs. They also provide support to the Foundation for Civil Society, an independent body that makes grants to support civil society organizations in policy and governance roles. These initiatives

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[42] For example, in Kenya DFID staff did not seem to know that the Elimu Yetu Coalition received funding from the Commonwealth Education Fund, whose resources are provided by DFID; while CIDA staff had no list of Canadian CSOs working in the education sector with CIDA funding.

are unique in that the donors directly support an advocacy and independent monitoring role for civil society organizations (rather than the more typical focus on CSOs as service deliverers).

- In all case countries, bilateral donors (most notably USAID) have continued to provide project funding to CSOs for the development of district-level management and governance capacities. These have included training programs for school management committees, district school improvement initiatives, and district planning processes.
- Small amounts of donor funding have also been channeled to national coalitions through INGOs, or other hybrid mechanisms. For example, the Commonwealth Education Fund (financed primarily by DFID, but managed by ActionAid, Oxfam and Save UK) provides some funding for national coalitions, and policy and advocacy efforts by individual CSOs in Kenya and Tanzania; the African Network Coalition on Education for All (ANCEFA) has also received bilateral funding to enhance the capacity of African national EFA-CSO coalitions (through its "Real World Strategies").

However, CSOs view these different models of donor support with mixed enthusiasm. Many are seen as providing too many small pots of funding, and failing to provide sufficient opportunity for CSOs to define their own agendas. Each initiative has specific limits. For example, the Burkina experiment with a donor-government-CSO managed responsive fund for non-formal education was seen by some CSOs as contributing to the domestication and cooptation of CSOs – rather than to their development as critics and watchdogs of the government. In Tanzania, TEN/MET members were opposed to the idea promoted by donors of using the organization as an intermediary granting organization, noting that such a role might undermine the collaborative essence of its activities with members. Where donor funding is channeled to CSOs involved in subnational capacity development of local authorities, questions were raised about whether such activities are intended to build the capacity for independent citizen deliberation and oversight, or simply to enhance the administrative efficiency and accountability of the government-controlled program.

As with the CSO-government nexus, certain actors, particularly teachers' unions, other constituency-based groups and many smaller local NGOs, do not participate actively in these programs of donor support for CSO engagement; donors' main recipients are major NGOs.

Finally, CSOs often expressed to us that they believe they have a legitimate role in monitoring donors and their commitments to sector programs in education. However, we could find no example of donors contributing to CSO efforts in this regard. Although donors do increasingly support international CSO efforts to monitor EFA (as, for example, the national branches of the Global Campaign for Education, and initiatives like Save the Children's *Rewrite the Future* campaign), it was unclear in our research whether donor organizations consider monitoring of international donors a legitimate part of the business of national CSOs.

Conclusion: Assessing Challenges and Opportunities Posed by Sector Programs

In this chapter, we set out to describe and assess the evolving character of CSO engagement in the context of new education sector plans.

We note that quite distinctive experiences have unfolded in our four case countries:

- In Tanzania, CSO engagement is relatively well-coordinated and includes impressive use of evidence-based policy advocacy. However, CSO efforts to play effective monitoring and watchdog roles have not been well-received by government, and there is also a perceived weakness in the capacity of the CSO coalition to reach rural and more marginalized CSOs and citizen groups.
- In Burkina Faso, civil society engagement is active and growing, especially in regional and decentralized fora. However, in contrast to Tanzania, civil society organizations in Burkina Faso

have embraced the gradualist approach to EFA that the government and donors have adopted in the sector plan.

- Both Kenya and Mali have seen a decrease in effective CSO engagement in the national education policy arena. In Kenya, this is partly due to the loss of a common CSO mobilizing frame after the declaration of free primary education; but it also reflects larger tensions between governments and autonomous CSO actors.
- Finally, in Mali, CSOs have not yet been able to develop a common platform for engaging government on educational issues – their efforts here are just emerging. The Mali case can perhaps best be understood by contrast to the Burkina and Tanzania cases. In contrast to Burkina Faso, Mali has a number of well-endowed CSOs who have objected to key features of the sector program (especially decentralization reforms), thus limiting the potential for a broad-based, collaborative CSO response to the sector program embracing a gradualist approach to EFA. On the other hand, until recently there has been no movement in Mali to develop a coalition around the issue of governmentally provided free primary education (as has occurred in Tanzania).

Together, these cases highlight the fact that there are challenges to both more contentious and more collaborative forms of CSO engagement in sector programs. They also suggest just how fragile and hard-won effective civil society coordination can be. Civil society coordination depends crucially on the development of a common mobilizing frame or agenda. Perhaps because of the strong international support for rights-based approaches, the use of "universal free primary education" as a mobilizing frame has proven particularly powerful as a starting point for CSO coordination. However, such frames have to be negotiated and owned at the national level; and renegotiated (and re-owned) when specific goals are achieved.

