

1 GLOBAL MID-TERM REVIEW

This document represents one part of a set of three produced by the CEF in June 2005 as part of their global review and strategy proposal. The documents are:

1. Global Mid-Term Review
2. Global Mid-Term Review Appendices
3. CEF Strategy 2010 - A Proposal for DfID and HM Treasury



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List of Acronyms

ABES	Adult Basic Education Society (Pakistan)
ACRE	Advancement of Child Rights in Education (Malawi)
ASPBAE	Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education
BAF	Bangladesh Adibasi Forum
CADEC	Cancel Debts for the Child Campaign
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education (Bangladesh)
CAPP	Community Action for Popular Participation (Nigeria)
CBO	Community based Organisation
CEF	Commonwealth Education Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSACEFA	Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
EYC	Elimu Yetu Coalition (Kenya)
FAWEMO	Forum of African Women in Education - Mozambique
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GMC-SL	Global Movement for Children-Sierra Leone
GSIAE	General Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education in The Gambia
GTU	Gambia Teachers Union
GWA	Global Week of Action
HDA	Health Development Agency (Nigeria)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KISDEG	Kilum Strategic Development Group (Cameroon)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCKK	National Coalition of Churches of Kenya
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGOC	Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition on the Rights of the Child (Lesotho)
PAR	Participatory Action Research (Tanzania)
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Parent Teacher Associations
QBE	Quality Basic Education
SMC	School Management Committee
TAAC	The Apac Anti-corruption Coalition
TENMET	Tanzania Education Network
TOF	Training of Facilitators
UPE	Universal Primary Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) was set up by the British Chancellor Gordon Brown in February 2001. The CEF was framed around the Millennium Development Goals on education and gender - achieving gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and universal completion of primary education by 2015. ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children UK came together to manage the fund. The focus of CEF was agreed to be on civil society input into the Education for All (EFA) process - to raise the profile of international education goals at a national level in low-income Commonwealth countries. The CEF would increase public debate around education goals, promote greater transparency around education budgets and focus attention on the needs of children at present outside the education system.

This mid-term review shows that, three years on, *CEF is making a difference* to how education civil society organisations (CSOs) are engaging with the policy processes in sixteen low-income Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia. It is not always easy to measure the distinct contribution that CEF has made, especially when so much of the work is done through supporting coalitions. Indeed, CEF often deliberately takes a step back, playing a facilitating role and not seeking to take credit itself. This creates some challenges for a Review like this where showing clear attribution is desirable. Hopefully the combination of statistics, critical analysis and case studies in this Review helps the reader gain a clear view of the roles that CEF has played and the contributions that it has made.

Through CEF support umbrella *coalitions are emerging or being strengthened*. They are working to ensure that free quality basic education is a right for all children and they are building domestic pressure on their governments to get education higher up the political agenda. The Review recorded ninety-seven examples of changes to education policy and practice in which CEF support has played a significant part. More generally, the education and gender Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) previously had little visibility - but CEF has helped to ensure that governments feel increasingly accountable to deliver on them. In most countries effective links have been made between NGOs, teachers unions, parent associations, faith-based organisations and social movements to build a common platform. The coalitions are growing in confidence but most are still in their adolescence - showing great potential but not yet fully-grown.

Citizen's organisations are becoming empowered to participate effectively in the monitoring of *education finances and budgets*, leading to demands for increased public resourcing of the education sector. In most countries CEF has helped to demystify national *budgets* on education, and trained people at national and local levels to track education spending. This work is still in its infancy in some countries as there was a big capacity gap to overcome - but in others significant impacts have already been seen. Budget monitoring is now widely recognised to be crucially important; both in terms of ensuring that resource allocation matches policy and determining that those resources are not misused. CEF's work, among others is demonstrating that this is an area where civil society engagement can make a massive difference.

CEF has started to identify and disseminate *innovative approaches* that have helped excluded children access and succeed in school. Impressive work is being done in different countries on inclusive education for disabled children, adapting learning for street children, challenging girls' exclusion or putting education for displaced children

on the agenda. These have been documented and shared in different ways within countries. To date the sharing of this work between countries has been very limited but the first steps towards this are now being taken.

CEF has forged a strong working relationship on education between ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children across low-income commonwealth countries in Africa and South Asia. CEF represents *a new way of working* - a new mode of international NGOs, working constructively and collaboratively with governments, civil society and the private sector in the North and South. Our concern now is that this work should be *sustained and expanded*.

Working with the *corporate sector* has always been a priority for CEF but this is an area where progress has been slow. The early focus was on fundraising and there were some significant successes. However, the focus on fundraising has sometimes prevented meaningful relationships being built to encourage the private sector to add its voice behind the call for public education. This work is now shifting from its previous focus in the UK to focus instead on building in-country links and active engagement.

CEF has been *under-spending* against its original budget but this report shows clear reasons behind this. Coalition-building takes time. In countries where coalitions are better established spending is more rapid. The strongest programmes are those that have been able to build on work that dates back to 1999/2000. The rate of spending is now increasing and it is likely that the present total fund of just under £12 million will be mostly spent by March 2007.

The need to resource this work will *continue beyond 2007*. Although some of the more established coalitions have been able to attract funding from other sources, most still depend substantially on CEF for core funding. Other donors are not yet ready to work with such a radical new mode of operation - but this is changing. This review shows that the real returns to this investment are now becoming evident and are likely to accumulate further in the coming years. Success will attract other donors (as is evident in a country like Bangladesh). However, it would be premature for CEF to terminate its support in 2007. Rather, we need to guarantee the continuity of this work for a further period so that it can move forward with confidence. The accumulating achievements from this mode of working in each country will be the key to attracting new donors and sustaining the work at a national level in each of the 16 countries.

The *CEF mode of working* has even attracted interest beyond the original 16 countries. Particularly, interest has been shown in francophone Africa, in Latin America and in South East Asia. Organisations in these other regions have looked at the feasibility of establishing education funds to invest strategically across civil society and to strengthen capacities for engagement in policy dialogue. The French government has been particularly keen to understand CEF and several other donors like Unicef, SIDA, NORAD and CIDA have shown an active interest in the CEF approach. There is a clear sense in which the impact of CEF is already being felt beyond CEF countries - and that this could go much further in the coming years.

There have of course been many *challenges* in implementing CEF. The sixteen countries are immensely diverse and each throws up different problems which require different responses. The decentralised management has helped to ensure the flexibility to adapt CEF to these different contexts. But there are also some challenges that cut across

countries and these have been highlighted in this Mid Term Review. In each case this review identifies learning that can be drawn from the challenges and possible ways forward. *Recommendations* have been highlighted in each section which, if implemented, should help to ensure that CEF will be even more effective in future than it already has been.

1. BACKGROUND TO CEF AND THE MID-TERM REVIEW PROCESS

The British Chancellor Gordon Brown, at a meeting on child poverty in February 2001, announced the creation of a Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) with a £10 million initial grant. The details of how this would work were elaborated over the following year with DFID, ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children UK. The CEF was framed around the Millennium Development Goals on education and gender - achieving gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and universal completion of primary education by 2015. Beyond the initial £10 million grant it was envisaged that a similar amount would be raised from the corporate sector (who would also be encouraged to be involved in other ways). The British Government agreed to match whatever funds were raised through corporate or individual donations.

The focus of CEF was agreed to be on civil society input into the Education for All process to raise the profile of international education goals at a national level in low-income Commonwealth countries. Seventeen Commonwealth countries were identified with significant educational challenges and the presence of at least one of the partner agencies. It would be an unconventional fund, not designed to support service delivery in education; not for building schools or running a few local projects. Rather, the funds would be used strategically to build domestic support for education to pull together disparate voices across society in order to encourage governments to place education higher up their agenda. In most countries the education and gender MDGs had little visibility and so governments did not feel accountable to deliver on them. The CEF would help to change this, increasing public debate around education goals, promoting greater transparency and focusing on the needs of children currently outside the education system.

To succeed, CEF would need to build collaboration across civil society in each country. To facilitate this it was agreed to manage the funds in a collaborative way between Oxfam, Save the Children UK and ActionAid. In each country one agency would take the lead (hosting CEF) and join with others on a Management Committee. This would keep administrative costs low and ensure that CEF could build on existing capacity and experience. The lead agency was agreed by mutual consent in each country by early 2002. An initial workshop was then convened in Nairobi, where the core objectives of the CEF were fleshed out with two representatives from each of the countries. Three core "criteria" were defined. The CEF would:

1. Strengthen civil society participation in design and implementation of national and local education plans especially through support for broad based national alliances and coalitions.
2. Enable local communities to monitor spending on education both at national and local levels (budget analysis/tracking).
3. Support innovative ways for communities to ensure that all children (especially girls and most vulnerable) are able to access quality education within a framework of national education plans - in a way that links to advocacy.

Following this, each country developed interim plans to get work started by the autumn of 2002 whilst full strategic plans were drawn up and finalised by early 2003. The UK Management Committee approved strategic plans for all 17 countries but CEF was subsequently terminated in Zimbabwe due to unfavourable political and work conditions. The original timeframe for CEF was to 2005 (the gender parity MDG). However, agreement was reached with the Treasury and DFID in early 2004 to extend

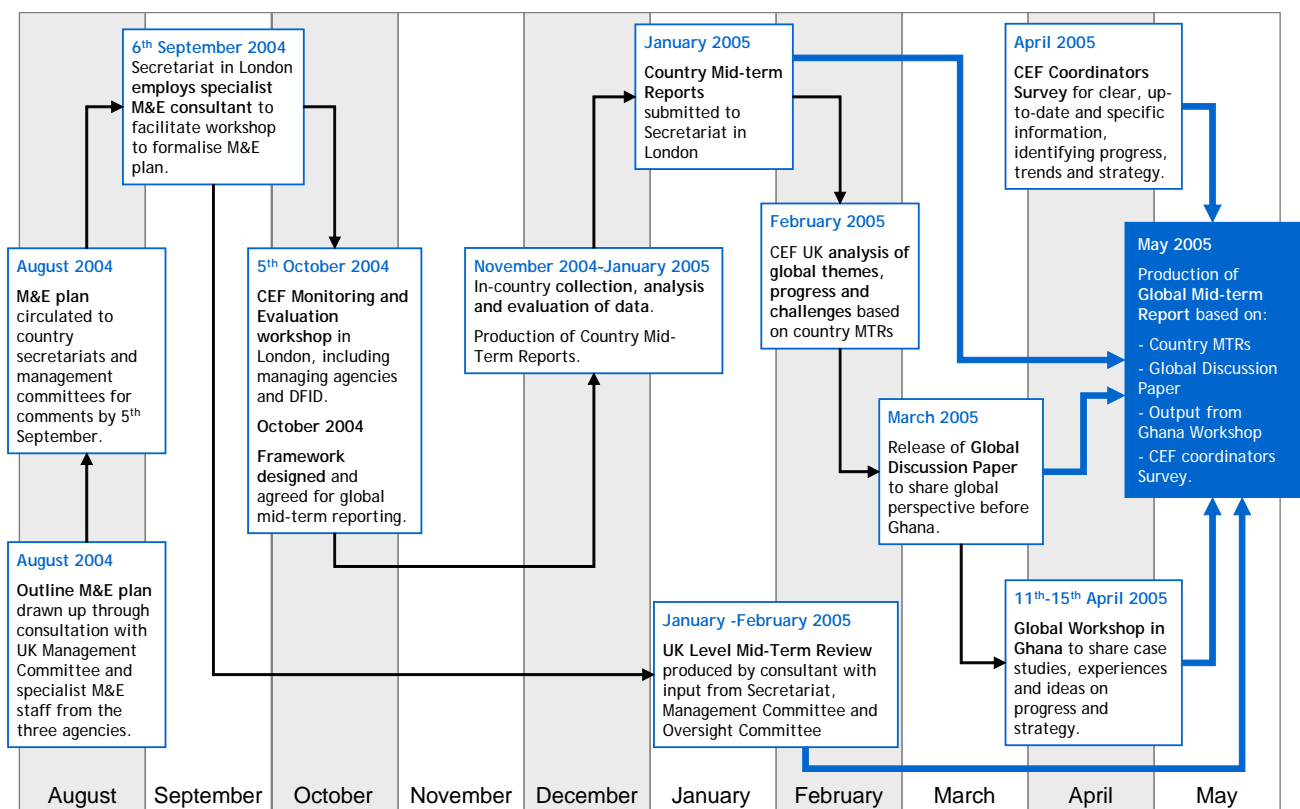
the timeframe to March 2007. In late 2004, three years since inception and with two years of operation behind it, we undertook this Mid-term Review of CEF.

The production of the CEF Global Mid-Term Review was a structured and participatory process that spanned ten months. A purpose-built monitoring and evaluation framework was designed with active input from M&E experts in each of the lead agencies and DFID. From November 2004 -January 2005, country programmes, predominantly with assistance from external consultants, gathered quantitative and qualitative information from local community level up to the national level. A study was also conducted by an external consultant in the UK, interviewing all key stakeholders. In February and March 2005 the country reports were compiled and analysed by the UK based CEF Secretariat and Management Committee. Feedback was given to each country to help them revise their strategy for the coming period. Key trends and critical issues were also drawn out. Representatives from each of the 16 countries then came together in Ghana in April 2005 to discuss the findings, deepen the analysis and share experiences. A survey was then undertaken by each of the CEF coordinators in April 2005, following the workshop. This survey was designed based on the key trends and issues identified by the review process so as to provide a more structured comparative picture of the progress of each country programme. (Unfortunately, due to a recent change of personnel, no survey information was available from Mozambique.)

There are therefore five key sources for this consolidated report:

1. The 16 country level mid-term review reports (available on request)
2. The UK report by an external consultant
3. The global discussion paper/initial consolidation of these reports
4. Outputs from the Ghana workshop
5. The CEF Coordinators survey.

Diagram D1: Chronological Development of the Mid-Term Review



2. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT IN EDUCATION: WHERE CEF FITS

In the UN Millennium Assembly in 2000 global leaders committed themselves to eight “Millennium Development Goals”. Seven of these goals were set for achievement in 2015, including the achievement of universal primary education. Only one goal was set for 2005: the achievement of gender parity in primary and secondary education. There was good reasoning behind this. Over 100 million children have never been to school and almost two thirds of them are girls. There is now overwhelming evidence that the education of girls has a crucial impact on improving maternal health, reducing infant mortality, limiting the spread of HIV/AIDS, empowering women and reducing poverty. The achievement of the other MDGs depends on getting girls in to school - but the returns on girls’ schooling take time. For this reason the goal was set ten years in advance of all other MDGs. CEF was framed with an explicit reference to this goal.

Compelling arguments about the social and economic returns to girls’ education can clearly be made, but we should never let these obscure the fact that education is a basic right. The goal of getting all girls into school alongside all boys is critical in itself. In some respects the right of girls to education is the most critical of all rights - because education plays such an important role in enabling girls to access and secure their other rights.

Unfortunately we now know that over 70 countries will fail to achieve the goal of gender parity in education in 2005 and that very little progress has been made in the past five years. The recent MDG Task Force reports place worryingly little emphasis on this failure. The MDG Summit in New York in September 2005 seems unlikely to address this failure head on, fearing a negative impact on the credibility and integrity of the MDG framework as a whole.

Yet the seriousness of this failure has never been clearer. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the Global AIDS Alliance suggest that over 700,000 lives a year could be saved if all children were in school. Girls are the most vulnerable to HIV infection - but their vulnerability decreases with each year of schooling they receive. Children out of school are at the highest risk of infection.

In this context it seems remarkable that in 92 countries children still have to pay to go to school (as documented by Katarina Tomasevski the former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education). When children have to pay it is girls who are most systematically excluded. When countries lift school fees it is girls who flood into school - in their millions. In recent years we have seen this happen again and again - in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Just between these 3 countries, the abolition of user fees has brought 7 million children to school. In each case domestic pressure and political will have been key. It is not international agreements that compel these dramatic changes but the desire for votes or popular support. Civil society alliances played a key and active role in bringing this about, particularly in Kenya and Tanzania.

The impact of abolishing user fees shows that gains in education do not always have to be slow and painstaking. Sudden improvements can be made which will enable accelerated progress. There are other policies that can be adopted that will dramatically impact the enrolment and retention of girls - such as the subsidy schemes in Bangladesh that have played a key role in making Bangladesh one of the few countries to have progressed on gender parity in recent years.

It is not just girls who are excluded from school. In any particular country there are clear categories of children who are not enrolled or who drop out in the first couple of years. Disabled children are almost uniformly excluded, as are street children, the children of pastoralists or migrant labourers, those from linguistic or ethnic minorities, from low caste families or those who are HIV orphans. There is a growing body of good practice about how to get these children into school - but often this remains isolated in small scale projects with specialised organisations. The challenge remains of converting these experiences into learning that can inform changes to policy and practice at a national level.

