

VSO LINKS Study Tours:



Malawi & Zambia Education
Advocacy Coalitions Study Tour

12th- 23rd March 2007



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Acronyms

BETUZ	Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia
BOND	British Overseas NGOs for Development
CEF	Commonwealth Fund for Education
CNLS	Commission National de Lutte Contre le SIDA/National AIDS Control Commision (Rwanda).
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
EJG	Education Journalists Group (Nepal)
FAWE	Forum for African Women Education
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
IGO	International Governmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSETT	In-Service Teacher Training
LINKS	Learning through Information Networking & Knowledge Sharing
MEPT	Movimento de Educação para Todos (Mozambique EFA Campaign)
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (Rwanda)
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education (Rwanda)
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
ONP/SNP	Organização Nacional de Professores /Sindicato Nacional de Professores (Mozambique National Teachers' Union).
SNEP	Syndicat National des Enseignants du Primaire (Primary Teachers Union – Rwanda)
TUM	Teachers Union of Malawi
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition
ZNUT	Zambia National Union of Teachers

1 What did we do?

The participants of the tour, teachers' union representatives, civil society coalition members, Ministry of Education representatives and VSO staff from Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal and Rwanda visited two experienced coalitions in Zambia and Malawi. They met with coalition members to learn about: how they are organised; how they coordinate and fund their activities; about some of the successful outcomes of their work; the challenges they face and how they tackle them.

In addition meetings were held with Ministries of Education representatives, international donors, UN, national and international NGO representatives to gather their perspectives on the work of the coalitions. Visits to schools to examine the particular problems experienced by the host country were also arranged.

1.1 Objectives of the tour

- To develop the capacity of the civil society coalition members participating in the tour, to hold their governments to account on the delivery of the Education For All goals.
- To develop the capacity of the Teachers' Union representatives involved to represent teachers voices in policy dialogue more effectively.
- To discuss with the Ministries of Education we visited, and the participating Ministry of Education representative, their perspectives on: how they can work with civil society to achieve the EFA goals together, and on how they are endeavouring to be accountable and responsive to civil society stakeholders.
- To enable the coalition members from Rwanda, Nepal, Ethiopia and Mozambique to share and learn from the experiences of the host civil society coalitions (Malawi and Zambia), and from each other.
- To facilitate networking and initiate longer term organisational or mentoring links, between the tour participants.

1.2 The Participants

From Ethiopia:



Mohammed Abubeker Mohammed
Senior Gender Specialist
Ministry of Education



Hiwot Beyene Gidey,
Instructor (Lecturer)
Kotebe College of Teacher Education



Sewit Getachew
Education Programme Manager
VSO Ethiopia

From Mozambique:



Maria Jose Perreira
Teacher, Gender & Social
Affairs Officer
National Teachers' Union (ONP)



Januario de Sousa
Member of the steering committee of
Mozambique EFA Coalition/ Unity for
Development of Basic Education



Augusto Macicame
Education Programme Manager
VSO Mozambique

From Nepal:



Krishna Prasad Dhakal
General Secretary
Teachers' Union of Nepal

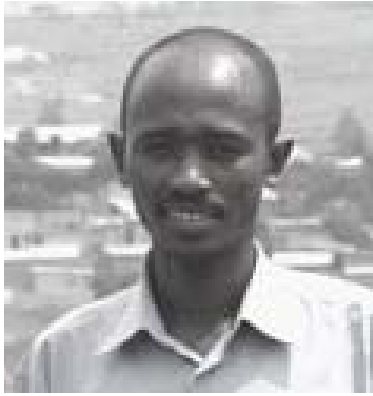


Sudarshan Ghimire
Immediate Past President of
Education Journalists' Group



Purna Kumar Shrestha
Education Programme Manager
VSO Nepal

From Rwanda:



Fred Buyinza
Chairman
Association of Committed Teachers



Faustin Harelimana
Administration & Finance
Syndicat National des Enseignants du
Primaire (SNEP)



Natascha Hermann
Disability Advocacy Officer VSO
Rwanda

From Malawi:



Donald Kebabe
Assistant Coordinator, Civil Society
Coalition for Quality Basic Education
(and VSO volunteer from Kenya).