We have also described some common patterns in CSO-government relationships in the context of new sector programs. Across all our cases, CSOs are now accepted participants in sector programs. However, government-CSO relations are also fraught with tension and confusion about appropriate CSO roles and mandates; and governments still have the ultimate say over who gets invited to the policy table, and for which purposes. There are no clear rules guiding the selection of CSO interlocutors in policy processes. A great deal of complexity also exists in government-CSO relationships at decentralized levels, where lines of authority are often unclear and there are distinct tensions between efforts to mobilize parental resources as opposed to parental voice and oversight. Finally, most CSOs only weakly engage parliamentarians or the executive in their efforts to support the achievement of better basic education in their countries: their relationships are largely concentrated on within-Ministry processes in a way that may be undermining rather than supporting the formal fabric of democracy.

In the last section of this chapter, we turned to look at CSO-donor relationships in the context of new sector programs. Our findings suggest that CSOs are unsatisfied with the level and scope of donor support for their policy and advocacy efforts, and wary of initiatives that place CSOs in subcontracting roles vis-à-vis government. While donors are seeking new ways of supporting CSO engagement in sector programs, the majority have been slow to support autonomous advocacy and watchdog roles in our case countries. Overall there is a strong case to be made for experimentation with a range of mechanisms to support new CSO roles.

Chapters 5: Synthesis, Lessons and Policy Implications

Introduction

New efforts to revitalize and expand basic education systems have become central to the national development plans of many African countries over the past decade. They are different from past efforts on three counts. First, national efforts are supported by the international community on a larger scale than ever before, often through innovative sectoral approaches that fund national education sector plans rather than individual projects (Buchert 2002; Lavergne & Alba 2003). Second, such changes are occurring in a context of political liberalization and democratic consolidation, within which citizen demand appears to reinforce governmental commitments to universal provision of primary education (Stasavage 2005; Bratton 2007). Finally, new education sector plans now routinely recognize an important role for civil society organizations in the realization of national basic educational goals (Lexow 2003; Kruse 2003; Ratcliffe & Macrae 1999).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are increasingly expected to be partners in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of these new national educational sector plans and policies. In this sense, sector programs have opened up greater political space for CSO participation and representation in the education sector policy arena. However, the new aid architecture for education has created not only opportunities, but also significant challenges for civil society participation and engagement in the education sector.

Below, we synthesize the findings from our fieldwork in four countries: Kenya, Mali, Tanzania and Burkina Faso. We look at the opportunities as well as the "design contradictions" for civil society actors within new sector programs; the changing dynamics between CSOs, donors, and governments that such programs have engendered; and the cross-national variation of CSO experiences as they attempt to play new kinds of policy roles in the context of education sector plans. A final section draws from our research to identify three specific policy challenges for international actors interested in supporting greater civil society engagement in education.

Synthesis of our Findings

1. Tensions and Contradictions in the Design of Sector Programs

The new education sector programs launched in our four case countries focus on the expansion and improvement of educational services, particularly at the basic education level; they introduce new forms of donor coordination and harmonization; and they establish a nationally-owned framework for educational reform. They also mandate increased engagement of civil society actors in the achievement of sector plans. In all of these dimensions, these programs thus embody principles that the international community has identified as crucial for aid effectiveness, which focus on the harmonization and coordination of international assistance around nationally-owned and -led approaches to poverty reduction and economic growth (Lavergne & Alba 2003; Lavergne & Wood 2006).

However, this study has also suggested that the new education sector programs contain important "design contradictions" (to use a term borrowed from Lister & Nyamugasira 2003), that raise real challenges for the roles and expectations of civil society organizations.

Emerging principles of aid effectiveness typically describe civil society as contributing to development in three ways:

- enhancing educational services for citizens;
- contributing to the fabric of formal democracy;
- empowering citizens to make educational claims– especially those that are poor or marginalized (AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b).

The focus of sector programs in all four of our countries is firmly on the first rationale for civil society participation: enhancing the provision of services. In all our case countries, sector programs and the government officials and donor organizations that have designed them, recognize that civil society organizations need to play a direct and instrumental role in the achievement of system expansion and quality improvements, acknowledging that CSOs bring flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness and the ability to raise resources to the sector table.

But sector programs are far less clear about the contributions that civil society actors make to the fabric of formal democracy, and to the empowerment of the poor or marginalized. Only in Tanzania is direct reference made to "advocacy" as a legitimate role for civil society actors (other sector programs focus on "partnership" or "participation"). There is also no explicit mention of regularizing opportunities for the public to interface with the elected branches of government in the oversight of sector programs. Instead, and by design, the governance of sector programs is focused on Ministry of Education-CSO engagement – a dangerous emphasis in contexts where sector funding is controlled by other Ministries (particularly the Ministry of Finance, in the case of General Budget Support), and where centralization of power in the executive has long limited the development of citizen engagement in formal democratic processes.

Tensions or gaps in the way that sector programs conceptualize a role for civil society actors can also be seen in several other dimensions of their design:

- Sector programs do not establish a clear procedural framework for civil society engagement at the national level. For example, there is no regularized and transparent process for choosing civil society interlocutors in key policy processes; and no clear framework explaining why certain civil society actors (and not others) should be "invited" to the policy table. Most sector plans also assume harmonious, collaborative interaction with CSOs; there is little discussion of competing interests or goals. The absence of a transparent procedural framework allows governments to control who sits at the policy table, and often leads to the exclusion of CSOs that have potentially critical or destabilizing viewpoints. This can work against the development of broadly-based, democratic forms of deliberation at the national level.