CEF is designed precisely to start to address these challenges with the firm belief that we can make accelerated progress towards achieving the education and gender goals. New policies and practices can open up schools to whole new groups of children. But this requires a fundamental shift in the way that NGOs have worked in the past. For years there has been intense competition between agencies to run innovative small-scale projects with little or no incentive to share learning and pool experiences. Agencies have focused on their own projects rather than thinking of wider policy or the role of governments. In the 1980s and 1990s there were almost no examples of NGOs coming together on education, almost no examples of coherent engagement by NGOs with government around education policy.

Through CEF, ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children are working to change embedded practices and perspectives. NGOs are more often seen as small scale service providers in education - whether with their own funds or as sub-contractors for governments. Yet our accumulated experience over decades is now clear. If we want to achieve change at the level that the MDGs are seeking, we must work much more strategically. We must pool our efforts and engage systematically with government. We must work to define the changes in policy and practice that will get excluded children into school. We must ensure the voices of those children and their parents are heard by politicians and policy makers. We must help to create the conditions so that any government that is in power will prioritise education. Governments may come and go - but education policy requires continuity.

The scale of resources necessary to achieve education and gender goals should not be under-estimated. International donors will need to find something like \$7 billion a year in new aid to get all children in school. However, this figure depends on national governments increasing their own spending, and the costs are significant. Abolishing user fees in education brings a double cost; new spending is needed as enrolments go up (more classrooms, more teachers, more textbooks etc.) New spending is also needed to cover the lost income (user-fees were often a key part of revenue for education). No country has yet succeeded in fully covering the double cost - so as enrolment rises so do class sizes - leading to failing quality. To sustain quality when such changes are made requires even more resources than most estimates suggest.

In the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 a promise was made that no country with a viable plan for educating all children would be allowed to fail for lack of resources. It was further agreed that national education plans should be developed with systematic and sustained involvement of civil society in design, implementation and monitoring in each country. CEF has helped civil society organisations to take on this new role - bringing diverse agencies together to feed constructively into national plans and building their capacity to monitor government spending. CEF has also helped to keep pressure on donor countries to live up to their resource promises. We have supported the Global

Campaign for Education and the African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) to ensure that concerns from the 16 CEF countries are articulated to key regional and global actors

There is a very long way still to go. Countries that have developed good quality plans that have been approved by the "Fast Track Initiative" (the main mechanism now agreed for determining this), have not yet secured the minimum funding they need. This could undermine the whole process. Fortunately there is renewed momentum in 2005 and a good prospect that the G8 in July will mobilise major new aid resources. The challenge will remain in spending these wisely and this will depend on dynamics in each country.

The Africa Commission recently highlighted issues of governance and corruption. Certainly there are many examples where education budgets have been misused, where corruption creeps into the system at different levels. This is another area where CEF is designed to help make a difference. Over the past 2 years CEF has helped civil society groups to demystify national education budgets and to track what happens to these in practice. Misuse of funds has been highlighted and corrupt officials have been prosecuted. In many countries, for the first time, people outside of government understand the education budget and feel confident to ask questions about it from school to district to national level. This work takes time to build up but the foundation has been laid.

The transformations needed to education systems if international goals are to be achieved depend on decisions being taken in each country. What CEF brings to the table is a radical new way of working, where international NGOs come together with national NGOs, teacher unions, parent associations, faith-based groups, prominent individuals, the women's movement and the private sector. These broad based alliances play a pivotal role in ensuring that governments fully assume their responsibility to provide quality public education for all girls and boys. Having spent less than £5 million to date, CEF has succeeded in unleashing remarkable energy across society in all 16 countries. Much remains to be done, as this report shows, but there is no doubt that the profile of the education and gender goals has increased in all countries and that CEF has played an important role in keeping up the momentum towards education for all. The work funded by CEF is at the heart of achieving EFA.

3. STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY: Criterion One

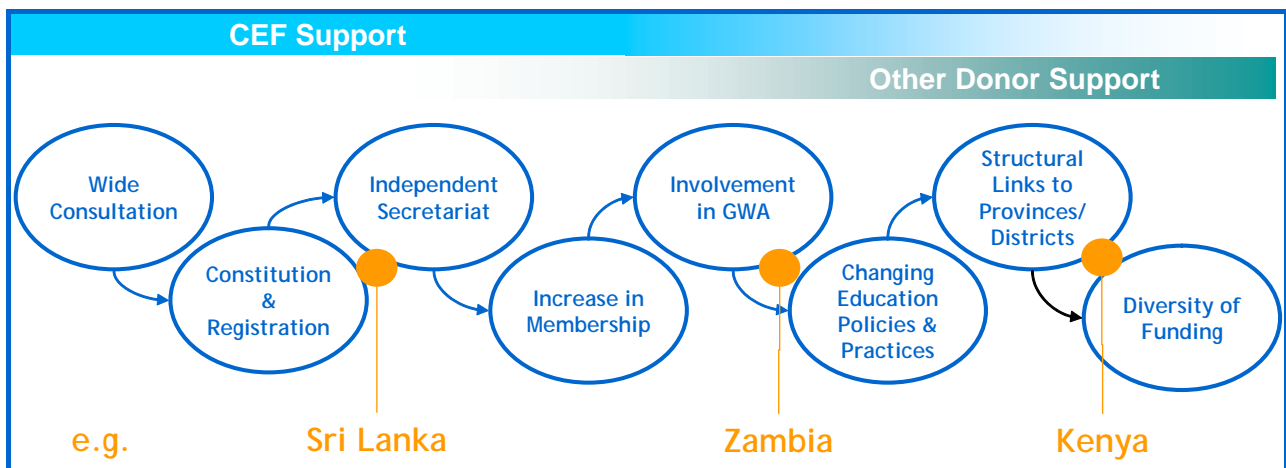
3.1 Summary of Achievements

The first CEF criterion focuses on strengthening civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans. In almost all countries it has been recognised that the most effective way of achieving this is to support the emergence of, or strengthen existing, civil society coalitions on education. There are often hundreds or thousands of NGOs in a country and it is almost impossible for governments to meaningfully involve them in any process, unless they are coordinated and present a coherent voice.

Operating across 16 countries, the CEF programme has supported the creation of 4 new national education coalitions and supports 12 existing national education coalitions. Additional significant regional or thematic coalitions have been supported in 5 countries.

On average CEF provides 73% of a new coalition's funding and 59% of funds for existing coalitions. Generally, the longer established a coalition is (especially for those founded before Dakar in 2000), the less it is dependent on CEF funds. Like much donor funding, some CEF funding is directed to support specific activities. Yet CEF also provides funding for core operating costs to nine of these coalitions. This funding is particularly difficult for new coalitions to secure from other sources and yet is critical to allow them to function and build.

Diagram D2: A Typical Picture of Coalition Development



Most coalitions do not only operate in the capital city. National education coalitions in 12 of the countries supported by CEF have a structural base in provincial or district level coalitions ensuring a presence across the country. CEF coordinators report that a genuine two-way exchange of ideas and influence takes place in 9 of these cases.

CEF supports core capacity building activities in 14 of the coalitions. This takes a range of forms from training in policy analysis to strategic planning, from advocacy and campaigning to gender analysis. Most CEF Coordinators report that capacity building that is done in this way with members of national coalitions gets passed on through partner organisations even down to community level.

Since CEF's inception, the number of coalition members has grown by 54% to over 2100 organisations across the 16 countries. Before CEF, coalitions were predominantly formed by NGOs and international NGOs. There has been an ongoing drive to broaden the membership of coalitions and at present the media, faith-based organisations and teachers unions have a bigger part to play. This expansion trend is continuing with representatives from academia, parents groups, social movements and the private sector being particular priorities.

The Global Campaign For Education's Week of Action

CEF actively supports participation in the Global Week of Action coordinated by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). More than 100 countries are involved in this week of action and CEF countries are amongst the most active - including over a million participants in 2004. It is an opportunity for CEF-supported coalitions and partners to engage the public, the media and politicians on critical education issues in their countries. The global nature of the mobilisation increases the attention that it receives in each country.

In 2003 the week of action focussed on teaching the **"World's Biggest Lesson" on Girls' Education**. Over 2 million children in 70 countries simultaneously learnt the same basic lesson, discussing the factors that cause girls to be excluded from school. Kofi Annan took on the role of teacher to staff in the UN Headquarters. Meanwhile, in the Gambia the daughter of a peanut seller taught the lesson to a classroom of senior politicians. In many places, the lesson itself was followed by public debates and extensive media coverage of the issues affecting girls. Ministers of Education were involved in several CEF countries with some making new commitments to change policies and practices that affect the enrolment or achievement of girls.

In 2004 the GCE Week of Action mobilised the **"World's Biggest Ever Lobby"**, involving over 2 million people in 117 countries. Children around the world lobbied politicians directly through meetings, parliamentary debates and letters. They created maps of their communities, indicating which children cannot attend school and why. The Sri Lankan president received 75,000 postcards and the Pakistani prime Minister received 22,000 letters - all from children demanding action on education. Children in Mozambique met the Prime Minister, to demand more investment in schools. In Nigeria, disabled children and children who had never been to school spoke in a special session to the national assembly. Many legislators were deeply moved, offering to pay the school fees of the children who spoke, to which one child answered "and will you also pay for the other 7 million children like me?" Meanwhile in Zambia, the president promised to consider a bill drafted by a children's parliament regarding education for orphans and vulnerable children. Following the children's lobby in Bangladesh the Prime Minister committed to providing free textbooks to all primary schools and recruiting 35,000 teachers over 6 years. In the UK, over two thirds of MPs went back to a school in their constituency to learn about the global crisis in education from children.

In 2005 people in at least 110 countries demanded **"Send My Friend to School"**. They made over a million "buddies" (cut-out silhouettes of children) to represent the 100 million children still out of school. These 'buddies' or 'friends' were gathered for rallies and demonstrations, and presented to political leaders. Over 3,000 politicians around the world went back to school for a day to find out more. In Sierra Leone over 30,000 buddies were presented to the Minister of Education in the National Stadium, leading him to make emotional promises to get all children into school. On 16th June, the day of

the African Child, follow up events will be held in all countries to send these buddies off to the UK for the G8 meeting. The hand-over of buddies to G8 leaders will be a centrepiece of the Make Poverty History campaign at the G8 meeting. GCE is optimistic that progress on aid, debt and trade at the G8 meeting will generate substantial new resources for education.

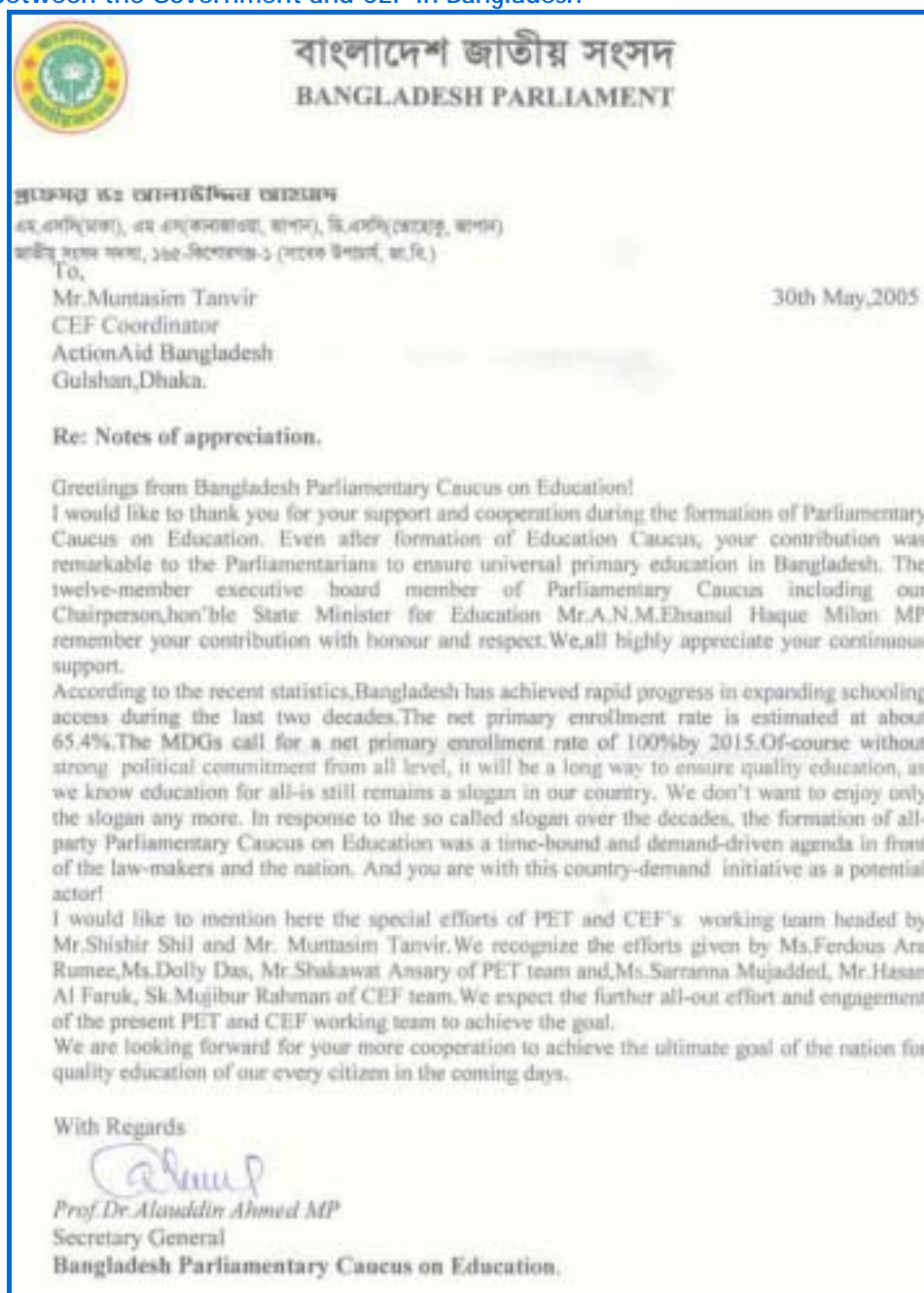
The challenge for the future is to use the GCE Global Week of Action for building more sustained mobilisation with clearer links to policy influencing both nationally and internationally. The GCE World Assembly in Johannesburg in December 2004 made this a priority for the future. CEF's support for GCE is focused on helping them to deepen the links between popular campaigning and achieving clear outcomes on education policies and practices.

CEF support has enabled the national coalitions to engage in key national policy forums in most countries, ranging from government reviews of education, to consultations over EFA plans, from inputs into PRSP processes to education dialogues with donor consortiums. Often CEF partners have been invited into planning committees or drafting teams, or detailed submissions have been requested on specific areas of policy.

In the past individual agencies may have had some access to these spaces but they rarely spoke with the authority of a wider platform. In many cases in the past government officials had no idea who to invite to a policy dialogue from the hundreds or thousands of competing NGOs. Some bigger NGOs may have been invited but felt no accountability to others in the sector. Having organised coalitions makes this much easier for government and helps to ensure that consultations are not just one-off or tokenistic. Sustained relationships can be built up.

As well as being invited to these policy spaces, coalitions have actively worked to create new spaces for dialogue, for example organising workshops and seminars on key issues with governments. Work with the media and awareness-raising at different levels has also helped to create new spaces or put new issues on the table. There are now many more interactions on education at district and local level between government officials and citizens groups/NGOs.

Interaction between the Government and CEF in Bangladesh



Talk is one thing but change to policy and practice is another. There is good evidence that having secured a seat at the table, civil society coalitions have influenced the policies and practices of national and local government. The survey identified 92 examples of change in policy and practice.

These range from changes to mother tongue education in adivasi areas of Bangladesh to changes in resource allocations for education in Ghana; from changes to corporal punishment policies in India to influencing debt cancellation in Kenya; from changing the roles of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)/ School Management Committees (SMCs) in Malawi to establishing girls clubs in Mozambican schools; from changes to cost-recovery practices in Sierra Leone to influencing policy on slow learners in Sri Lanka; from linking madrasas to mainstream primary education in The Gambia to addressing the education needs of displaced children in Uganda. The variety reflects the immensely diverse

contexts and shows the importance of addressing these issues through national policy dialogue.