Kidwell Chipwatali
Regional Publications Officer
Teachers Union of Malawi



Alice Ching'Oma
Education Programme Manager
VSO Malawi

From Zambia:



Isaac Lungu
Deputy General Secretary, Basic
Education Teachers Union of Zambia
(BETUZ)



Chinyama Miriam Beene
Executive Director
Zambia National Education Coalition
(ZANEC)



George Mwaanda
Participation & Governance
Programme Manager
VSO Zambia

1.3 Organisations visited

Week one – Malawi

- The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
- Teachers Union of Malawi
- Malawi Ministry of Education and Vocational Education – Directorate of Basic Education
- Forum for African Women Educationalists, Malawian chapter (FAWEMA)
- ActionAid Malawi
- UNESCO Malawi
- A Lilongwe Primary School

Week two - Zambia

- Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC)
- Zambia Ministry of Education
- Forum for African Women Educationalists, Zambian chapter (FAWEZA)
- Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT)
- Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ)
- Irish Aid & Oxfam/ Commonwealth Education Fund
- Chimwawe Government Primary School, Lusaka
- Linda Open Community School

N.B. Minutes were taken in meetings with each organisation visited in both Lilongwe and Lusaka. The resulting document added up to 65 pages of unedited notes. If you are interested in reading the notes from one or all of the organisations visited they are available on demand from stephen.nock@vso.org.uk

2 What did we learn?



Participants were asked each morning, over breakfast, for their key learning points from the previous day's meetings. At the end of the tour, participants were then asked to group their key learning points into themes. The following themes and associated learning points emerged. The learning points below are not intended to be a comprehensive discussion of each topic, rather they are a summary of the learning points that participants themselves reported after the tour.

N.B. this section of the report was written by study tour participants: Donald Kebabe, Purna Shrestha, Natascha Hermann, Augusto Macicame and Sewit Getachew with or on behalf participants from the same country; and was edited by Stephen Nock - Education Policy and Advocacy Adviser from VSO International (who also attended the tour).

2.1 Making education advocacy coalitions effective

'We got an opportunity to learn the work of Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE) of Malawi and were really impressed by their achievements and the credibility of their work. In particular, Nepal can learn two things from them - how they have worked forming different working groups and their network at the grass roots level was praise worthy. In Nepal, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) secretariat is not very active. The coalition in Malawi was very strong at research, commissioning research on various education issues and lobbying on the basis of findings of the research. We felt that such coalition of civil society could play the role of a watch dog, to ensure that the government is more accountable to society for their work.

In Zambia, the coalition had their own office with full time members of staff. We felt that for any kind of effective advocacy, good research and clear asks backed up with evidence is vital. The relationship between the civil society organizations like FAWEZA, ZANEC and the government seem to be very good. We observed that the government of Zambia and the civil society coalitions are working hand in hand' [Nepali participants].

'Coalitions should understand their role in promoting EFA and engage in informed advocacy so as to convince policy makers of the need for reform. It is important therefore for coalitions to enhance members' skills in research and informed advocacy to carry out their mandate. Moreover CSOs should be more focused on issues in their strategic plans and try to avoid being influenced by donor funding outside their scope of work. This will increase their impact and help them to gain recognition among Government and development partners. CSOs should take business like approach, putting good systems in place so as to be efficient and effective' [Malawian participants].

'Coalitions in the countries we visited involve their governments in their planning processes. For example coalitions have engaged themselves with the parliamentary bodies that deal with education issue. They also undertake research to use as evidence for advocacy and discussions with the Government and make sure that all the studies make conclusions that are verifiable.

Coalitions try in as much as possible to focus on their plans though with the influence of donors they might be tempted to do things out of the plan because of donor money available for different kind of activities. For this to happen, coalitions need to have strong and autonomous secretariats' [Mozambican participants].