- Sector programs tend to employ an imagery of "partnership" around the financing and provision of education, begging the question: do sector programs view private/CSO funding and provision of basic education as "unfortunately necessary" or "inherently desirable"? By leaving these questions vague, sector programs create considerable uncertainty for CSOs. Sector programs not only reinforce longstanding tensions between the service delivery and advocacy roles CSOs play; they also foster administrative confusion about the relative responsibilities of the central state, subnational authorities and CSOs in guaranteeing access to quality basic education.

- Most sector programs emphasize new accountability roles for civil society actors at the local or decentralized level – largely based on the idea that the engagement of community-level actors in the oversight of schools will keep national sector plans on track. In some cases, decentralized engagement is "locked in" by donor funding, through conditionalities that require governments to disburse funding to school-level management committees with parental representation. However, we noted five "design contradictions" for civil society in decentralization reform programs.

o Decentralized reforms are often introduced to "break" previous forms of civil society leverage in the sector (especially the hold of teachers' unions in the Francophone case countries).[43]

o They tend to produce unclear and sometimes overlapping responsibility and authority structures, especially between locally elected authorities and school management committees, and between CSOs, local authorities and decentralized Ministry staff. This tension is often manifest in anticipated roles for CSOs. Donors fund CSOs to engage in capacity enhancement of local authorities and structures, but although local authorities may welcome such contributions, they are also likely to question CSO efforts to enhance parental oversight over 'their' schools.

o While sector programs imagined that decentralized structures are inherently more democratic and invite participation, research suggests that they are often captured by local elites and limit the voice of the poor (*see* De Grauwe et al. 2005; Manor 2004a, 2004b; Cornwall & Coelho 2007). In addition, our research suggests decentralized authorities often receive such detailed governmental direction that space for democratic deliberation and decision-making is foreclosed.

o Decentralized structures are often used to mobilize parental resources, with implications for both the participation of the poor, and for equity across districts with different socio-economic profiles. For CSOs, this creates tension between resource-generation activities and the fostering of local citizen voice and representation of the poor.

o The link between decentralized accountability roles for communities, parents, and civil society organizations and democratic deliberation at the national level is rarely explored in sector plans. Sector programs in our case countries mandate new roles for school management committees without explicating channels for national representation.

In addition to these important design contradictions, an overarching tension within sector programs needs to be restated here. Education sector plans in all our case countries reflect an emerging international consensus about the importance of primary schooling over other types of educational investment within development processes. Behind them is also the idea that a universal right to education ("Education for All") is essential for democratic development and good governance, embodied in the Millennium Development Goals, international human rights conventions, as well as in the Dakar Framework on Education for All. However, despite two decades of promises, the international community has never come close to funding the gap between the resources our case country governments can reasonably expect to make available for education, and what would be needed to achieve the right to education (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, various years). The absence of a strong international resource commitment to the universal right to education has led the donor community itself to send mixed messages about the best approach for achieving EFA – for example, whether through gradualist or more rapid approaches to universalization; through public resources or a mixture of public and private resources; on the basis of budgetary containment (such as cuts in the costs of teachers), reallocation from other sectors, deficit spending, or external commitments.

These underlying problems affect CSOs in several ways, especially as CSOs move towards "rights-based" approaches to international development.   They create:

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[43] For an interesting analysis of this, from the Latin American experience, see Corrales 2006.

o Tension between advocacy for universal access to schooling, and other education and development goals (especially when these suggest trade-offs in resources).

o Tension between traditional roles as direct service providers [stop-gap measures] and advocacy for universal and equitable governmental provision of services.

o Tensions in CSO relationships with international funding organizations, since CSOs must increasingly act as critics and campaigners within the international aid regime, while remaining significantly dependent on international donors for their own funding.

2. *The Structure and Capacity of Civil Society Actors in the Education Sector*

Enormous variation exists across our case countries, both in terms of the capacities and interests of different types of CSO actors, and in terms of intra-CSO relationships and CSO capacity to mobilize around a common agenda or policy platform for education. Such variation has important policy implications: it suggests that efforts to support civil society engagement in the education policy arena will need to be carefully tailored to specific country contexts; and must not assume harmonized interests or abilities among CSOs.

Below, we summarize what we found out about the capacities, interests and activities of civil society organizations identified in our research as key actors within the education policy arenas

- INGO/NGOs are among the most prominent actors in the education policy arena, representing the largest number of discrete CSO "voices" at the policy table. While INGO/NGOs continue to work in project mode, there is an increasing recognition among them of the need to work at a systems level, and within emerging sector plans. Furthermore, INGO/NGOs increasingly adopt a rights-based approach that implies an important commitment to the political mobilization of citizens for their rights. There is a clear perception among INGOs and NGOs that a small subset of actors, namely those that have repositioned themselves as complementary service providers and who have international connections, are more frequently invited to the policy table in the context of the new sector programs.

  Tensions between INGOs and national NGOs are less prevalent in the education sector than the wider literature on North-South civil society relationships might suggest. This is at least partly because leadership in both types of organization is often drawn from highly qualified nationals, and because most INGOs work to support Southern counterpart organizations. In addition, the existence of functioning civil society coalitions with leadership from national organizations appears to support a sense of local ownership and control among domestic NGOs in two of our cases.