Diagram D3: Examples of Changes in Policy and Practice

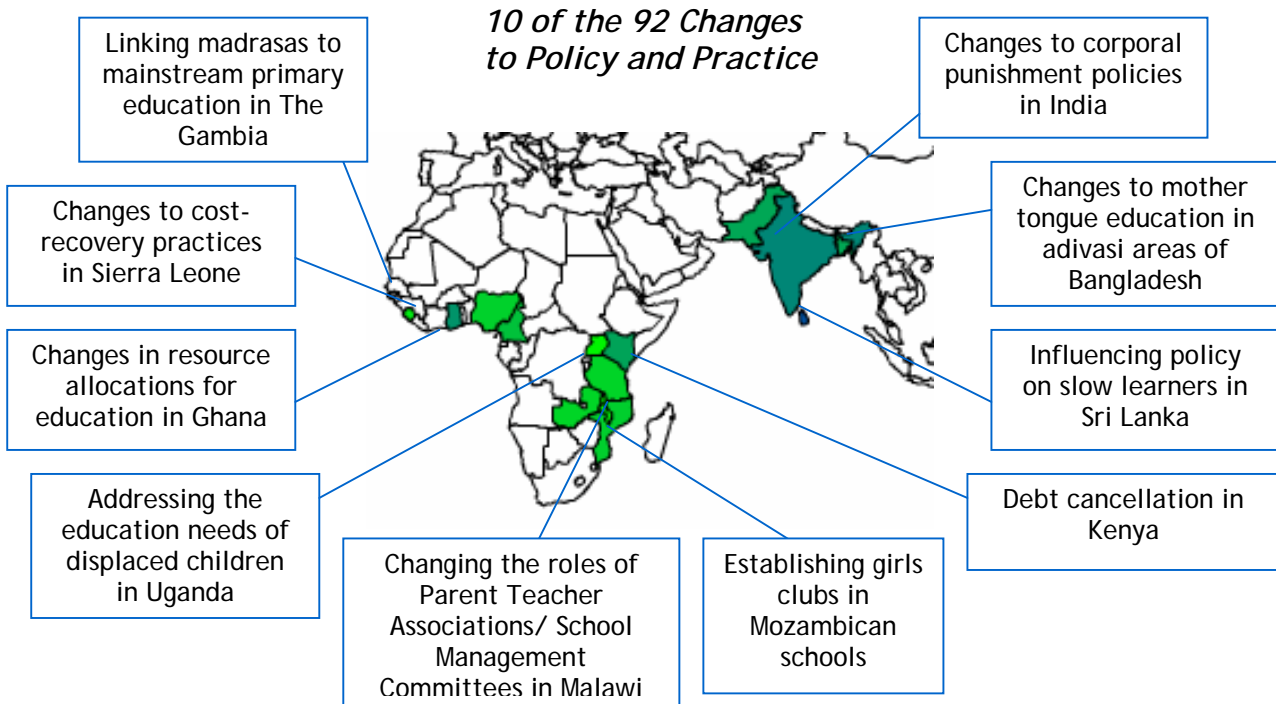
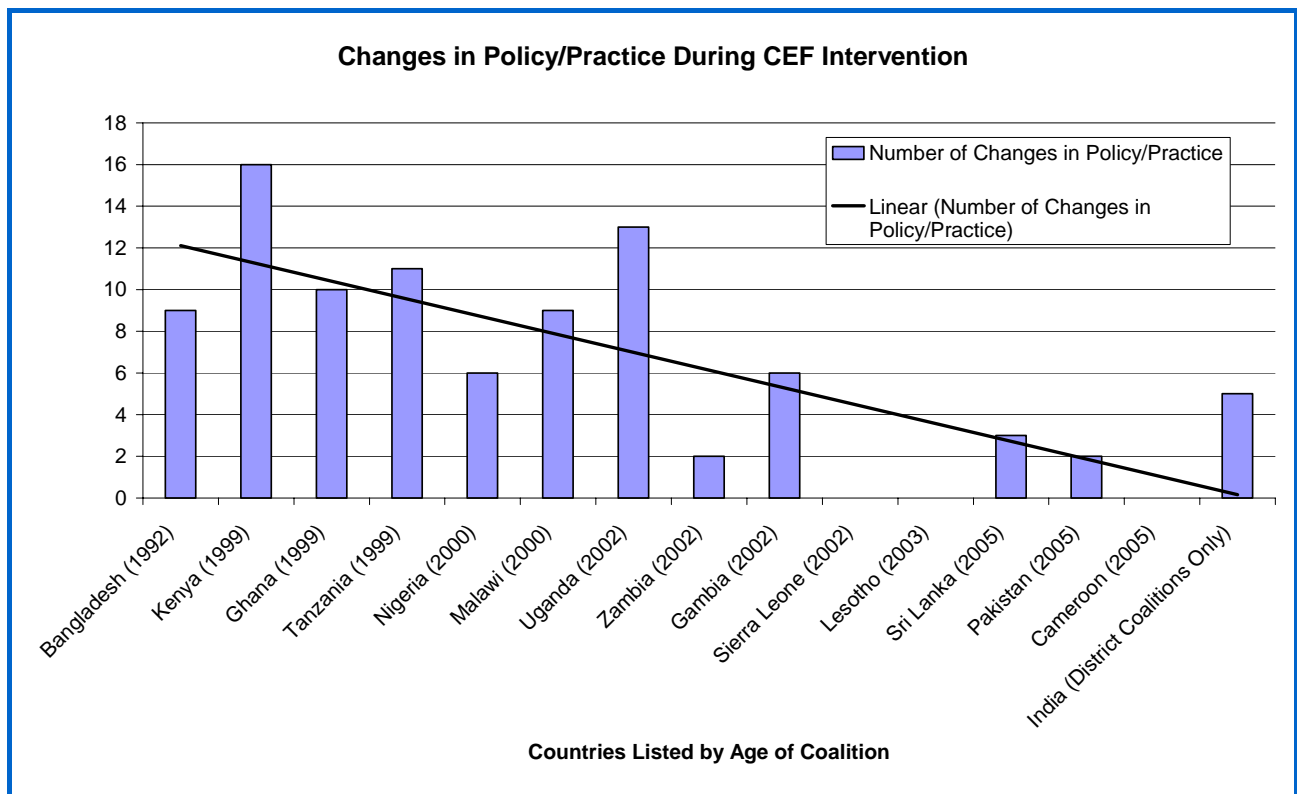


Chart C1: Recorded Changes in Policy and Practice



Whilst it is important to acknowledge that each country faces a unique set of circumstances and challenges, the chart above demonstrates a clear trend. In the same

period, longer established coalitions are able to drive substantially more changes than their younger counterparts.

As well as working with governments, the national coalitions on education have an important role in public awareness raising and mobilisation. A significant number of the country reports documented nation-wide publicity or sensitisation campaigns, creatively using the media, coalition members and innovative resource materials to urge parents to prioritise education; whether in Sierra Leone as schools re-opened after years of conflict or in Nigeria where challenging cultural attitudes to the education of girls was prioritised. In many of the reports, there are descriptions of communities effectively demanding both educational resources and a level of commitment from their leaders and representatives with regard to education.

Asked directly, CEF Coordinators reported that awareness of the MDGs had increased across all groups that CEF works with, and in particular amongst parliamentarians and Ministry of Education officials. Whilst this relates closely to CEF work, direct attribution is difficult to ascertain. It was however the view of the coordinators that in more than one third of cases, CEF influence in the change was "high" or "very high". In recent months the profile of the MDGs as a whole has been further raised in many countries by the Global Call For Action Against Poverty (GCAP). It is worth noting that in CEF countries, the education coalitions are almost always the strongest base of GCAP.

3.2 Case Studies

Starting a coalition from scratch in Sri Lanka

A substantial component of the work funded in Sri Lanka is made up by on-the-ground projects which have served as pilots of good practices and lead to the identification of advocacy issues and strategies. The approach at the community level is to strengthen community ownership of schools and work in collaboration with government officials at all levels to improve the education system.

In addition, the programme in Sri Lanka has recently initiated a National Educational Network. A national consultation was held in July 2004 and an Interim Executive Committee was established with provincial and national representatives. The inaugural meeting of the national coalition was held on the 26th March 2005.

Objectives of the national coalition include:

- Formulate national policies relevant to national and international needs and lobby for quality and equity in education for all children
- Strengthen capacity of provincial, district and village level civil society action and committees to ensure ownership of education planning and implementation
- Monitor implementation of education policies
- Reduce disparities and discrimination between urban and rural schools in resource allocation as well as in quality of education: Investigation, address and lobby for equal opportunity for realizing Education For All
- Mobilise teachers/ parents/ students to promote broader dialog in order to participate in education policy formation & implementation.
- Promote value based education

The immediate strategy to realise these goals is simple but direct:

- Develop advocacy plan for the coalition
- Provide capacity building to coalition members for engagement in policy analysis and advocacy (ASPBAE)
- Build credible links with National Government & Private sector partnership
- Link with regional and international networks
- Respond to the urgent needs of tsunami-affected children.

Supporting an existing coalition in Nigeria

In early April 2000, ActionAid Nigeria in collaboration with a local NGO, CAPP facilitated the inaugural meeting of the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) in time for the world summit on Education in Dakar. A team of six represented CSACEFA at the meeting and one representative was elected onto the UNESCO committee.

Before CSACEFA, CSOs were scarcely involved in the design or implementation of education plans. Several factors restricted potential engagement including; the perception of the government among NGOs, a lack of enabling environment, poor networking-capacity of CSOs, and competition between CSOs.

Since 2000 the membership of CSACEFA has grown from 42 to 219 community based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs working on education related matters, grouped into 6 geo-political zones for better coordination. A team of 8 facilitating committee members manages the work of CSACEFA and the Policy Advisor under the supervision of a Moderator carries out day-to-day activities.

CEF supports CSACEFA to strengthen the secretariat structure, consolidate on advocacy, influence education policy and increase the interface with international and regional campaigns. CEF also engages with mobilising civil society voices for free basic education of good quality. They assist collaboration and partnership with government both at national and local levels and build and strengthen the capacity of CSOs and CBOs in contributing to education policy.

Through increased collaboration and capacity, CSOs and CBOs are now involved in the design of the National Action Plan on EFA and have influenced several education policies including on girl child education and early childcare development. There is growing commitment of government towards free education in terms of policy and legislature. In addition, there is also growing interest of the private sector involvement in basic Education

Effective engagement with the grassroots still remains a challenge though there is now some presence of CSACEFA and its members across almost all States. There are still major capacity issues for most member organizations as they enter the unfamiliar world of policy dialogue rather than project delivery.

Supporting an experienced coalition in Tanzania

TENMET coalition has existed since 1999 to coordinate education CSOs' lobbying and advocacy works in Tanzania. A coalition secretariat was formed and a 3 year plan developed. TENMET has been an active participant in international education campaign events and successfully lobbied for, and influenced, education benchmarks in Tanzania. It was Marifa's/TENMET's research on the

impact of school-fees on access to quality education that led to the abolition of fees in primary education.

However, there were internal challenges in TENMET. The role of the secretariat was unclear. There were conflicts of interest in setting and engaging in campaign agendas, dissimilar capacities among members and some unrealistic expectations held by many district-based members. The funding base was unstable, leadership tensions existed and recruitment and retention of qualified staff was a problem.

CEF targeted support to TENMET in two areas: firstly increasing their capacity to engage effectively in Ministry of Education consultation/working group processes and secondly deepening their nation-wide membership and the connections with that membership. In 2003 the first disbursement to TENMET was released. Support has since been given by CEF to TENMET for education budget monitoring work at all levels, monitoring the government's Primary Education Development Plan, capacity building of district networks, resourcing and remunerating the core secretariat and strategic planning for 2004 - 2006.

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The retention of staff remains a problem as does reporting and the capacity to monitor impact. There has been an erroneous perception among other thematic coalitions that TENMET's presence in the MC enables them to influence grant-making decisions, However these internal challenges have been resolved using established mechanisms and none of the problems were attributed to CEF involvement. Progress is being made with improved internal accounting systems and personnel procedures. An invigorated new leadership and secretariat are in place and TENMET remains a key player in policy dialogue with government on education.

Linking networks through CEF

ANCEFA and PAMOJA submitted a joint proposal to the CEF management committee to provide support for regional networks and regional initiatives, building the voice of African civil society towards the achievement of the EFA goals. The work included:

- Institutional support for ANCEFA at regional and sub-regional level
- Capacity building on key areas of need identified, especially around advocacy skills and campaign planning
- Support for PAMOJA to strengthen parental involvement in school governance across Africa, especially looking at links between women's literacy and girls' education.
- The development of regional mechanisms for civil society engagement on education (building on a Civil Society report to MINEDAF VIII) to maintain pressure on African governments and donors in Africa.

The CEF grant helped ANCEFA to strengthen its national and sub-regional networks through the facilitation of face to face meetings, phone conferences and email consultations. This plays a crucial role for many of the national coalitions supported by CEF who can learn from one another through ANCEFA, contextualise their work and contribute to a regional / global process. ANCEFA has revised its 2005/2007 campaign objectives and strategy through diverse sub-regional and regional consultations led by member coalitions and sub-regional

moderators. The budget helps with website management including links between the ANCEFA and GCE websites. In addition, the ANCEFA newsletter is co-funded by CEF and disseminated across the four sub-regions.

Three regional advocacy documents has been edited by ANCEFA with the CEF support, aimed at advocacy and EFA monitoring and have been disseminated in several international and regional meetings. ANCEFA and FAWE signed a MOU for a project on gender mainstreaming through workshops and lobby events in 14 countries and 50% of the cost is supported by the CEF grants. The implementation will start very soon in those countries by FAWE national chapters, ANCEFA national coalitions in partnership with other national stakeholders.

30% of the CEF grant is for institutional support to ANCEFA as a regional network formed by regional campaign platforms. This helps ANCEFA to employ staff to support the regional coordinators. In addition, the CEF audit led by AA/CEF accountant has been very fruitful and helped ANCEFA to fill some big gaps in reporting, filing, respect of procedures and financial and accounting systems. ANCEFA has subsequently improved its finance system management by recruiting a new accountant and putting in place appropriate software and internal procedures.

3.3 Challenges and Ways forward

Despite contextual differences, recurring issues and themes were evident in the mid-term reports submitted by country programmes. An analysis of key issues and challenges around coalition building was presented at the Global Workshop in Ghana in April 2005. This was followed by a detailed discussion where coordinators prioritised issues and identified ways forward.

Targeting support: Do we prioritise coalitions or the members of coalitions?

CEF has tended to support national coalitions directly but many of those coalitions have struggled to fully engage their membership in policy and advocacy work. Within coalitions there are huge contrasts between big agencies (with rigorous systems and a wide range of skills) and the local NGOs or CBOs (who not only lack skills in research, documentation and policy analysis but also have weak basic systems). CEF could do more to build the basic capacity of coalition members as the long-term strength of the coalitions depends on all members being able to engage in key activities. In an early example of this, the CEF Kenya Accountant ran a finance workshop for partners with support from CEF accountants from Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia. The shift from a traditional role in service delivery to one of active engagement in policy discussions is a very significant one and requires new skills. CEF needs to be more pro-active in looking to support these skills in grassroots members of coalitions.

Reflecting on Coalitions: When is a Coalition not a coalition?

A coalition should be a vehicle for its members which actively involves members at all opportunities. Its strength comes from the collective experience of staff in all member organisations. But to operate effectively a coalition needs a strong capacity to coordinate and communicate. A basic secretariat is therefore essential. Often that secretariat grows as the reputation of the coalition grows and its workload increases - so as to take advantage of all the opportunities. This can lead to a mushrooming of staff at

the centre and a progressive sense from members that if something needs to be done the secretariat should do it. Before long, staff in member organisations are detached and all the work is left to the secretariat and the coalition becomes an organisation in its own right that loses its base.

This scenario and the issues raised by it have been discussed at length within CEF. There is no simple solution and the context in any country will be different, but talking through such scenarios helps to prepare people and make them alert to danger signs. Somewhere there is a perfect balance; a capable coalition secretariat that remains accountable to members and actively involves them at all opportunities. Building democratic structures that are not overly bureaucratic seems important. But there is no substitute for having the right person as a coalition coordinator - someone who understands and can handle complex power dynamics.

Building a genuine focus on gender

Despite CEF's framing around the 2005 MDG, gender has remained a relatively weak area of work. Gender is yet to be a central theme of all coalitions and is sometimes misinterpreted. Many of the CEF coordinators have tried to raise gender issues with coalitions or other partners but this generally results in peripheral actions or partners reporting "gender focused" activities merely because they involved or were related to girls. More attention and resources need to be focused on building understanding and capacity so that coalitions and partners operate with the rights and needs of both girls and boys at the heart of all their activities. In some cases this needs to start with greater gender awareness amongst CEF coordinators themselves.

Deepening and broadening the base of coalitions

Most education coalitions supported by CEF remain dominated by NGOs even if other agencies are increasingly involved. There needs to be an active move to diversify and deepen membership in most cases. Teachers' unions/associations are involved in most countries but not always as actively as they could be. Parents' federations are less widely involved nationally but can play a key role in providing a solid base and grassroots voice. At grassroots levels there are links to statutory bodies like Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or School Management Committees (SMCs) and there is a growing phenomenon of non-statutory citizens groups on education/parents' action groups. Both can provide an important foundation. Links to the private sector are another priority in order to bring non-conventional voices behind the call for public education. There is also crucial work to be done to involve the media (education journalists in print, radio and TV) and parliamentarians.

There are many examples of good practice of developing strong links with or supporting sub-groups or mini-coalitions that can be part of the national coalition but need their own space. These might be networks of education journalists, women' groups, budget-tracking networks, organisations working on early-childhood issues, pastoralist organisations, private sector groups (e.g. education groups within confederations of industry/chambers of commerce), parliamentary caucuses etc.

Acknowledging it takes time

The strongest coalitions that have had the biggest impact on changing policy tend to be those that pre-date Dakar - specifically the coalitions in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria Tanzania and Malawi. These coalitions have matured. Some have been through difficult times (like Tanzania) but have emerged stronger for it. They have been able to establish their voice at national level and build linkages across the country. Their members have a

better understanding of the issues and are more capable of engaging (though even here, challenges remain). The country reports show clearly that you cannot rush the early period of coalition building. There are power-relationships to be resolved, changes in perspective to be accommodated, and capacities to be built. This is one of the major reasons for the slow initial spending in CEF. Coalition building does not cost lots of money but it takes time and is a necessary foundation.

Although overall, CEF has been under-spending against its budget, CEF programmes in countries where coalitions that have been longer established (Bangladesh, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania) tend to be spending funds more rapidly and effectively. Once the foundations are established, the work can take off.

Adjusting to diverse contexts

Although coalition building is an effective method of strengthening civil society voice on education the idea of building a single national coalition is not always appropriate. There is a marked difference here between the work in Africa and South Asia. In Africa, coalitions are often started at national level through convening different agencies in the capital city (and then later working outwards). Aside from Bangladesh (which has a well established coalition) there have been difficulties in building national coalitions elsewhere in South Asia. There are now national coalitions emerging in Sri Lanka and Pakistan - but these have been built up slowly and carefully from local and provincial work (rather from the capital city). In India it seems almost impossible to bring together all the different voices nationally and the strategy has now shifted to focus on State-level coalitions in Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. For all the power and potential of national coalitions on education, CEF needs to continue to have flexibility to adjust to different national contexts. If CEF wants to put education higher up domestic political agenda, then different processes may achieve this in different countries.

Addressing power issues

CEF needs to be aware of its own power. In many countries CEF offers a unique form of strategic funding for civil society work on education. This power should be used, for example to deepen the democratic processes of coalitions (and their links to the grassroots) but should not be used to interfere in setting the coalition's agenda or interfering with management of the coalition. The capacity to support core costs of coalitions is widely appreciated but must be handled carefully. Coalitions must be supported to find other funding sources - to diversify their base so that there is no longer-term dependency on CEF. This will take time and coalitions must be prepared to deal with other donors who may be less interested in their process and more interested in pushing particular agendas.

Building capacity

The workshop in Ghana identified that key capacity gaps still exist at different levels - whether in policy analysis, networking, advocacy & campaigning, or in documentation, communication, administration, management and fundraising. There needs to be an ongoing process of needs assessment with the secretariats of national coalitions and with coalition members so as to address these capacity gaps. In many cases the capacity gap within one organisation can be filled by the experience of another organisation within a coalition - so these gaps do not always require external intervention, but they do require clear identification and the development of systems and cultures or mutual support.

There is much more that CEF can also do across countries in bringing experience from one coalition to help address a capacity gap in another. There have been some good

examples of exchange visits within CEF (several countries sent people to see the work in Kenya where Elimu Yetu has a long experience). There have also been some examples of shared capacity building; a workshop on budget tracking for national coalitions hosted by CEF Sri Lanka, run by CEF Bangladesh and attended by CEF Pakistan; and school governance run by Pamoja in Tanzania. There have also been cases where CEF Coordinators have joined workshops run by one of the three lead agencies such as the Beyond Access workshop on girls' education in Bangladesh and a workshop on Violence against Girls in schools in Johannesburg. However, much more needs to be done to make the most of the potential for cross-country capacity-building.

3.4 Recommendations

- CEF should do more to build the **basic capacity of coalition members** particularly in areas of policy analysis, research and documentation: the long-term strength of the coalitions depends on all members being able to engage in key activities.
- CEF should support coalitions to **build democratic structures** so that coalition secretariats remain accountable to their members and actively involve them (it is important for coordinators to be aware of the dangers of coalitions losing their base, becoming institutions themselves or over-bureaucratising processes).
- There needs to be an active move to **diversify and deepen membership** of coalitions, including: teacher unions, parents' federations, the private sector, and organisations outside the education sector for which education is a concern.
- CEF should encourage all coalitions to build **strong links to district and local level** with good two-way communication. The base of national coalitions should be in the voices of parents, children, teachers and citizens, as the most direct stakeholders in government schools.
- CEF should support national coalitions to strengthen existing **democratic governance structures** increasing parliamentary engagement in and oversight of education reform, deepening the accountability of relevant government structures at all levels and enhancing the status and effectiveness of PTAs / SMCs etc. Securing a seat at the policy table for coalitions should be seen as a means to making government schools work, not an end in itself.
- Coalitions must be supported to find **other funding sources** to diversify their base so that there is no longer-term dependency on CEF - but it will take time for the coalition to be able to attract core funding of the type CEF can offer.
- We must recognise that this work takes time and we should seek to **secure continuity of core CEF funding** for a longer period. The policy impact of this innovative work is more evident where coalitions were established pre-Dakar/ pre-CEF and it is this policy impact which will attract other donors over time.
- There needs to be an ongoing **process of needs assessment** with the secretariats of national coalitions and with coalition members so as to address capacity gaps.

4. BUDGET WORK: Criterion Two

4.1 Summary of Achievements

Before CEF, budget work on education was unfamiliar to most people in the 3 lead agencies and in our national partners across the 16 countries. People assumed it was something to be done by economists, accountants or other experts. Our biggest achievement has been to dispel this myth and to build the confidence of people at local, district and national levels to ask questions about education budgets.

In the global workshop in Ghana, it was deemed that coherent progress against Criterion Two was dependent on a shared definition of budget tracking, its purpose and relevance. Group discussion resulted in the following output.

Budget Tracking is a process where financial allocations for education are analysed at different levels to see if plans match rhetoric and needs and to see if expenditure matches plans. When done in a systematic way at different levels and locations, and when the analysis is used for advocacy, budget tracking contributes to enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of education.

Budget Tracking can help:

- *Suggest where money needs to be increased or reallocated*
- *Expose misdirection of money*
- *Clarify whether policy announcements are backed up with necessary resources*
- *Increase stakeholder ownership in education*
- *Create a positive partnership between public and government in delivery of education*

Budget tracking should be seen as a component of a wider process of community empowerment around education. i.e.:

- *Relationship building with education authorities*
- *Monitoring quality of expenditure*
- *Addressing wider issue of education financing*

Many countries are still in the early stages of work on education budgets but some have been through an extensive process already, involving an accumulation of activities such as:

- Analysing and demystifying the national education budget.
- Sharing user-friendly versions of the budget extensively.
- Training people in budget work at national level in various organisations.
- Training people at district and local level (inc PTA/SMCs).
- Tracking what happens to the budget in practice in different districts/schools.
- Consolidating/analysing data at national level from tracking exercises.
- Exposing misuse of budgets and taking corrupt officials to court.
- Advocacy on the education budget (eg costing key reforms/demanding changes).
- Taking active part in education budget formulation processes locally or nationally.
- Building capacity of parliamentary committees to scrutinise education budgets.
- Raising strategic questions on education financing with Ministries of Finance.

Across the 16 countries this work has been developing on an impressive scale. Information about education budgets has been distributed to over 6 million people as a result of CEF support. The table below shows the numbers of groups and individuals who have received training on education budgets as a direct result of CEF support:

Table T1: Budget Work Training Supported by CEF

Budget Work Training	Training Delivered	
	No. Groups	No. Individuals
CSO/NGOs Nationally	102	790
CSO/NGOs Locally	221	3,360
School Management Committees/Parents Groups	610	7,250
Children/Children's Groups	1,502	375,040
Total	2,435	386,440

This training on education budgets has meant that national coalitions have been in a strong position going into budget discussions with Ministries of Education; something that has happened with CEF support in 10 countries. In 6 countries, coalitions have felt confident enough to take discussions even further with Ministries of Finance. For Ministries of Finance this is a novelty. Never before have they had an informed discussion with civil society groups about the education budget - even being challenged on their own figures. But this work is still very new and many countries are still a long way from being able to engage at this level.

It is not only the national level where budget work has an impact. There are some exciting examples where local and district level advocacy work on education budget is showing an impact. Country reports show an impact in many different forms:

- Evidence of increased budget allocation
- Rehabilitation of primary schools
- Provision of materials
- Plans for schools for the physically challenged
- Abolition of cost-recovery schemes (eg the pamphlet scam in Sierra Leone)
- Prompt payment of teachers' salaries

The table below gives an overview picture of where different countries have been doing budget work and some of the different impacts they have seen:

Table T2: Achievements in Budget Work - Criterion Two

Where work is in progress ○

Where results have already been achieved ●

Budget Work Achievements		Bangladesh	Cameroon	The Gambia	Ghana	India	Kenya	Lesotho	Malawi	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia
Tracked/influenced Education Budget	National	○		○		●	●		○	●		○			○	○
	District				○	○	●			●	○	○		●	○	
	Local				●		●			●	○	○		●	●	
Exposed misuse of budget in media							●		○	○	●			●	●	
Taken public officials to court over misuse							○								●	
Calculated costs of key policy reforms						○	●			○						
Worked with MP or Parliamentary Caucus		●		○	●	○	●		○	●	●				●	
Linked to wider public finance network						○	●		○	●				●	●	
Linked to campaigns on debt							●							●	○	
Challenged donors on their aid to education		○					●									
Questioned macro economic policies		○					●			○				●	○	

This table suggests that the focus is very much on government education budgets with little significant work being done about donor funding for education. There have only been a couple of countries where organisations have used the legal system to enforce change - taking public officials to court - though many more countries are happy to use the media to expose misuse of funds. Work, with parliamentary caucuses or committees is now evident in 8 countries and appears from reports to be a relatively new area of work but something which has yielded quick results.

4.2 Case Studies

Linking local and national budget work in Bangladesh

When the CEF budget work began in Bangladesh, the education financing pattern was constrained by incrementalism (each year a modest percentage increase with no real analysis) and bureaucratic discretion (no open discussion/transparency about priorities). An underlying assumption seemed to be that quality in education could be equated with infrastructure.

CEF Bangladesh decided to focus on the linkage between local and national budgets, analyzing both demand and supply dynamics. Perhaps most significantly, there is a core principle of translating analysis into action at both the local and national level. This is demonstrated in the table below.

	Analysis	Players	Action	Players
Local	School Budget, Family Budget	Local organization PPRC, Community	Resource mobilization, Community audit of education intervention	Local organizations, Community
National	Policies and Budget	Innovators, PPRC	Lobbying , Media Advocacy	CAMPE, Parliamentary caucus, <i>Sushikkha</i> <i>Aandolon</i> , Media

The accumulation of work at local and national level has already had significant effects. Insights gained from the local work on family and school budgets are reflected in the country's PRSP. Nationally the Finance Minister has agreed to have a pre-budget session with a parliamentary caucus on education which is unprecedented. Reports published by CEF partner Innovators have gained significant media coverage, especially where they have documented findings that were contrary to exaggerated government claims about education spending.

Future plans include PRSP and budget monitoring to ensure policy commitments are translated into actions. Detailed work will be done with the Parliamentary Caucus so that they can hold the Finance Minister to his word and use the pre-budget meeting to full effect. Accountability for the education budget at national level will be matched by similar accountability for education spending at other levels of government and all the way down to the school. CEF Bangladesh also plans to build budget literacy for education journalists.

Structured success in Kenya

The Elimu Yetu Coalition (EYC) started budget work just before CEF. ActionAid helped the coalition do research on financing education in 2 districts of Kenya:

- Narok: a rich county council with low investment in education, low enrolments especially for girls-poor learning achievements
- Mwingi: poor county council with high investment in education, high involvement of parents in schools activities, high enrolments for both girls and boys, leading in performance

Before the research was undertaken, parents were contributing 90% of the education budget, the government 8% and CSOs 2%. Head teachers demanded more support from parents but were not accountable or transparent. This meant a heavy burden to parents. Education became too expensive, enrolment rates dropped (especially for girls) and poor children became further marginalized in schools.

CEF built on this work and helped Elimu Yetu develop a second generation of budget tracking tools and training resources. These were translated into local languages and distributed to member CSOs. However the CSOs argued that the budget tracking tools were too technical and needed simplification. Abridged versions have therefore been developed to take down to the most local level.

This work undoubtedly contributed to the government's commitment to abolish user fees in Kenya in early 2003. The new Minister of Education opened his doors to Elimu Yetu to get advice on the challenges of funding primary schools. The Minister then put in place bank accounts for all 17,800 primary schools so that schools could receive funds directly (rather than have them trickle down and disappear in district offices). Elimu Yetu then had to rise to the challenge of training school management committees to use school budgets effectively and transparently.

EYC delivered training to the National Coalition of Churches in Kenya (NCKK) staff, who in turn transferred skills and knowledge to 120 Trainers of Facilitators (TOFs) across six districts. The TOFs went on to train 5,000 School Management Committee (SMC) Members who formed "budget-tracking teams". EYC also trained and disseminated resource packs to 600 members of CSOs in 8 provinces. Budget tracking monitoring reports were produced and shared with the Ministry of Education and the media. In addition coalition members participated in pre and post budget analysis forums organised by Institute of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education.

EYC and the NCKK now use budget tracking information to influence ministerial budgetary allocation to some regions. Parents and SMCs have become more proactive in ensuring efficient utilisation of primary education funds and SMC involvement in schools has grown beyond budget tracking. They are now involved in; monitoring teachers attendance, schools performance, maintenance of schools, abuse of children especially girls, cultural barriers to girls education; female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriages, sanitary facilities for girls etc.

As a result of budget tracking work more than 50 head teachers were exposed by the media for corruption on purchase of text books and the Minister for Education issued a circular/directive that all public primary schools must display the school budget on the public notice board.

The biggest challenge now is that people see the term "budget tracking" as controversial. Some communities are fearful about questioning or being seen to investigate the government. To assuage these fears EYC has now renamed all its training materials and courses "Free Primary Education". This defuses the fear even though the substance is the same.

Child Participation in Uganda

Uganda has also been involved in similar work to Kenya and Bangladesh but one area where it has gone further is in respect of child participation in education budgets. One partner, Kigulu Development Group, focuses on the different ways in which primary school children can monitor the quality of education as well as spending of Universal Primary Education (UPE) funds at school level. This is linked to a wider child rights agenda and involves school Management committees, teachers and district political leaders.

As well as succeeding in demystifying the "complexities" in budget tracking this initiative has gone a considerable way to overcoming fears and developing harmonious relationships between child monitors and children, teachers, SMC, parents. Children have been involved in advocacy, lobbying and influencing their family, school, community and district. They have collaborated across schools

and districts and demanded that responsibility is taken for their education. Children are participating in planning and budgeting committees of SMC. They present proposals for change at various levels - in their own and others' roles and responsibilities. Significantly, children are increasingly approaching Head teachers, Teachers and SMCs to seek advice and explanation on issues of concern to them (absenteeism, abuse, etc).

To date 360 children have been involved as monitors. Many more could become involved if this innovative approach attracts wider interest.

4.3 Challenges and Ways Forward

Linking coalition-building and budget work

Some countries have been slow to get started in budget tracking work. These tend to be those countries where there was no pre-existing education coalition such as Cameroon, Lesotho and Sri Lanka. Until a wider platform is in place it is difficult to undertake this work effectively as it benefits from cross-agency collaboration and the legitimacy that comes from a nationally recognised platform.

Continuing uncertainty about concepts

There is undoubtedly still a lot of fear and uncertainty around budget tracking. Even after people have broken through their initial fear of numbers and budgets, that fear re-surfaces. There is an incredible deference to economists and accountants and a fear of looking stupid by asking the wrong question. Even the process of budget work itself gets mystified - with a few national "experts" emerging who are seen to be the only ones who can chart a path through the complexities. Others feel unsure whether to start with analysis or tracking, whether to begin locally or nationally, whether to look at budgets or actual spending as if there is only one right path. Some people are unclear about the wider objectives of budget work and get completely absorbed in tracking figures and collating numbers with no sense of why! There is a constant need to keep the process simple and un-intimidating and with a clear purpose.