- Teachers' unions are perhaps the most powerful, well-organized, and representative of civil society actors in all the education systems we studied (especially so in Mali and Kenya). In addition, these organizations have played a powerful historical role in advocating for democratic transitions. However, our research suggests that they remain somewhat marginalized players within sector programs, primarily because of their focus on employment issues. In Mali in particular, government efforts have focused more on containing the disruptive capacity of unions. However, even in countries like Mali, where teachers' unions have opposed major aspects of the sector program, unions are now committed to working towards the expansion of basic education with government. Our research suggests that the time has come to reconsider the role of teachers' unions in sector programs – focusing both on their capacities for professional socialization and mobilization, and their broader contribution to the fabric of democracy.

- Faith-based organizations bring considerable resources and capacities to the education policy table. They represent large constituencies in each of our case countries, as well as running their own schools. However, the engagement of faith-based organizations in national sector plans is quite varied. In

Tanzania and Kenya, Christian and Muslim organizations are routinely consulted by government and work effectively with national CSO education coalitions. In Mali and Burkina Faso, faith-based organizations are more marginalized in the policy process. We also noted, drawing on the Kenya case, that inherent tensions can arise between secular national education systems and faith-based bodies around the control of schools and school curriculum. Like teachers' unions, faith-based groups represent both general citizen interest and the particular interests and values of their members.

- Private providers and the business community. There have been a rising number of private educational providers in all four of our case countries over the past decade, supported in part by the new openness to private provision in new education sector plans. Mali, Kenya and Tanzania each have an active civil society organization that represents the interests of private providers within the educational policy arena. In addition, Kenya has a coalition of private providers from informal urban settlements. While governments tend to consult with these new provider groups, tensions sometimes emerge over their demands for increased government subsidies for private schools.

  It is also interesting to note that despite efforts by at least some civil society coalitions and their supporters to engage national business communities in advocacy and engagement with basic educational issues, Kenya was the only case country in which a national business association appeared to be active in the education sector program (and this was primarily focused on secondary, technical and vocational education).[44] There was limited evidence of direct business community or private provider engagement in sector programs or basic education advocacy in any of the other cases.

- National coalitions and intra-CSO relationships. While some type of CSO coordinating group exists in each of our countries, their histories, capacities and effectiveness are extremely varied.

  o Tanzania's TEN/MET appears to be the most effective in mobilizing a wide range of members around a common policy platform; it also is the most effective critic and watchdog over basic education commitments. Though it includes INGOs in its membership, its leadership is primarily drawn from national and subnational NGOs and significant attention is paid to building links to subnational groups. One way in which TEN/MET has distinguished itself is in its effective mobilization of international support and linkages to leverage domestic policy change. However, TEN/MET's effectiveness has at times engendered tensions with government, especially when its members have adopted a critical or watchdog role.

  o Kenya's national Elimu Yetu Coalition is quite weak; since the declaration of universal free primary education it seems to have lost the capacity to mobilize its members around a common agenda for basic education. EYC does not seem to play an effective watchdog role in the context of the new sector program, and has remained highly dependent on its hosting organization, the INGO ActionAid. Competition and varied views within education civil society seem to explain its deterioration. The threat of government reprisals for critical CSO activism may also have played a part.

  o In Mali, education CSOs have only begun to develop an effective coordinating body or common platform on basic education. Although a number of coordinating groups have emerged in Mali over the last 10 years, CSOs tend to bargain individually rather than collectively.

  o Burkina Faso, with the youngest of the national education CSO coalitions, appears to be developing a somewhat more cohesive and effective coalition, the *Cadre de Concertation en*

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[44] The Commonwealth Education Fund (which is financed by DFID and managed by a group that includes ActionAid, Oxfam and Save) has long advocated for the engagement of the business community in basic education issues (CEF 2007b).

Education de Base (CCEB). In contrast to TEN/MET, however this organization has not made the achievement of universal, equitable access to basic education its central platform; with the support of both INGOs and domestic NGOs, it embraces the government's more gradualist approach and focuses its efforts on specific issues, such as gender, curricular reform, and regional planning processes.

In both their own and in others assessments, civil society actors of all types in our case countries lack the organizational capacity and experience to engage consistently and effectively in policy dialogue, evidence-based advocacy and oversight activities in the education sector. CSOs recognize that playing these roles effectively will require collective, broadly-based action. They see a valuable role for international non-governmental actors in helping them to realize these new policy roles – not only in terms of financing, but also through their ability to leverage international moral authority and ideas. However, the value of nationally-led CSO action is also important to them.

3. Changing Dynamics of CSOs Engagement in the Education Sector

Both sides of the CSO-government equation shape the degree to which CSOs participate in the national education policy arena. National education sector plans in all our case countries seem to have created a context within which civil society actors are "invited to the table" for consultation in a more regular and routine way by governments than had been the case historically. However, roles and expectations for CSO-government and CSO-donor engagement vary considerably across the countries, as do levels of CSO autonomy, coordination and mobilization. In the terms suggested by Lister and Nyamugasira (2003), it matters both whether CSOs are "**invited**" to the policy table by government, and whether CSOs have the autonomy and resources to "**create**" and define their own policy roles and spaces.