Accessing Information

Getting hold of data remains one of the major challenges in budget work. Even where it might be available at a local level it may be completely inaccessible at the national level or vice versa. In most CEF countries there is no legislative framework with regard to freedom of information (draft bills exist in most countries but seem to have little prospect of getting passed). Some programmes obtain education budget information from sympathetic officials in Ministries, others from parliamentarians or from international donors. Worryingly, bilateral and multilateral donors routinely have more information about the national education budget than national citizens. Some coalition members are outraged and frustrated by this but others question their own legitimacy to ask for such information. In most countries the management of information is closely linked to power and people have no automatic sense that they have a right to ask for it. There is still work to be done in building people's confidence that it is fair to ask for information about what Ministries of Education are doing with their money. There is also work to be done in strengthening the legal framework that requires the sharing of budgets. Until access to such information is a right budget work will always be vulnerable.

Sharing materials and expertise

There are some countries that have developed an impressive range of training materials in the past 2 or 3 years, but these have not been shared across countries. Other CEF countries that are just starting on this road could gain a lot from these and accelerate their own work. Budget tracking is also an area where human expertise needs to be shared; especially where people unnecessarily regard themselves as “non-experts”. Countries wanting to see how budget work functions should visit those where it has already worked and should then invite people to help develop their own programmes. The UK CEF secretariat can play a more active role in matching training needs to training skills in this area.

Positioning with government and head-teachers/building relationships

Some governments feel threatened by civil society organisations doing budget work. Others feel affronted: What right do you have to ask questions of me? Where is your own legitimacy? It is not an easy balance to get right, seeking positive dialogue with government over education policy and then threatening to expose the same government’s misuse of education budgets. This functions equally at the school level. Do parents or community based organisations have any right to ask head teachers about the education budget? How do you build a good relationship with the head-teacher around parental involvement in school life if the head also fears you are out to expose her or his corruption? Locally groups are particularly wary of asserting themselves as they don’t want to damage relations or give any sense of pursuing a witch hunt. This is further complicated for coalitions and NGOs by the very real question that can be asked about our own practices. NGOs need to be internally consistent, having full transparency in their own budgets if they are to demand the same from government departments, education authorities and donors. NGOs must improve in order to adhere to the same standards set for others.

Alongside improvements in NGO practicess we need to be pro-active in making the case for budget work with governments, officials and head teachers - showing the potential benefits that come from better understanding of the budget by all stakeholders. Particularly Ministries of Education can be persuaded that this work can help them make a compelling case for more overall investments in education. What seems most important is to avoid any unnecessary confrontation. Position on budgets need to be well-researched and evidence of any discrepancies or misuse needs to be robust before it is made public.

Building Gender Budgeting Work

Gender has remained peripheral to CEF-supported budget work and is certainly not yet truly mainstreamed. Considerable efforts were made in the workshop in Ghana to share understanding on gender budgeting and further information was distributed afterwards to support in-country skill development. There is agreement now that CEF can make considerable steps to a more genuinely mainstreamed consideration of gender by considering the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys through the use of tools such as:

- Gender-aware policy appraisal
- Gender-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis
- Gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessments
- Gender-aware budget statements
- Gender-aware budget analysis

Looking beyond government budgets

There is a tendency to focus on government budgets as something in themselves and to ignore other sources of revenue for a school. There is also a tendency to look at the numbers in isolation - for example not equating them to a process of monitoring quality. The financial information becomes most valuable when matched with key statistics about class size or the ratio of texts to pupils or rates of drop-out. Budget work therefore needs to be integrated into a much more holistic programme of work.

Asking the big strategic questions

Often national coalitions can get invited to budget discussions about relative allocation to one item or another within the education budget. It is much rarer to have any say in the overall budget. Yet it is clear that to achieve the EFA goals will require massive increases in government budgets and donor support for education. Coalitions need to be able to engage better in strategic discussions that affect this big picture - the macro-economic debates which determine the overall size of the education budget. Some coalitions are starting to look at how low-single-digit inflation targets or tight deficit levels or public sector spending limits impact on teacher pay and recruitment. This work is only just starting but represents an important area for future investment if coalitions are to understand the big picture.

4.4 Recommendations

- CEF needs to ensure all countries are clear about the objectives of budget work and how it links to the provision of, and access to, good quality education in government schools.
- CEF should support work around freedom of information where this impacts significantly on our budget work.
- CEF needs to invest more in capacity-building and confidence-building in this area. The UK CEF secretariat can play a more active role in matching training needs to training skills in this area.
- CEF should support pro-active engagement with government, making the case for budget work with governments, officials and head teachers, showing the potential benefits that come from better understanding of the budget by all stakeholders.
- Budget work needs to be integrated into a much more holistic programme of work that looks at gathering other relevant data especially around indicators of quality.
- More work needs to be done around macro-economic issues as they affect education so that coalitions understand the big picture and can take reasonable positions around the overall size of the education budget.

5. LEARNING FROM INNOVATIONS: Criterion Three

5.1 Summary of Achievements

There is an immense diversity to CEF's work in the area of learning from innovation but most work can be clustered in one of two ways:

1. Innovative work with specific excluded groups
2. Innovative work with schools

The table below demonstrates the breadth of work with different excluded and vulnerable groups. The second column indicates the total number of partners that are supported across all 16 countries. The next six columns show the number of countries in which different types of activity or achievement have been recorded.

Table T3: Groups Benefiting from Innovative Work

Groups Benefiting from Innovative Work	No. Partners Supported	Specific Thematic Coalition	Issue on Agenda of Nat. Coalition	Researched/ Evaluated	Suggestion made to Government	Policy Change	Change in Practice
Girls	56	6	7	3	5	4	4
Street Children	24	3	4	2	4	2	3
Disabled Children	12	5	7	4	2	3	2
Very Remote/Rural Communities	11	2	4	3	5	1	2
Indigenous Groups	8	3	3	3	4	1	2
HIV Orphans and Vulnerable Children	7	1	3	1	2	1	1
Linguistic Minorities	4	1	2	3	3		1
Pastoralists	3	1	1	1			
Conflict Affected/ Displaced Children	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Low Caste/Dalit Children	1		1		1		
Migrant Workers	1						1
Other Groups	8	2	3	3	3	2	2
Total	137	25	36	24	30	15	19

This table demonstrates that changes in policy and practice are most likely where substantial and unified thematic coalitions have developed or issues are taken up by national coalitions. A build up of resources and applied pressure through advocacy takes time. The work with disabled children, street children and girls are good indicators of this.

It is also interesting to note that work with these excluded groups has been recorded and shared in different ways. The table below lists the most popular ways in which information and knowledge are transferred. Some CEF supported programmes have also engaged in child-to-child information transfer, role-play and performance and have engaged community leaders and tribal elders in delivering messages.

Table T4: Transfer of Information on Innovative Practices

Modes of Information Transfer	Workshops for Practitioners	Newspaper Articles	Posters, Photos and Exhibitions	Seminars for Policy Makers	TV and Radio	Reports Published
Conflict Affected/ Displaced Children	1	1	1	1		1
Disabled Children	4	4	2	1	2	1
Girls	6	5	4	4	4	3
HIV Orphans and Vulnerable Children	2	1	1	1	1	2
Indigenous Groups	4	2	2	2	1	1
Linguistic Minorities	3	2	2	1	2	1
Low Caste/Dalit Children	1	1	1			
Pastoralists	1	1	1			
Street Children	4	3	3	2	1	1
Very Remote/Rural Communities	4	3	3	2	4	2
Other Groups	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	32	25	22	16	17	14

Looking through the second lens we can also see much diversity in the ways in which CEF has promoted learning from innovations at the school level. All of this innovative work may increase the possibilities for children from across many excluded groups to enrol, stay in school and actually learn when there.

Table T5: Achievements through Innovative Work - Criterion Three

Where work is in progress ○

Where changes in policy or practice have already been achieved ●

Where plans for future work exist ◇

Innovative Approaches Achievements	Bangladesh	Cameroon	The Gambia	Ghana	India	Kenya	Lesotho	Malawi	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia
Costs for Parents															
Tuition Fees	○	◇	●		◇	●			●				○	○	
Books	●			◇	◇	○			◇					○	
Stationary	○			◇	◇	○									
Uniform	○				◇	○	◇		◇						
Pupil's Food	○			◇	●	◇			◇		◇	○		○	
PTA/SMC Fee*				●	◇	◇			◇		◇				
School Maintenance	○			●	◇	◇			○		◇		○	○	
Staff Salaries	●	◇			◇	◇					◇			●	
Quality of Education															
Teacher Attendance	●			●	◇	◇		●	◇		○	●		○	◇
Teacher Training		◇	●	◇	○	○	◇	●	◇	○	○	○	○	●	
Teacher Salary	●		●	◇	◇	◇		●	◇		◇			●	○
Female Teachers	◇		●		○	○		●		○	○			○	●
Curriculum Content	○	◇			○	○	◇		◇			○	○	●	◇
Teaching Resources		◇			○	○				○	◇		○	●	
Exam Performance	●				○	○						○		●	
Mother Tongue**	○		●	●	○	●								○	
Corporal Punishment					●	○				○			●		

Access															
Pupil Attendance	●	◇	○	●	○	○	◇	●	○	◇	○	●	●	○	●
Distance to School			○	◇	○	○		●	○		○	○		○	◇
Non Formal Education				◇	◇	●	◇		○	◇	○	○	●	●	◇
Over-Age Children					◇						○		○	○	
Adult Literacy				●	◇			●	◇		○			●	○
Early Childhood Edu.	◇		●	◇	◇	○	◇	●	○		◇		●	○	○
Vocational Education				◇	◇		◇				◇			○	
Lower Secondary Edu.				◇	◇				○		◇			○	
School Governance															
Accountability***	●	◇		●	●	○	◇	○	○		◇			○	◇
Corruption		◇			○	○			○					○	
PTA/SMC Capacity	●	◇	●	●	●	○	◇	●	○	◇	○	●	●	○	◇

*PTA/SMC = Parent-Teacher Association/School Management Committee

**Mother Tongue refers to promotion of teaching in indigenous languages

***In this context Accountability refers to financial accountability

The table demonstrates a broad distribution of resources and importantly, an equally broad distribution of successes. Some country programmes are able to share considerable experience with others who are just beginning work in an area. It is interesting to note that the strongest area of innovative work seems to be around capacity building of School Management Committees and PTAs - an area where eight countries feel they have already made an impact on policy or practice.

5.2 Case Studies

Aligning Syllabi in The Gambia

Between 2000 and 2003, primary school enrolment in Islamic schools (Madrassas) grew from 10% to 15% of all primary enrolment in The Gambia. Despite being formally recognized by the National Education Policy, no plans were in place for integration with the conventional school system.

Through working with the General Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic Education in The Gambia (GSIAE), CEF supported the development of integrated syllabi and unified timetable elements ensuring that 44% of the timetable is for core subjects of mathematics, science, social and environmental studies and English language. This process involved teachers, senior Madrassa officials and other government representatives and has affected nearly 200 Madrassas (schools) across the country since June 2004.

As shown below it also had a significant influence on government policy. Furthermore, the Education policy has been simplified and disseminated in open forum to all levels in a "Know Your Policy, Know your Responsibilities" campaign.

"The Madrassas will be supported and strengthened to cater for children whose parents opt for instruction in these institutions. Such support will include provision of teachers of English language, instructional materials, upgrading and training of Madrassa teachers for quality assurance."

(The Gambia Education Policy 2004 - 2015, page 19)

Continued work is planned with the added security of CEF funding but some challenges remain. The availability and use of materials is difficult to monitor as are the volumes of materials actually reaching the children. In many instances teachers lack capacity and full integration is restricted by the existing school structures.

Supporting Community Demand for Education in India

CEF has been working in 9 districts of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in a partnership to provide practical assistance, influence policy and public opinion for positive change. The programme is working to improve a literacy rate of 70% for males and only 50% for females and a belief among many parents and children that no education is better than the kind of education the State provides in its schools.

The programme involved consultations with teachers, children and parent teacher associations; workshops to develop indicators for community monitoring on education; and briefings for members of the Legislative Assembly, the education department, teachers union and media on positive discipline. In addition a state level convention was held where village representatives and children came face to face with high authority of the state and asked them pertinent questions. There have been regular training programmes on inclusive education and joyful learning.

Some of the key outcomes noted include:

- Communities empowered to demand more teachers and school facilities
- Government order for the banning of corporal punishment in both states
- More than 10,000 working children were mainstreamed into schools with 85% retention
- 50 children with disabilities have been admitted to regular schools
- 25 children with severe disabilities have been admitted to special schools

However, more work needs to be done on influencing policies, enhancing teacher capacity and facilitating children to access power over administrative aspects relevant to their learning.

Future work includes:

- Strengthening equal opportunities and pre-school initiatives;
- Developing a state wide review mechanism for implementation of directive against corporal punishments in both states;
- Undertaking studies on the implementation of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) - India's national Education For All programme;
- Increasing advocacy efforts for quality and relevant education to all children, and
- Establishing linkages with corporate and big business houses.

Quality Basic Education Sensitisation in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone ranked 2nd to last on the UNDP Human Development Index in 2004 and there are currently an estimated 375,000 children out of school, of which 69% are girls. Since 2000, the government has pursued a policy of education for all children of school going age in Sierra Leone by 2015. However the huge challenge is compounded by low government spending on education and a lack

of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in education. In addition, high financial constraints and cultural practices among parents mean that girls are vulnerable to early marriages, pregnancy etc.

The situation led to the emergence of several civil society organisations to advocate for increased quality, access and retention. One such group, GMC-SL partnership launched in 2001 committed itself to support the national drive to provide access and retention to Quality Basic Education (QBE). GMC-SL partners decided to produce a sensitisation and mobilisation manual for all stakeholders involved in providing and promoting QBE. The manual is designed to focus on key players and to be utilised by both literate and non-literate groups.

CEF partners were involved in reviewing the process of the draft sensitisation document and giving technical inputs. CEF funded the finalisation/editing costs and the initial 1000 copies for launch during the Global Campaign Week of Action in April 2005.

CEF has encouraged high Ministry of Education involvement in the design and development processes of the manual and as a result the President is taking a lead role, legislating for use of the manual in all government sectors/institutions and by all Sierra Leoneans. Information on the manual has been shared through radio, TV, rallies, spot parades and drama, mainly by government and school authorities.

As a result, major stakeholders (Government, partners, children, business, communities etc.) are sensitised and mobilised and have contributed to the design and development process of the manual; technically and financially to date. The next challenge is to produce and effectively distribute 9,000 more copies of the manuals.

5.3 Challenges and Ways Forward

Compared to the coalition building work and budget tracking, this work remains in its infancy. Success is evident but sporadic. There is little evidence of sharing between countries and yet huge potential for this.

Avoiding the creation of parallel systems

When the government education system has failed to reach particular groups of children the first response of most NGOs is to want to assume the role themselves - to set up and run basic non-formal education (NFE) provision. In most CEF countries there are numerous examples of NGOs having assumed this service delivery role, running excellent micro-projects with some wonderful innovations. CEF has helped to document some of these in order to draw out learning to influence wider policy and practice. But there are serious limitations to the learning that can be drawn from micro-projects operating outside the government system. Often the micro-projects have per-capita spending on pupils which is impossible to replicate in the mainstream government system. They may also have all sorts of support and supervision that exceeds what is available for government schools. In the longer term they are profoundly unsustainable as NGOs cannot take permanent responsibility. In future CEF must emphasise learning from within the government system - whether from specific innovations within government schools or from government programme that have made a qualitative difference. Examples of getting excluded children into government school are much more

compelling, replicable and sustainable than isolated NGO projects. Our focus must be on how to make public schools work.

Reaching excluded children

The nature of groups that are most vulnerable or most likely to be excluded from education makes them more difficult to access. In most cases there are specific obstacles that often lie outside the immediate realm of education that impinge on their capacity to access schooling. For example, the mobility of pastoralists and migrant workers makes settled school provision difficult. There are solutions but they require some fundamentally different ways of working and organising and even of conceiving schools. Government systems are notoriously inflexible. Yet reaching these children will probably require changes to timetables or calendars, changes to curriculum or language policy, changes to teacher profiles or teacher training. Again, the easiest way to reach certain categories of excluded children may be provide special schools for each group. Even where such schools are run by government (rather than NGOs themselves) they can however end up being stigmatised and seen as second-rate or inferior. The real challenge remains reforming mainstream schools so that they reach excluded children and all children are integrated into a unitary (if flexible) education system. CEF must focus on converting innovative solutions into mainstream policy recommendations - always thinking about how innovations will work within government systems and government schools.

Improving learning and sharing

There remain considerable challenges in converting excellent work in one district or one country to work in other districts and other countries. Although the categories of excluded children vary from one district or country to another, there are common threads and much more potential for learning and exchange than CEF has yet taken up. The challenges of providing street children with education will cut across from Delhi to Nairobi to Lagos. If innovative ways are found to bring disabled children into mainstream schools in Tamil Nadu then this should excite every other State of India. If the education needs of displaced children are placed on the government's agenda in Uganda, then learning from how this was done will be significant to many other countries. To date, CEF has not been as creative as it could be to bring about a rich flow of learning across countries. It is not of course, to be done alone; there are other networks and organisations that can and should help with this work. Within the next few years it is certainly important that anyone wanting to source innovative ideas for addressing the education needs of HIV orphans or dalit children has easy access to simple and relevant material drawn from the practical experience of multiple countries. At present, cross-country learning of this sort remains largely within an academic sphere without immediate relevance for policy makers or practitioners. CEF should be bolder in seeking to change this.

In the Ghana CEF Workshop each country documented one innovation and participants went on a gallery walk to discover the innovation of other countries. This inspired many people to arrange exchange visits to learn more. It also led to demands for a more up to date and relevant web-site (to focus on learning and sharing) and for more collaboration in production of cross-country publications and resource materials. More tightly focused cross-country thematic workshops are needed, not for CEF Coordinators but for partner organisations in different countries which share common concerns and can learn together. We need to use video and other media to extend this too. As an education fund, CEF should use the best and most innovative education approaches itself to promote learning across CEF countries both for coordinators and partner organisations.

Linking innovative work with coalition-building: a unified approach

There is a danger that innovative work for helping excluded children is not linked to the wider agenda of CEF. Work under this criterion has tended to involve grassroots engagement with specific groups of excluded children or specific organisations working on school reform but these are not always systematically linked into district or national coalitions. There is too much of a tendency for people to see the 3 CEF criteria as separate pillars rather than constantly asking how they connect with one another to contribute to larger change. Innovations are being documented but they are not feeding sufficiently into a policy agenda or advocacy work, yet this should not be difficult. For example, if good work is being done with access for disabled children then links should be made with disability organisations at district and national level and organisations of disabled people should be encouraged to add their voice to the national education coalition refining and sharpening an agenda for policy reform for disabled children. If innovative work is done on girl's education then links should be made with the women's movement. Each piece of CEF-supported work should be seen as a bridge to building a wider constituency with deeper insights on the policy reforms needed and a more powerful voice nationally.

5.4 Recommendations

- In future CEF must **emphasise how learning from innovations is applicable within the government system**, focusing on those outcomes that help us to understand how to make government schools work.
- CEF should ensure that the innovative work recorded is converted into **mainstream policy recommendations**. Work in this area should be focused on building an evidence base for policy and advocacy work.
- There is much more **potential for learning and exchange** than CEF has yet taken up. CEF has not been as creative as it could be to bring about a rich flow of learning across countries.

6. MANAGEMENT & INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION




6.1 Achievements

CEF involves an unprecedented degree of collaboration between Oxfam, Save the Children UK and ActionAid. There is almost daily communication on CEF between the three agencies in the UK. There are monthly UK management committees with representatives from each agency. This collaboration is also extended to country level where the three agencies have an active presence in the same country. National management committees are built on the core membership of the three agencies but have evolved in size and composition to incorporate other voices.

CEF's association with these internationally respected agencies creates a platform from which to communicate with influential figures and organisations at a local, national and international level. The benefits of this adopted credibility are clear throughout the country mid-term reports, not least in terms of advocacy and the opportunity to attend high-level meetings.

The diagram below shows the composition of Management Committees in each country. From the base of collaboration between the 3 agencies the Management Committees have extended to include national NGOs, other international NGOs, UN agencies, DFID, teacher unions, government representatives and the private sector.

Table T6: Current Composition of Management Committees

	Bangladesh	Cameroon	The Gambia	Ghana	India	Kenya	Lesotho	Malawi	Mozambique	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia
Agencies																
 ActionAid	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
 Save the Children	●				●	●			●		●		●	●	●	
 Oxfam	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●		●
Teachers Union															●	
Government		●	●	●						●	●					●
DFID			●	●					●		●					
National NGO		●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●
International NGO		●					●				●	●		●		
Academia							●			●				●		●
Prominent Individuals			●							●						
UN/Donor			●	●			●		●			●		●		●
Private Sector			●							●		●				●

This diagram gives some sense of the level of interest that CEF has generated amongst other agencies - many of whom see CEF as a model (or at least as something that might inform how they work themselves in future). Other international NGOs have been joined Management Committees in 5 countries. Other bilateral donors or UN agencies are involved in 7 countries. There has been active involvement from SIDA, CIDA, Unicef and NORAD - with many enquiries also being made in the UK (eg by the French government). As well as strengthening the management of CEF, the engagement of such diverse agencies also helps to spread the CEF model. Organisations in many countries beyond the Commonwealth are now asking how they can set up something similar to CEF.

In many respects as CEF Management Committees become more complex they become microcosms of the coalitions that we are seeking to build. The power dynamics that will be at play in developing a broad-based national coalition on education play out on a smaller scale in the Management Committees. They become a learning ground and a space for building shared understanding. There are of course tensions and problems as will be highlighted below but there are also many causes for celebration. Simply getting these groups together under the shared vision of CEF to agree how to strategically fund work across the country, is a remarkable achievement.

The collaboration around CEF has also led to wider collaboration on education issues between the lead agencies, particularly in the UK. ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children form the core of the UK branch of the Global Campaign for Education - officially formed in 2004 - which now includes almost all UK agencies with an interest in international education as well as the main teacher unions. There is particular collaboration in the policy group of GCE UK drawing on the shared experience of supporting coalitions in Africa and Asia. There is much greater coordination around policy engagement with DFID than in the past. This has even helped to strengthen GCE globally - the trust that we have built up working on CEF helped us to breakthrough various logjams to secure a new agreement for the future structure and priorities of GCE at its global assembly in Johannesburg in December 2004.

One of the biggest advantages to the management structure of CEF is that it keeps administrative costs very low. In each country one of the three agencies plays a lead role. This role involves housing the CEF Coordinator and accountant and providing legal, administrative and logistical support. There has been no need to register CEF separately or set up new offices. The lead agency provides line management and oversight.

The CEF structure has also successfully achieved a high level of decentralisation, enabling strategic decisions to be taken where they can best be made. Country level core allocations were established from the outset dividing the initial £1million according to the population size and level of educational challenge in each country. The development of a strategic plan in each country could then be done knowing the overall size of the fund available. The UK Management Committee was thus able to focus on strategic questions ensuring that each country was clearly complying with the core criteria/objectives but not having to judge the minutiae of each proposal. That was left to national Management Committees who were in a much better position to judge the relevance of the strategy and the appropriateness and competence of each partner.

6.2 Challenges and ways forward

There are of course many challenges that come up when you build an innovative structure. It is not easy to get people to work across institutions when all established forms of working and all incentive and reward structures are agency-based.

Integrating CEF within job descriptions

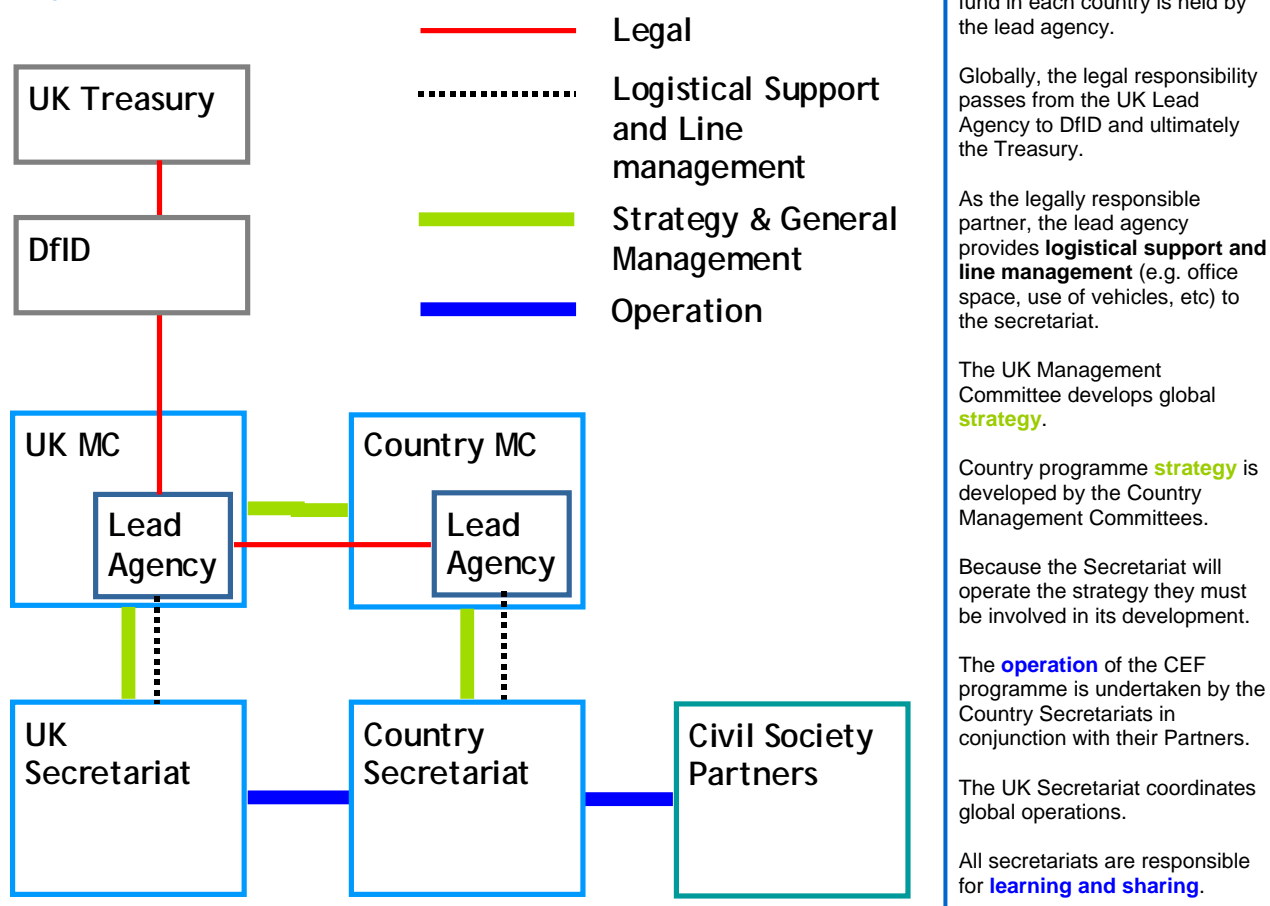
The CEF rarely exists within anyone's job description; even people on the CEF Management Committee. It is not part of people's core responsibilities and not part of people's appraisals. When people have high workloads, which are almost universal, CEF can easily slip to the bottom. In many cases it is only the personal commitment of people within agencies that has kept CEF moving forward. There is a need to recognise

the energies and efforts being put into CEF and for each agency to acknowledge CEF within job descriptions and appraisal processes for the key people involved.

Overcoming confusion around roles

There is considerable uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of different actors within CEF. The role of lead agencies and management committees has proved perhaps the most contentious and this was not defined clearly enough from the beginning. Work was undertaken to clarify the roles in the CEF Coordinators London workshop in 2003 but this was not widely disseminated. More was done in the CEF workshop in Accra in April 2005 and a clear process of dissemination and consultation is now underway based on a core document that defines the roles of each player. The diagram below summarises this document (which is available on request).

Diagram D4: The Structure of CEF



Addressing power dynamics between lead Agencies and Management Committees

Although some problems arose owing to confusion others arose because of the inherent power tensions between lead agencies and Management Committees. As the legal employer of CEF Coordinators and the legally and financially accountable organisation, lead agencies have sometimes treated CEF just like any other externally funded project. They have sometimes allocated CEF Coordinators to do non-CEF work and Coordinators have felt unable to question this. They have prioritised funding their existing partners rather than reach out to new groups. In a couple of places it seems the lead agency's own funding of similar work has reduced as CEF funds have come in. The Management Committees in these cases has been treated as a rubber stamp and have felt unable to challenge abuse of power by lead agencies. For this reason the new roles and responsibilities framework is very explicit. For example, it says the Lead Agency has a responsibility "to ensure that the Management Committee actively participates in taking

all key strategic decisions.” There is of course a danger of going too far the other way with Lead Agencies feeling too disempowered. Is it fair that they should they take full legal and financial responsibility when they do not control strategic decision-making? The new framework strikes the right balance on paper but of course in practice it all depends on how people interpret and apply this. It is impossible to legislate for personalities. But work is undertaken to maintain a culture of good will that has certainly underpinned CEF to date in most countries and which is very deep at the UK level.

Maintaining the profile of CEF in all 3 agencies

ActionAid is the managing agency for CEF and houses the UK secretariat. It is also the lead agency in 12 of the CEF countries. Oxfam is lead agency in just one and Save the Children UK in three countries. In each case the decision was taken by mutual consent at the start of CEF and there were only disagreements in 2 countries (Pakistan and Tanzania - where more than one agency felt it was in the best place to play a lead role). One of the outcomes of this situation is that CEF has a high profile within ActionAid (though this can bring some problems such as the cases where some scaling down of ActionAid’s own support to similar work is evidenced) but that CEF struggles to gain the same profile in Save the Children UK and Oxfam. Empowering Management Committees at country level is one way of addressing this so that all agencies feel they have an active say over strategic decisions wherever they want. Another simple mechanism that has worked is the rotation in the location of CEF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE meetings in the UK, with the host agency always chairing meetings. Occasional internal reviews of CEF within each agency also play an important role enabling each agency to determine ways of making the most of the CEF collaboration.

6.3 Recommendations

- CEF Management Committee roles should be recognised within **job descriptions** and appraisal processes for the key people involved.
- The **roles and responsibilities** of different actors within CEF must be clarified (as has been done).
- All **three lead agencies** must keep actively engaged in CEF at a senior management level.

7. CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

7.1 Achievements

The CEF framework has always envisioned the business community as a key development actor, alongside civil society and government. From the outset, it was clearly acknowledged that CEF was expected to work with the private sector to raise further funds, which would be matched by HM Treasury. Implicit in this was an assumption that fundraising would lead to opportunities for the business community to lend its voice and influence to promote public investment in education systems in CEF countries.

Fundraising got off to a remarkably good start with a generous donation of £450,000 from Zurich Financial Services, whose Chief Executive, Sandy Leitch, serves as Vice-Chairman on the CEF Oversight Committee. In early 2003 Sir Edward George, Chairman of the CEF Oversight Committee, held a series of breakfast, lunch and dinner meetings at the Bank of England to request support from others like British Airways, Deloitte and Touche, Accenture, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Barclays, Prudential, Citigroup, ICICI Bank, Vitabiotics, Islamic Development Bank and Cadbury Schweppes. In some cases these led to donations, though generally on a smaller scale.

In April 2004 Sir Edward George visited India, hosted by ICICI Bank, who announced a donation of 35.25 million Rupees to CEF. Sir Edward's visit also facilitated contact between the CEF India Secretariat and over 50 business leaders at dinner meetings hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and CEF Oversight Committee member Subhash Thakrar.

In May 2004 the Chancellor of the Exchequer hosted a reception at 11 Downing Street for 70 CEF guests. As a result of this event, three new donations (totalling £20,000) were received.

The deadline for match funding passed in April 2005. The full set of donations now received is as follows

Table T7: CEF Donations to April 2005

CEF Donations to April 2005	Banked	CEF Donations to April 2005	Banked
Zurich	450,000	Warner Bros (via Bank of England)	1,000
ICICI Bank (received in India)	429,272	Transco	1,000
Cadbury Schweppes	60,340	Melton Medes (Puri Foundation)	1,000
Citigroup	53,271	Manek Investments	1,000
Prudential	25,000	Kieran Poynter (PWC partner)	1,000
Goldman Sachs	25,000	Johnson Matthey	1,000
Bank of Tanzania	20,000	Currencies Direct	1,000
Bank of England auction	19,459	Stephenson Harwood	750
Homestead Charitable Trust	10,000	BBC (via Bank of England)	500
James Gaskell	9,000	Sir Peter Burt (expense claim)	395
Standard Chartered	5,000	St Paul Companies	201
IOD (via Sir Eddie)	3,500	Anon (Sponsored event)	25
ECGD (via HMT)	2,914		
Sullivan & Cromwell	1,707	TOTAL	1,123,334

Additional to the £1,123,334 in direct donations, CEF will receive £753,535 in matched funding from HM Treasury, bringing the total amount raised (with Gift Aid of £2,932) to £1,879,801.