In this section, we look at these civil society actors through a somewhat more dynamic lens, exploring their experiences in the policy processes that have unfolded around each country's new education sector plan. Again, we note that quite distinctive experiences have unfolded in our four case countries:

Tanzania:
In Tanzania, CSO engagement is relatively well-coordinated and includes impressive use of evidence-based policy advocacy. However, CSO efforts to play effective monitoring and watchdog roles have not been well-received by government, and there is also a perceived weakness in the capacity of the CSO coalition to reach rural and more marginalized CSOs and citizen groups.

The Tanzanian experience is characterized by:
- Expansion of policy space for CSOs in the new sector program, in part "created" by CSOs themselves, through advocacy and research, use of media, and leveraging of international networks and actors. However, government has tried to contain criticism and contention, and favors complementary service providers. Rules for CSO engagement in sector program design and oversight are not transparent or formalized.
- Considerable coordination among CSOs, though led in large part by national NGOs. In contrast to Kenya, Mali, and Burkina Faso, the national parents' association is weak.
- Common platform for CSO coordination emphasizes equity and quality improvements; holding government accountable for the delivery of services.
- CSO engagement is coordinated, focused on accountability, and independent. However, this is the most contentious CSO-government relationship. Civil society capacity, in terms of popular mobilization, development of local authorities (including school management committees) is just emerging.

Burkina Faso:
In Burkina Faso, civil society engagement is active and growing, especially in regional and decentralized fora. However, in contrast to Tanzania, civil society in Burkina Faso has embraced the gradualist approach to EFA that the government and donors have adopted in the sector plan.

The Burkina Faso experience is characterized by:
- Expansion of government-controlled ("invited") policy space for all CSOs, especially at decentralized levels (with some innovative mechanisms to support CSO management of parts of the sector program).
- NGOs increasingly coordinated around efforts to directly provide for expansion of access and creation of curricular alternatives.
- Broad endorsement of gradualist, *faire-faire* (partnership) approach to expanding and improving basic education.
- CSO engagement that is complementary and collaborative – especially at decentralized levels. There are limited signs of CSO capacity for popular contention or engagement in watchdog or accountability roles.

Kenya:
Kenya has seen a decrease in effective CSO engagement in the national education policy arena. In Kenya, this is partly due to the loss of a common CSO mobilizing frame after the declaration of free primary education; but it also reflects larger tensions between governments and autonomous CSO actors.

The Kenyan experience is characterized by:
- Expansion of policy space for CSO engagement, in part "created" by CSO advocacy in the lead up to the 2002 elections. However, government continues to view CSOs primarily as implementers, not as policy interlocutors.
- Some coordination among CSOs in the education sector – especially strong around thematic issues (gender, early childhood education). But competition, even among networks, is common. There has been a distinct decline in overall capacity and effectiveness of the national Elimu Yetu Coalition.
- The loss of a common platform for CSO coordination after the government's abolition of school fees. Many strong independent CSOs. While these key CSOs still belong to the EYC, many also advocate for policies that enhance their own interests.
- CSO engagement that is routine and frequent, but relatively uncoordinated. There are limited signs of CSO capacity for popular contention or engagement in watchdog or accountability roles.

Mali:
Finally, in Mali, CSOs have not yet been able to develop a common platform for engaging government on educational issues – their efforts here are just emerging. The Mali case can perhaps best be understood by contrast to the Burkina Faso and Tanzania cases. In contrast to Burkina Faso, Mali has a number of well-endowed CSOs who have objected to key features of the sector program (especially decentralization reforms), posing challenges for a broad-based, collaborative CSO response to the sector program embracing a gradualist approach to EFA. On the other hand, until recently there has been no movement in Mali to develop a coalition around the issue of governmentally provided free primary education (as in Tanzania).

The Mali experience is characterized by:
- Expansion of government-controlled ("invited") policy space for CSOs, but with differential treatment by type of CSO, and limited information sharing between government and NGOs. Decentralization of governance seems to confuse rather than enhance CSO policy leverage, although government wants the main CSO contributions at this level.
- Limited coordination among NGOs and between NGOs and other CSO actors.

- No effective, shared CSO platform for operating in the sector – deep disagreement about the main decentralization reforms.
- CSO engagement is fragmented and offers a limited counterweight at the national level. Actors contend for specific interests, and bargain with government as individual organizations.

Together, these cases highlight the fact that there are challenges to both more contentious and more collaborative forms of CSO engagement in sector programs. They also suggest just how fragile and hard-won effective civil society coordination can be. Civil society coordination depends crucially on the development of a common mobilizing frame or agenda. Perhaps because of the strong international support for rights-based approaches, the use of "universal free primary education" as a mobilizing frame has proven particularly powerful as a starting point for CSO coordination. However, such frames have to be negotiated and owned at the national level; and renegotiated (and re-owned) when specific goals are achieved.
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4. CSO-Government and CSO-Donor Relationships

Changes in CSO-government and CSO-donor relationships are a given feature of the new aid architecture that supports education sector programs in our four case countries. One of the central principles of aid effectiveness is the placement of development funds directly under government leadership, to be used in agreed-upon sector plans. Across all our case countries, there has been a drop in direct funding from bilateral donors to NGOs, a heightened level of policy dialogue between donors and government, and a new (but relatively untested) framework calling for the engagement of CSOs. We were thus not surprised to find many similar trends in CSO-government relationships across our case countries, differing more in degree than in kind. Below we summarize some of the key features of changing relationships between CSOs, governments and donors engendered by education sector programs in our four case studies.