Whilst most corporate fundraising was focused in the UK, important work to establish links with the private sector in many CEF countries. For example:

Table T8: Corporate Partnerships Progress

Bangladesh	Standard Chartered held several meetings with CEF and set up a best school and best teacher award to promote quality education improvements.
The Gambia	Currently developing a proposal to the Islamic Development Bank.
Ghana	There are links with the Association of Ghana Industries and the Private Enterprise Foundation as well as with Cadbury Schweppes.
India	Established links with ICICI Bank, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
Kenya	CEF Kenya successfully submitted a funding proposal to Citigroup. Recently met with new contacts at Unilever and at Thomson Kenya. Thomson expressed interested in supporting the CEF Innovative Award recognising achievement in enhancing access to education.
Lesotho	Work in this area has been limited, but there is enthusiasm about developing a group CEF approach to the BP contact for Sub-Saharan Africa, along with Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.
Malawi	The CEF met with the President of the Chambers of Commerce about curriculum relevance. CEF found that most private sector support is for infrastructure improvement. Also met with the Bankers Association of Malawi, and have recently contacted Unilever.
Nigeria	Met with Vitabiotics but were unable to accept donation as it was tied to product distribution. Cultivated positive relationship with Globalcom Nigeria and have invited them to join the Management Committee. Currently contacting Diageo, Hilton International, Deloitte and Standard Chartered. Planning to work with Nigeria Chartered Institute of Bankers on budget analysis.
Sierra Leone	Standard Chartered Bank convened a meeting with 15 companies. More links being explored with Chamber of Commerce.
Sri Lanka	Although unable to engage in fundraising, CEF Sri Lanka is looking to develop a private sector partnerships strategy in conjunction with the newly formed National Coalition for Educational Development.
Tanzania	CEF met with the Chambers of Commerce and approached the CDC Group of Companies. They also met with the Bank of Tanzania, which made a donation.
Uganda	Standard Chartered Bank helped set up meetings with Private Sector Foundation and the Association of Businesses - which are influential in government policy and have an inside track on key processes.
Zambia	Recently met with CEO of Standard Chartered and were invited to submit proposal. Need to sensitise private sector in Zambia about the contribution of civil society advocacy campaigns to the country.

7.2 Case Study

Cadbury Schweppes

In 2004, the Cadbury Schweppes Foundation awarded CEF Ghana a £30,000 per annum three-year grant. In addition to supporting the work of national education coalitions, CEF and Cadbury Schweppes agreed to devote some funds to a shared area of interest, education in the cocoa growing areas in Ghana. To identify key issues, CEF surveyed communities in 4 cocoa growing districts about access, quality and equity in basic education, and held a follow up workshop to develop strategies to campaign for better education in cocoa growing areas.

Four top priorities were identified for work in deprived areas:

1. Changing attitudes toward education through campaigning, communication, and networking to raise the number of children enrolling and staying in school. In some deprived districts 24% of girls and 18.82% of boys drop out.
2. Encouraging community based organisations to play a part in school governance and contribute to the three-year district education plans, working to improve access, quality and equity in education, and to monitor school resources.
3. Helping civil society groups influence specific education policies and practice e.g. on child labour, teachers quotas and deployment, and incentives for rural teaching posts. Some rural classrooms have only 1 teacher for every 60 pupils.
4. Piloting alternative methods to recruit, deploy and retain teachers, and provide flexible basic education for hard-to-reach children in underserved areas, with ultimate aim of influencing district assemblies to use the most effective methods.

7.3 Challenges and Ways Forward

Shifting from fundraising to partnership-building

Since its creation, CEF has operated with a very ambitious fundraising target of £10 million but few companies were willing to match the largesse of Zurich who made the largest contribution. To a certain extent, the fundraising goal has obscured opportunities to create lasting private sector engagement. CEF risked being perceived as simply asking for money, rather than offering a point of engagement for businesses to put their weight behind public investment in education. CEF should open up a broader range of opportunities for engagement by leveraging non-financial private sector resources, a strategy which is more appropriate than seeking funds in those CEF countries currently under-spending.

Communicating the CEF approach

The concept of CEF is quite complex to convey to potential donors, unless anchored to something tangible such as the activities carried out on the ground, especially as many donors are more familiar with education initiatives such as service delivery projects that provide easily quantifiable results e.g. numbers of textbooks purchased, teachers trained or schools built. To build relationships with the corporate sector, the CEF should offer opportunities to engage with activities and results at the country level.

Improving CEF communications

CEF made an early effort to develop stories for 'selling CEF' such the Tanzania TEN/MET case study. CEF should make a constant effort to capture and share stories that

demonstrate the value that CEF and partners are adding to education systems. By using CEF reporting to simply and clearly link each activity to the overall goal of making government schools work for all, CEF will move from focusing on processes - attending meetings, building coalitions, holding workshops, and conducting surveys - to focusing on achievements. Effective communications are essential. Working with Brunswick on a pro-bono basis has helped sharpen messages and needs to be sustained even as we move from a focus on fundraising to a focus on building corporate partnerships.

Ensuring interagency collaboration

CEF is founded on a collaborative model, drawing upon the different structures and philosophies of three long established development and aid agencies. CEF should always seek consensus about effective corporate partnerships practice that does not violate any agency's ethics or identity. CEF's strength is the belief that the agencies can achieve more together than individually. This means sharing resources (including donors) and sharing responsibility for CEF's success. Unfortunately the marketing departments of the 3 agencies have not fully owned CEF and raising funds for CEF has not been built into their own targets. This led to some frustrations. We hope that the renewed focus on partnerships rather than fundraising will encourage all marketing departments to feel less threatened and to therefore share contacts, experiences and ideas.

Building capacity of CEF country programmes to work with the private sector

Fewer corporate partnerships have emerged than originally expected. The original corporate partnerships strategy overestimated the capacity of Coordinators to build these relationships in CEF countries. Coordinators lacked the experience and time to carry out this work, and struggled to identify common values among civil society and the business community. Experience suggests that there is also a need to raise the comfort level of the private sector around work with NGOs. This is crucial for CEF because our advocacy work is less well understood, and can be interpreted as too political to be of interest to companies. A significant investment of time is needed to build relationships, carefully identifying areas of mutual interest and benefit. Where there is strong potential to cultivate sustainable partnerships, CEF should increase resources available to those country level teams, providing staff time and training to build mutual understanding and trust with their local business communities.

Moving from UK to country level leadership

Cultivating sustainable corporate partnerships has proved a difficult goal for CEF to realise, but for sustainability reasons, it remains one of the most important. By putting a new country-led strategy in place to provide Coordinators with strategic plans, resources and incentives whilst removing the pressure to raise funds, CEF can create a stronger framework for establishing these important relationships. The shift to country leadership would also encourage CEF Coordinators and Management Committees to embrace corporate partnership building as an integral part of civil society strengthening. This is very much the direction in which we are now moving with the focus on partnership for CEF goals rather than fundraising. The box below summarises latest efforts and strategies.

Latest Developments in building Corporate Partnerships

To facilitate the shift from UK-based fundraising to country-based partnership, CEF Country Coordinators will need to take a lead role. However, they have had limited success in developing corporate partnerships at the country level in the past and it is clear that additional support and incentives are required to ensure that establishing corporate partnerships becomes a priority. To this end, the UK Secretariat began work

in late 2004 to develop a starter pack of partnership letters for CEF Coordinators. The strategy behind the pack was to create interest at the UK level with companies contacted by Lord George and capitalise on this interest at the country level by contact from CEF Coordinators to companies' country offices.

The UK Secretariat researched more than 90 companies and 500 individuals, to determine those most likely to be possible contributors to the CEF based on a) their focus on funding primary school education and b) their operations in CEF countries. In December 2004, Lord George wrote to the CEOs of 30 UK companies with operations in various CEF countries, asking them to share their local contact details. The response to our request was initially slow, as many companies were devoting attention to the tsunami, which occurred shortly thereafter, but we received 11 positive responses from Boots Healthcare, BP, Diageo, Deloitte, Hilton, KPMG, Rentokil, Standard Chartered Bank, Unilever, United Utilities, and WPP Group.

*The UK Secretariat then developed tailored letters for CEF Coordinators to send to company contacts in their country, which explained local CEF achievements and requested a meeting to discuss corporate support. CEF suggested three tangible ways that this support could be organised: forming **associations of businesses for public education** to support the work of civil society coalitions; drafting a **national charter** of companies who wish to declare their support for public investment in education; exploring **corporate volunteer opportunities** for professionals to support CEF partners (e.g. encouraging private sector employees to volunteer by training civil society groups in skills such as budget tracking, policy analysis, strategic planning, and media campaign development). These are preliminary suggestions, and CEF is very open to alternative ideas formed within countries around specific areas of interest or need.*

In essence, CEF is returning to its original intention - asking the business community to lend its voice and influence to supporting investment in public education. To develop a strategy for CEF that has resonance in the private sector, CEF UK has requested a Designated Adviser be appointed by a UK company with links to CEF countries. The CEF Designated Adviser would join the newly formed Corporate Partnerships Subcommittee composed of UK Management Committee members and the Communications & Corporate Partnerships Manager. This team will guide the transition from a UK-led process to a country-led process, as the Oversight Committee completes its work at the end of 2005. CEF UK will support the development of country level plans and devote additional resources to those with potential for achieving sustainable partnerships.

7.4 Recommendations:

- CEF should shift its focus from fundraising to partnership.
- CEF work with the private sector should shift from interactions in the UK to partnership building at the country level. Three or four countries should be supported intensively to build good examples of practice.
- The CEF corporate partnership building strategy should be developed in consultation with the private sector to explore ideas such as corporate charters, corporate coalitions and volunteer opportunities, in order to identify and pursue collaboration which is of mutual interest and benefit.

8. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

8.1 Summary

Spending up to the end of 2004 was just below £4m, which is around one third of the total fund available to the CEF (after fundraising):

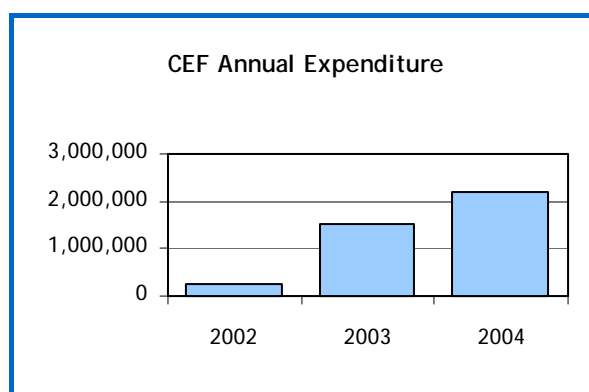
T9: Financial Summary

Initial DfID Grant	10,000,000	
Banked donations	1,123,334	
Match funding accrued	753,535	
Gift Aid	2,932	
Total fund available	11,879,801	
Spent to 31 December 2004	3,971,522	33%
Balance available	7,908,279	67%

Significant further income is not expected as the Treasury match funding deadline has passed and the corporate partnership strategy has moved away from fundraising towards a broader partnership approach. The expectation is that the 16 CEF countries will have exhausted the vast majority of remaining funds by March 2007.

Programme Start-up

C2 CEF Annual Expenditure



The origins of the CEF go back to mid-2002 with a workshop in Nairobi involving all potential countries. This started a very consultative strategy formulation process that began to build the foundation for CEF criterion one: bringing civil society groups together to speak with one voice on education issues. Strategies were in place in most countries by March 2003 after consultation and feedback with the UK Secretariat and Management Committee. The main exceptions to this were Mozambique, The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Pakistan due to various difficulties including employing a Coordinator, extended sensitisation around the CEF objectives and time to build relationships between the members of the Management Committee. The spending to 2004 therefore represents around 18-21 months of operational programme expenditure.

Allocation of funds

The DfID £10m grant was allocated between the CEF countries at the start of the programme. This was done by the UK Management Committee using poverty and education indicators and a judgment of the potential for the fund to impact education.

This allocation provided countries with a fund within which to build collaborative plans over the lifespan of the CEF. It removed the unstable effect of unsecured finance.

The weakness of this system of allocation is that the capacity to spend in each country does not always match the fund allocated to it. It may have also contributed to ambitious budgeting. The UK Management Committee plan to re-allocate funds from low spending countries to higher spending countries in 2005.

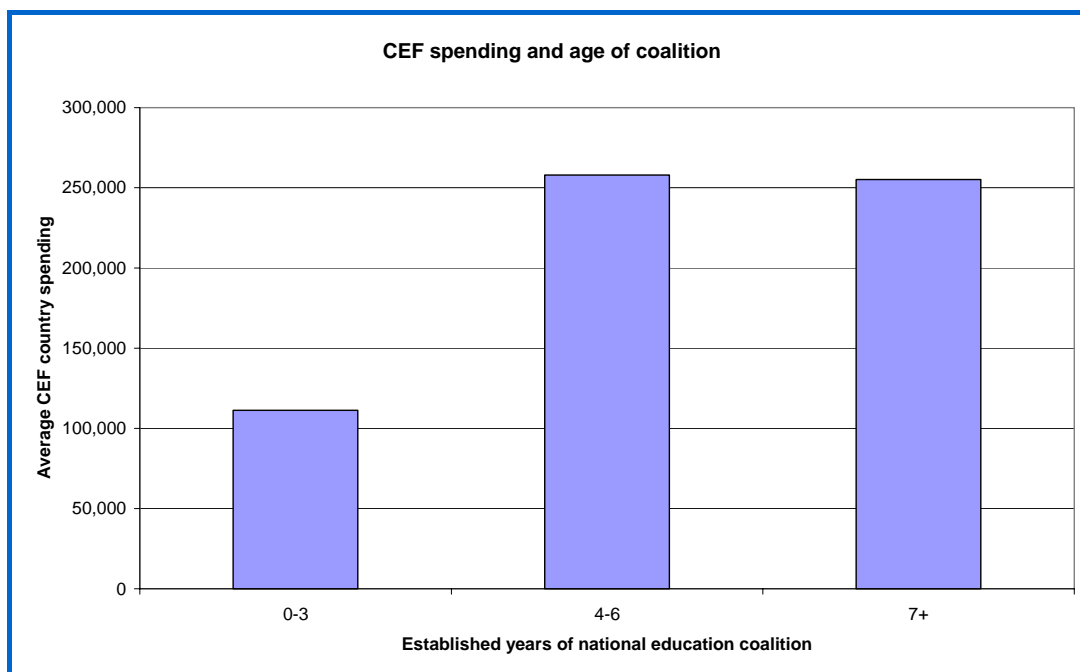
8.2 Understanding the Overall Level of Expenditure

When understood that 18-21 months of operational expenditure has been incurred to the end of 2004, we are yet to reach the halfway point for the programme.

Even after each country began implementing their strategy, all the front loaded administration associated with any project of this nature had to be worked through; promotion of the fund, sensitisation of communities to understand the objectives, analysis and development of partner proposals and capacity support to new partners.

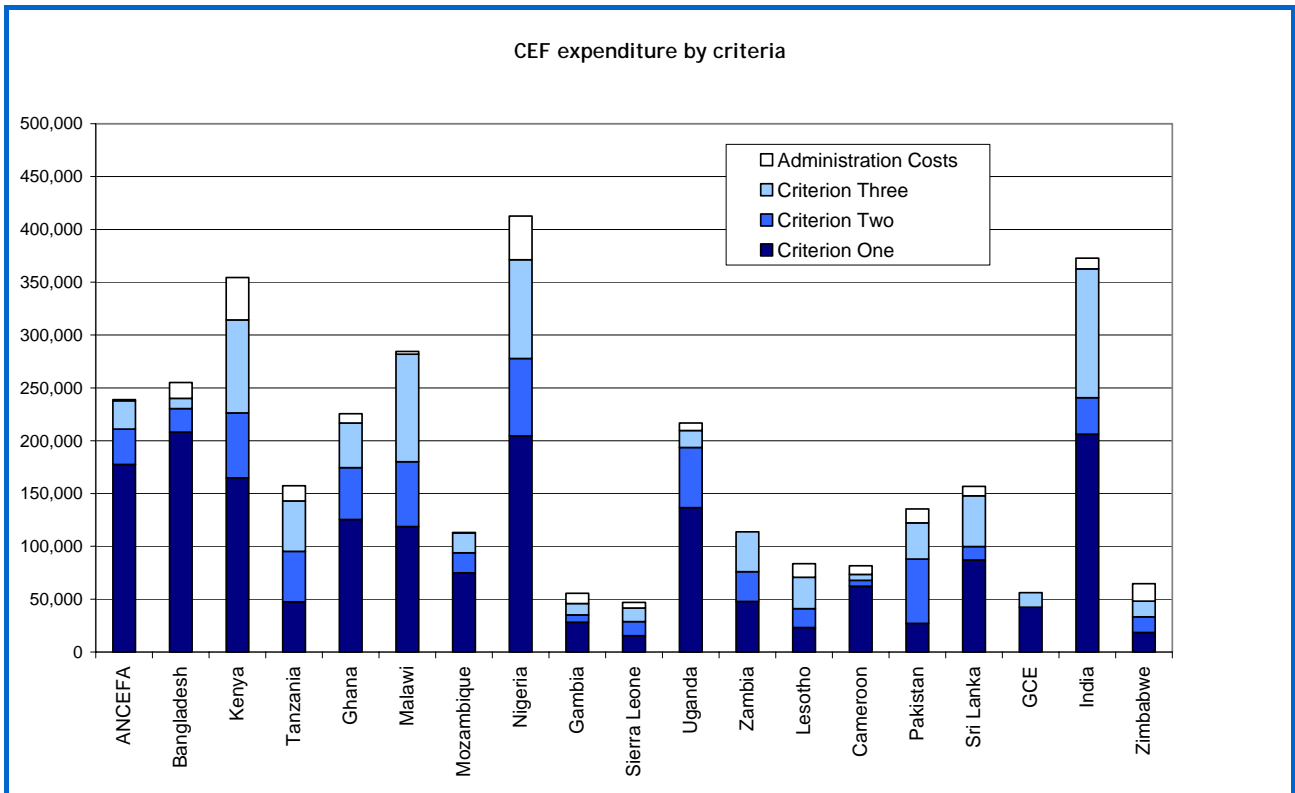
The following graph illustrates one reason why capacity in many of the CEF countries is still growing. CEF countries with more established national education coalitions tend to incur higher expenditure. The CEF is supporting 8 countries with less established national coalitions 0-3 years old with this low level of spending.