CSO-Government Relationships

The following themes and issues emerged as common features of government-CSO relationships across our case studies:

- CSOs are now accepted participants in education sector programs. However, governments still have the ultimate say over who gets invited to the policy table, and for which purposes. In the absence of clear rules guiding the selection of CSO interlocutors in policy processes, governments tend to select the organizations they perceive to be least contentious and most helpful.

- Winners and losers among CSOs are also apparent: while most governments consult with a variety of CSO actors, they tend to marginalize teachers' unions in the design and implementation of sector programs, and favour national-level organizations that provide complementary capacity. The significant potential that organizations with independent constituency bases – such as teachers' unions and parents' associations – have in terms of leveraging public engagement in educational issues, are often neglected by governments (as well as by donors, *see below*).

- Government-CSO relations are often fraught with tension and confusion about appropriate CSO roles and mandates, including questions about how to ensure that CSOs are working in a complementary fashion within new sector programs. Government officials sometimes raise the idea that CSOs should report on their activities to government and (in a few interviews) contribute their resources directly to a pooled sector fund. They are also skeptical about CSO roles.

- CSO actors generally reject the idea of taking subcontracts from government for complementary service provision. They distrust government management and disbursement of resources. However,

many CSOs (particularly well-established NGOs and INGOs) view the opportunity to work collaboratively with the government to meet sector goals with enthusiasm.

- CSOs only weakly engage parliamentarians or the executive in their efforts to support the achievement of better basic education in their countries: their relationships are largely concentrated on within-Ministry processes in a way that may be undermining rather than supporting the formal fabric of democracy.

- Government-CSO relationships at decentralized levels are complex and require further exploration. Many CSOs (especially NGOs) expressed enthusiasm for decentralization reforms. However, our limited exploration of government-CSO relationships at decentralized levels suggests that lines of authority are often unclear and experience with managing partnerships weak. Questions were raised about the autonomy of CSO actors attempting to both train local authorities and generate genuine citizen oversight of local services. In addition, CSOs had given little thought as to how local-level citizen voice might be aggregated to allow engagement in the national policy arena. Further research needs to be done on implications of decentralization reforms for citizen engagement and voice in the education sector.

Relations Between CSOs and Donors

CSO-donor relationships are changing rapidly in the context of new sector programs. Our findings suggest that CSOs are unsatisfied with the level and scope of donor support for their policy and advocacy efforts, and wary of donor initiatives that place CSOs in subcontracting roles vis-à-vis government. In Mali, Tanzania and Kenya, many CSOs described a drop in international funding for their activities – sometimes a precipitous one. In Mali in particular, several organizations expressed frustration with the fact that donors still tend to channel funds through their own NGOs rather than directly to Southern groups. In Burkina Faso, CSOs also cautioned that when donors delay disbursements of sector funds, due to government failure to meet conditionalities, CSOs' activities suffer.

CSOs in all countries all noted that a decline in opportunities to meet with international technical and financial partners characterized the period following the introduction of sector programs. However, in some contexts (particularly Tanzania), several CSOs praised donors for helping them to leverage a greater degree of CSO engagement in national policy processes.

A significant finding across our case studies was the degree to which donor organizations lack a well-informed and coordinated strategy for supporting CSO involvement in the education sector. We were surprised how little donors seemed to know about local CSOs and their capacities – or even about the funding given by various branches of their own organizations to education sector CSOs. While donors are seeking new ways of supporting CSO engagement in sector programs, they have generally preferred to fund small research or information-sharing exercises among CSOs. With the exception of Tanzania, donors have generally shown limited interest in providing the kind of core funding that might enable national CSOs to engage in sustained programs of research or advocacy. Many donors prefer to channel funds through their own national NGOs, for reasons of familiarity and trust, and have only begun to experiment with direct funding of Southern organizations. Nor do donors have clear rules or transparent processes for selecting which CSOs they interact with and support.