C3 CEF Spending and Age of Coalition



CEF Criteria

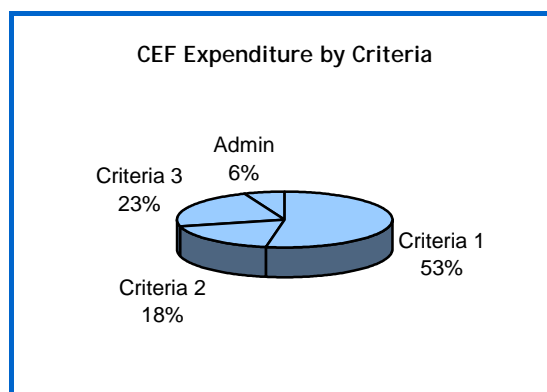
C4 CEF Country Expenditure by Criteria



Each CEF country programme has a different capacity to spend and is at a different stage with respect to coalition building, budget tracking and up-scaling innovative approaches for inclusion (the three CEF criteria). The majority of CEF spending to the end of 2004 was for coalition building. This is not unexpected as the national education coalitions form the infrastructure for work under the other two criteria in most CEF countries. It is important to note that criterion one work often involves low-cost activities and is based around bringing communities and stakeholders together to network and form a shared agenda for change.

The consolidated picture for all countries across the 3 criteria is as follows;

C5 CEF Overall Spending by Criteria



Appendix A2 (1) shows that more than 50% of expenditure has been on criterion one in 10 of the 16 countries (Nigeria and Kenya were just below the 50% threshold to be highlighted). The table also reveals that in just 4 countries was more than 25% of expenditure was devoted to criterion two (budget tracking).

Country Budgets

Country budgets have typically been optimistic about the capacity to spend. This is not uncommon in developing countries where the environment can be unstable and a range of external factors weigh against keeping the plans on track. Added to this, the CEF is promoting an innovative agenda and there are limited numbers of CSOs that can work in this area. This last point is illustrated by the fact that many CEF country Secretariats have received several proposals outside the scope of the CEF.

Appendix A2 (2) shows that India, Mozambique and Sierra Leone have had difficulties with both budgeting and spending in line with the original country allocation. Three further countries have spent below one third of the total fund allocated to them at the start of the CEF.

CEF Accountants

Full-time CEF Accountants have been employed in many countries. The CEF is an opportunity to break traditional functional boundaries between programme staff and the finance function. However, changing traditional finance job descriptions and moving towards a joint project management approach is taking time. One encouraging example of collaboration across functions (and across CEF countries) was when the CEF Kenya Secretariat ran a workshop for CEF partners on financial management and reporting. The workshop was co-led by CEF Accountants from Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda. CEF Accountants are now calling for a global workshop to share challenges and build skills. This will be considered for later in 2005.

Zimbabwe

The CEF started with 17 countries. However, the Zimbabwe programme was closed in July 2004 due to ongoing operational difficulties. It is hoped that work in Zimbabwe may begin again at some point so £200k of the remaining allocation has not been redistributed.

India

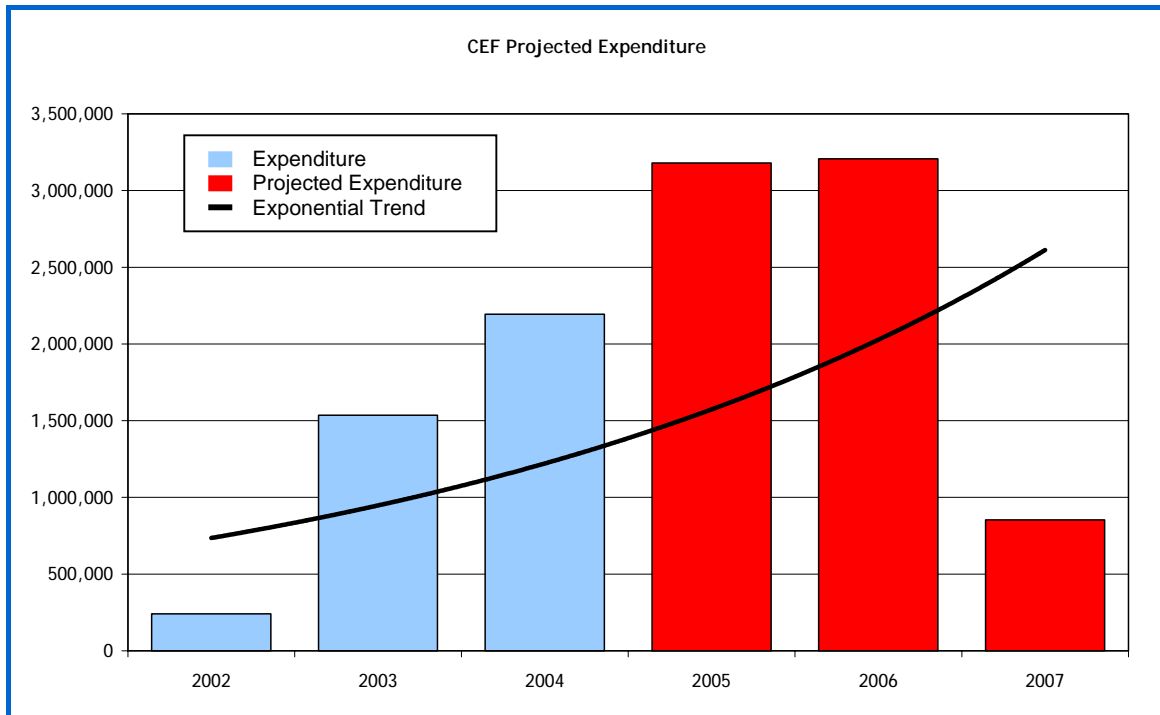
It is worth providing some background to low spending in India, which had the largest country allocation of £1.7m (or 14% of total funds available). Around 22% of this allocation has been spent up to the end of 2004.

The Mid Term Review highlighted that a *national* Secretariat and Management Committee were unable to effectively manage the fund across such a vast area. The focus has therefore been shifted to *state-level* Secretariats & Management Committees in 3 key states (with support and consolidation from a national Secretariat).

8.3 Forecast 2005-2007

The following graph is a projection of expenditure to March 2007. It is based on approved budgets for CEF countries for 2005 and estimates for 2006 and the first quarter of 2007.

C6 CEF Projected Expenditure



If correct, the balance of funds remaining as at March 2007 would be around £100k. This is because some countries may not spend their entire allocation. This is a prudent level of reserve to be allocated by the Management Committee according to emerging priorities.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Conclusions

The Commonwealth Education Fund CEF has made impressive progress over a short period but much remains to be done. It is a **highly innovative** initiative both in how it is structured and the work that it funds. It is charting a path that many others are likely to follow in the coming years. The significance of the transformation cannot be understated. It represents a move away from international NGOs competing over running micro-level service delivery projects towards NGOs collaborating to offer strategic support across civil society, building their capacity for policy engagement on education issues. There is a clear echo of the move being made by bilateral donors (such as DFID) towards sector-wide education support for governments, but this is perhaps the first serious initiative of its type in the civil society sector.

The credibility and active support of the three **lead agencies** enabled CEF to get established quickly and at low cost in all the 17 countries. The diversity of the countries meant that strategic planning and decision-making needed to be decentralised. This was done from the outset through establishing country level inter-agency management committees. However, at the same time as allowing diversity, the core framing and orientation of the CEF needed to be clear. Three criteria were established for CEF spending and these were negotiated and further elaborated with all countries in an initial workshop, enabling them to be internalised by all 17 countries. In general these criteria have proved effective. If anything, countries have defined their programmes so tightly within these three criteria that they have failed to look adequately at the big picture; the way the work under the three strands inter-connects.

This mid-term review shows that, three years on, CEF is making a difference to how education civil society organisations are engaging with the policy processes in sixteen low-income Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia. Through CEF support *umbrella coalitions are emerging or being strengthened*. They are working to ensure that free quality basic education is a right for all children and are building domestic pressure on their governments to get education higher up the political agenda. The education and gender MDGs previously had little visibility but now governments feel increasingly accountable to deliver on them. In most countries effective links have been made between NGOs, teachers unions, parent associations, faith-based organisations and social movements to build a common platform. The coalitions are growing in confidence but most are still in their adolescence showing great potential but not yet fully-grown.

Increasingly *education budgets* and finances are being brought under the spotlight to ensure that they are managed in a transparent and accountable manner. Citizen's organisations are becoming empowered to participate effectively in the monitoring of education finances and budget, leading to demand for increased public resourcing of the education sector as well monitoring their judicious use. In most countries CEF has helped to demystify national *budgets* on education, training people at national and local levels to track education spending. This work is still in its infancy in some countries as there was a big capacity gap to overcome, but in others significant impacts have already been seen. Budget monitoring is now widely recognised to be crucially important; an area where civil society engagement can make a massive difference.

CEF has started to *document innovative approaches* that have helped excluded children access and succeed in school with impressive work being done in different countries on inclusive education for disabled children, adapting learning for street children, challenging girls exclusion or putting education for displaced children on the agenda. To date the sharing of this work between countries has been very limited but the first steps towards this are now being taken.

Working with the *corporate sector* has always been a priority for CEF but this is an area where progress has been slow. The early focus was on fundraising and there were some significant successes. However, the focus on fundraising has sometimes prevented meaningful relationships being built to encourage the private sector to add its voice behind the call for public education. This work is now shifting from its previous focus in the UK to focus instead on building in-country links and active engagement.

CEF has been under spending against its original *budget* but this report shows clear reasons behind this. Coalition-building takes time. In countries where coalitions are better established spending is more rapid. The strongest programmes are those that have been able to build on work that dates back to 1999/2000. The rate of spending is now increasing and it is likely that the present total fund of just under £12 million will be mostly spent by March 2007.

The need to resource this work will *continue beyond 2007*. Although some of the more established coalitions have been able to attract funding from other sources, most still depend substantially on CEF for core funding. Other donors are not yet ready to work with such a radical new mode of operation - but this is changing. This review shows that the real returns to this investment are now becoming evident and are likely to accumulate further in the coming years. Success will attract other donors (as is evident in a country like Bangladesh). However, it would be premature for CEF to terminate its support in 2007. Rather, we need to guarantee the continuity of this work for a further period so that it can move forward with confidence. The accumulating achievements from this mode of working in each country will be the key to attracting new donors and sustaining the work at a national level in each of the 16 countries.

The *CEF mode of working* has even attracted interest beyond the original 16 countries. Particularly, interest has been shown in francophone Africa, in Latin America and in South East Asia. Organisations in these other regions have looked at the feasibility of establishing education funds to invest strategically across civil society and to strengthen capacities for engagement in policy dialogue. The French government has been particularly keen to understand CEF and several other donors like Unicef, SIDA, NORAD and CIDA have shown an active interest in the CEF approach. There is a clear sense in which the impact of CEF is already being felt beyond CEF countries - and that this could go much further in the coming years.

There have of course been many *challenges* in implementing CEF. The sixteen countries are immensely diverse and each throws up different problems which require different responses. The decentralised management has helped to ensure the flexibility to adapt CEF to these different contexts. But there are also some challenges that cut across countries and these have been highlighted in this Mid Term Review. In each case this review has identified learning that can be drawn from the challenges and possible ways forward. If all the recommendations in this report (as consolidated below) are implemented, CEF should be even more effective in future than it already has been.

9.2 Recommendations

A number of recommendations emerge from the analysis in different sections of this mid-term review and they are brought together below with a few overall recommendations that arise from analysis of the overall progress.

Overall / general recommendations:

- The CEF secretariat should be more pro-active in identifying gaps and opportunities for cross country work - whether for capacity building, joint research, learning or sharing.
- More focus should be placed on the overall strategic direction and coherence of CEF in each country ensuring strong links are made between work under each criterion (avoiding 3 separate strands). All three criteria are united by the shared purpose of engaging people actively in improving the effectiveness of government schools.
- Some adjustments should be made to the original country allocations based on spending patterns and effectiveness of work to date in different countries.
- CEF needs to mainstream gender in all its work, in project and partner assessment, in budgeting work and in looking at the exclusion of girls as it cuts across other categories of exclusion. We need to move beyond the narrow framing of the gender parity goal (which can be interpreted just around access) to look at quality and equity.
- CEF should share this innovative approach with other countries in other regions where there are major challenges in achieving progress towards the gender and education goals e.g. francophone Africa, Latin America.

Around coalition building:

- CEF should do more to build the **basic capacity of coalition members** particularly in areas of policy analysis, research and documentation: the long-term strength of the coalitions depends on all members being able to engage in key activities.
- CEF should support coalitions to **build democratic structures** so that coalition secretariats remain accountable to their members and actively involve them (it is important for coordinators to be aware of the dangers of coalitions losing their base, becoming institutions themselves or over-bureaucratising processes).
- There needs to be an active move to **diversify and deepen membership** of coalitions, including; teacher unions, parents' federations, the private sector, and organisations outside the education sector for which education is a concern etc.
- CEF should encourage all coalitions to build strong links to **district and local level** with good two-way communication. The base of national coalitions should be in the voices of parents, children, teachers and citizens; as the most direct stakeholders in government schools.
- CEF should support national coalitions to strengthen existing **democratic governance structures** increasing parliamentary engagement in and oversight of education reform, deepening the accountability of relevant government structures at all levels and enhancing the status and effectiveness of PTAs / SMCs etc. Securing a seat at the policy table for coalitions should be seen as a means to make government schools work, not an end in itself.
- Coalitions must be supported to find **other funding sources** to diversify their base so that there is no longer-term dependency on CEF - but it will take time for the coalition to be able to attract core funding of the type CEF can offer.

- We must recognise that this work takes time and we should seek to secure **continuity of core CEF funding** for a longer period. The policy impact of this innovative work is more evident where coalitions were established pre-Dakar/ pre-CEF and it is this policy impact which will attract other donors over time.
- There needs to be an ongoing **process of needs assessment** with the secretariats of national coalitions and with coalition members so as to address capacity gaps.

Around budget tracking:

- CEF needs to ensure all countries are clear about the **objectives of budget work** and how it links to the provision of, and access to, good quality education in government schools.
- CEF should support work around **freedom of information** where this impacts significantly on our budget work.
- CEF needs to invest more in **capacity-building and confidence-building** in this area. The UK CEF secretariat can play a more active role in **matching training needs to training skills** in this area.
- CEF should support **pro-active engagement with government**, making the case for **budget work** with governments, officials and head teachers, showing the potential benefits that come from better understanding of the budget by all stakeholders.
- Budget work needs to be integrated into a much **more holistic** programme of work that looks at gathering other relevant data especially around indicators of quality.
- More work needs to be done around **macro-economic issues** as they affect education so that coalitions understand the big picture and can take reasonable positions around the overall size of the education budget.

On learning from innovation:

- In future CEF must **emphasise learning from innovations within the government system** - those that help us understand how to make government schools work.
- CEF should ensure that the innovative work documented is converted into **mainstream policy recommendations**. Work in this area should be focused on building an evidence base for policy and advocacy work.
- There is much more **potential for learning and exchange** than CEF has yet taken up. CEF must be much more creative in methods of knowledge and information sharing in order to bring about a rich flow of learning across countries.

On interagency collaboration:

- CEF Management Committee roles should be recognised within **job descriptions** and appraisal processes for the key people involved.
- The **roles and responsibilities** of different actors within CEF must be clarified (as has been done).
- All **three lead agencies** must keep actively engaged in CEF at a senior management level.

On corporate partnerships:

- CEF should shift its focus from fundraising to **partnership**.
- CEF work with the private sector should shift from interactions in the UK to **partnership building at the country level**. Three or four countries should be used to build good examples of practice.

- The CEF corporate partnership building strategy should be developed in consultation with the private sector to explore ideas such as corporate charters, corporate coalitions and volunteer opportunities, in order to identify and pursue collaboration which is of mutual interest and benefit.