However, despite the general lack of a common framework for supporting CSOs, most donors have begun to experiment with project or (less frequently) programmatic support for CSO engagement with the new sector plan. Notably:

- In Burkina Faso, this can be seen in the agreement to establish a fund for CBO-led non-formal education initiatives (FONAENF). Managed jointly by donors, government and CSOs, this effort focuses on expanding CSO service delivery roles. As a side effect, it also seems to have empowered the CSOs that sit on its board.
- In Tanzania, a number of donors provide pooled funding for TEN/MET and a few strong national CSOs. They also provide support to the Foundation for Civil Society, an independent body that gives grants to support civil society actors in policy and governance roles. These initiatives are unique in that they directly support an advocacy and independent monitoring role for civil society organizations (rather than the more typical focus on CSOs as service deliverers).
- In all case countries, bilateral donors (most notably USAID) have continued to provide project funding to CSOs for the development of district-level management and governance capacities. These have included training programs for school management committees, district school improvement initiatives, and district planning processes.
- Small amounts of donor funding have also been channeled to national coalitions through INGOs, or other hybrid mechanisms. For example, the Commonwealth Education Fund, (financed primarily by DFID, but managed by ActionAid, Oxfam and Save UK) provides some funding for national coalitions, and policy and advocacy efforts by individual CSOs in Kenya and Tanzania; the African Network Coalition on Education for All (ANCEFA) has also received bilateral funding to enhance the capacity of African national EFA-CSO coalitions (through its "Real World Strategies").

CSOs view these different models of donor support with varied levels of enthusiasm. The models are seen (alternatively) as providing too many small pots of funding, as being tied to donor rather than CSO agendas, and as failing to provide sufficient opportunity for CSOs to define their own plans for engagement in national policy processes and in new local spaces for citizen engagement. Certain types of actors, particularly teachers' unions, other constituency-based groups, and many smaller local NGOs, do not participate actively in these programs of donor support for CSO engagement; donors' main recipients are major NGOs. Overall CSOs believe that there is a strong case to be made for experimentation with a range of mechanisms to support new CSO roles.

Finally, CSOs often expressed to us that they believe they have a legitimate role in monitoring donors and their commitments to sector programs in education. However, it was unclear in our research whether donor organizations consider monitoring of international donors a legitimate part of the business of Southern civil society organizations.

Implications and Key Policy Challenges

As described in our introductory chapter, the purpose of this research has been to document and map the experiences of civil society actors within new sector programs, and to provide a starting point from which external actors (both governmental and non-governmental) can better explore mechanisms to enhance the participation of national civil society organizations in the development and implementation of national education sector plans. In keeping with this goal, we look below at three key policy challenges our case studies raise for external supporters of civil society in the education sector:

- Clarify why civil society engagement is important;
- Understand what "education" civil society is and can do in specific contexts;
- Develop and experiment with supporting mechanisms that address all three of the roles envisaged for civil society under emerging principles of aid effectiveness.

1. *Clarifying Why Civil Society is Important*

Emerging principles of aid effectiveness typically describe civil society as contributing to development in three ways: by enhancing direct services to citizens; by contributing to the fabric of democracy; and by empowering citizens – especially those that are poor or marginalized (AGCSAE 2007a, 2007b). However, when we look at the way these rationale play out in the implementation of an aid effectiveness agenda within a specific sector, like education, we can begin to see that sector programs, as well as the governments and international development partners responsible for their design, achieve much greater focus and clarity about the service-enhancing functions of civil society. While the democratic and pro-poor roles played by civil society actors in the education sector are routinely mentioned, there is considerably less clarity about these roles. There is also a tendency to assume that civil society actors act harmoniously and in a complementary fashion under government leadership.

If we accept the proposition that civil society participation should enhance democracy and empower the disempowered (i.e. not only improve the quality of services themselves), we need to look again at sector programs and the aid effectiveness principles they engender. This time, we should be asking not simply: is civil society included in the sector program, but also: why some CSOs and not others, in some aspects of the program, and not others? Are there design contradictions in the sector program, as for example between decentralized mandates for CSOs and national policy input, or around the question of who should fund and provide educational services? More fundamentally, does the presence of CSOs lead to new capacity and effectiveness in citizen-led claims-making? Are these capacities equally distributed? Do civil society efforts scale up at the national level, helping to consolidate opportunities for democratic oversight of the educational system?

2. *Understand Civil Society Capacity in Specific Contexts*

Our cases studies illustrate the value of undertaking a political mapping exercise to answer such questions. In particular, they explore:

- How sector programs shape the political opportunity structures for civil society engagement (especially in terms of resource allocations; mandated seats in policy deliberations; decentralized CSO roles; and donor support for CSOs).
- Government receptivity to CSOs as policy actors (including willingness to share information and establish transparent rule for engagement) – as well as opportunities for CSOs to work with parliamentary and other representative structures.
- Key CSO actors – their interests, assets and repertoires for action, their history of coordination/collaboration, and their capacity for mobilizing external resources, including actors that are often marginalized in sector planning, like unions and parents' associations.
- Opportunities for/existence of a common platform or vision of CSO engagement that is committed in some way to enhancing the capacity of citizen-led claims making and democratic oversight of the educational system.

As should be clear from our research, dynamics of civil society engagement vary considerably across countries, despite the formal similarity of their roles as envisaged in national sector plans. Governmental policies and practices, levels of donor support, broad political and historical contexts, as well as CSOs own histories, have shaped the character and degree of civil society engagement in the new sector programs. Knowing when to step in and how to support civil society engagement in a way that enhances democracy and the voice of the poor across these varied contexts will be challenging, and will depend on what are often differences of opinion about how to make democratic engagement in the education sector work. However,

our case studies suggest that we might begin our discussions on where to focus our efforts by evaluating what appear to be five key thresholds for civil society effectiveness:

- Are the formal terms for CSOs engagement in national policy processes conducive to autonomous policy, oversight and advocacy roles [including regulatory and legal issues; mandated roles in sector plans, and informal rules and expectations within government]?
- Have individual CSOs attained a degree of autonomy and voice in the national policy process [including the capacity to act in watchdog or oversight roles that are critical]?
- Have CSOs developed mechanisms for coordination and collaboration around a common platform in the education sector?
- Is this agenda or platform deeply rooted in, and owned by, a wide range of national civil society actors?
- Are CSOs able to link enhanced citizen voice at a local level to their emerging roles in national policy processes [including not only within-Ministry but to parliamentary processes]?

Clearly, these thresholds look quite different in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Mali, or Kenya, and may be even more varied across other national contexts. Investing in better understanding of CSO-sector program dynamics is an important starting point for better and more effective external initiatives. However, across all our case studies, the one area that seems in most urgent need of further research an analysis is the interface between new forms of local governance in education, and the development of greater citizen voice and public deliberation within national-level policy processes.

3. Better External Support for Civil Society Engagement

External actors face a delicate task when supporting the more "political" of the roles played by civil society actors. They must do so while continuing to support government leadership and ownership of sector programs; in ways that do not imply partisanship; and that do not carry the threat of sanction or hegemony. Nonetheless, our case studies suggest that external actors can assist in seven important ways:

- They can dialogue with governments about the establishment of legal frameworks, formal processes and better government receptivity to CSO policy, oversight and public deliberation roles.
- They can argue for (and assist CSO actors in advocating for) more transparent, regularized and democratic processes for the inclusion of civil society representation in the formal processes engendered by national education sector plans.
- They can provide reliable core support for coalitions/networks to ensure that these networks survive and act as broadly-based national fora on education. Funding has to be provided in a way that ensures autonomy, continuity, and decentralized capacity.
- They can support neglected civil society actors or interests – such as teachers' unions and smaller subnational or thematic groups – to develop productive forms of engagement in national policy deliberation. (Funding that allows civil society organizations to develop the capacity to provide specific protections in areas like early childhood care, disability, conflict and democracy education, or that reaches out to underserved regions and communities, are especially important.)
- They can support international linkages between Northern and Southern citizens and their organizations, including INGOs, transnational advocacy groups and other international associations and bodies (e.g., Education International, representing teachers' unions internationally). Where governments block certain types of civil society engagement or issue-specific efforts, or where civil society capacity is weak, these external relationships help national CSOs to leverage international moral authority and experience as a policy resource.

- They can support CSO capacities for coordination and policy voice. One effective way to do so is through jointly-organized capacity-building exercises that allow for learning across national civil society coalitions in the education sector.
- They can assist CSOs that are attempting to link decentralized forms of citizen input and deliberation to national-level policy processes, through the use of media, public communications strategies, the strengthening of representative and membership-based organizations, and through relationships with elected authorities and parliament.

Because of the dynamic and varied histories of civil society engagement in the education sector, there is unlikely to be a one-size-fits-all plan for its support by external actors. In such a context, there is an urgent need for experimentation and learning. Donors need to develop and explore a diverse portfolio of mechanisms for enhancing civil society engagement, keeping in mind that different mechanisms are likely to suite different objectives and can pose different risks. As illustrative examples:

- Expanding CSO roles in effective and complementary service delivery may be best achieved by creating a responsive pooled fund for CSO projects, jointly managed by donors, government and CSOs (as has happened under the FONAENF program in Burkina Faso, where a percentage of international funding for the sector program was used to create a fund to support local non-formal education initiatives, managed jointly by donors, government and CSO representatives). However, such a mechanism will be less effective in building a coordinated CSO place at the policy table, and may even undermine CSO autonomy.
- Pooled support for national education coalitions may be an effective way to promote CSO coordination and the development of more representative and democratic policy processes. However, such coalitions may be compromised if their funding base is too tightly tied to a donor agenda; if there is an effort to use them as way to distribute donor funds to their members; or if they fail to gain the support of a broad range of civil society actors.

Above all else, external actors need to develop a regular process for reviewing the implications for democracy, public deliberation, citizen engagement, and pro-poor representation when they engage in efforts to support civil society actors within sector programs. One way of doing this might be to engage civil society organizations in the same kinds of dialogue and public deliberation over donor policies that are increasingly expected in national policy processes.

Appendix I: Participants by Type of Organization and Country

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Kenya	Tanzania
Total Estimated # Education CSOs/NGOs	154 est. 127 doc.	127 doc.	302 doc.	400 est. 202 doc.
Networks (National, Subnational)	6	14	9	7 (5,2)
INGOs	7	10	10	13
National NGOs	8	10	5	13
Subnational NGOs	4	0	3	13
National Faith-Based Organizations	2	4	2	2
Teachers Unions/Associations	1	4	1	1
Parents Associations	3	1	1	0
Community or Non-formal Schools	1	2	1	0
School Committees	0	4	3	1
Researchers	4	1	1	3
Total CSOs in our Sample	**36**	**50**	**36**	**53**
Development Partners (Donors & IOs)	5	9 (7,2)	5 (4,1)	9 (5,4)
Government	4	21	5	2

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