'The study tour highlighted the importance of supporting advocacy with action research and providing examples of good practice from pilot projects. Having strong and active members in a coalition increases the effectiveness of its work. The coalitions we met are taking a number of actions to empower their member organizations. These include:

- The establishment of legal grounding & policy frameworks to strengthen the coalition

- Employing strategies to develop trust and acceptance by the government: for example by collaborating with the government instead of only criticizing their failures.
- Celebrating national education day to highlight on education issues in the media.
- Establish branch offices in regions to help reflect the views of all the disadvantaged from different directions' [Ethiopian participants].

'A key learning for the Rwanda participants from visiting the two host coalitions was that the structure of the Rwanda coalition needs to be developed further. The coalition needs to increase our membership and engage with a number of Education stakeholders, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, MINEDUC, MIGEPROF and CNLS. We will need to introduce and further develop the organizational structure. This means working on developing aims and objectives of the coalition, having a clear mission statement, developing systems of accountability for effective implementation of programs and activities.

The experience in Zambia showed the need to introduce de-centralized bodies or provincial focal points to co-ordinate activities. This would need to be initiated in places where the organisations are currently operating. This approach would link very well with the de-centralization of Rwanda's administrative structures' [Rwandan participants].

2.2 The value of budget tracking for EFA monitoring

'The government Nepal has also adopted a policy of decentralization of the education system. School budgets are distributed on the basis of data provided by the schools - for example budgets for scholarships, infrastructure and teachers' salaries. However, resources allocated to schools are woefully inadequate, and is accompanied by a glaring lack of transparency regarding the budget. For last three years, Save the Children Norway has started publishing the details of the education budget in booklets which are made available to the public. However, schools and other key education stakeholders are not allowed to know how much funding the government has allocated to their particular school.

The participants from Nepal felt that they should undertake budget tracking of education expenditure, learning from the experience of the Malawi coalition, and were convinced that this would help to improve accountability and good governance. Therefore, the Nepal team will share this idea to other CSOs and members. In the mean time, ASAMAN (one of VSO Nepal's partner organisations, which represents dalit communities' and lobbies for the realisation of their rights to quality education) has already started work on social auditing of the government budget. VSO Nepal's governance programme has begun supporting them by providing training. From this year, there is an education volunteer who will mainly be involved in this work. Therefore, after they pilot this initiative in a few districts of Nepal, the learning will be shared to other partners and coalition members' [Nepali participants].

2.3 The vital role of the media in education coalitions

'The media have been members of the coalition in a number of countries and have a key role in bringing education to the attention of the public and the government' [Ethiopian participants].

'In Nepal Journalist have formed an Education Journalists' Group (EJG), a common forum of journalists from mainstream Nepali print and electronic media advocating quality education at policy making and implementation levels through a network of media persons and journalists. The group organises regular interaction forums on education issues by inviting the government officials to give an update on current issues in education, it informs the public and policy makers by writing articles, and airing news related to education. The EJG also facilitates media campaigns for the Nepal GCE coalition and helps policy makers prepare educational policies through undertaking in-depth research. More importantly; the Education Journalist Group has mainstreamed education issues in the media and persuaded the MoE to develop a media strategy for education' [Malawian participants].

2.4 Strengthening the voice of teachers' unions



Teachers' Union of Malawi Secretary General Lucien Chikadza makes a point in our meeting with him. He is listened to by TUM Executive Secretary Alfred Kamphonje.

Both the Malawian and Mozambican participants noted that:

'Unlike the Teachers Union of Malawi, Zambia Teachers Unions have strong research departments which enable them to come up with well researched information on issues that affect education and teaching in general. The

information is used in advocacy and lobbying with government in policy formulation and implementation. They also have public relations departments which deal with national and international affairs to ensure public support'

'However it was noted that BETUZ had membership of 15,000 and the study tour participants recommended to them to intensify recruitment of members especially those in basic education but belonging to other unions. The system of seconding elected teachers to the secretariat contributes to improved efficiency of the union because those on secondment work hard in order to be re-elected into office' [Malawian participants].

'The teachers' unions we visited carry on continuous capacity building activities for all the members of the secretariats. They have departments for all levels of education, e.g. primary, secondary, technical, and importantly for the achievement of gender equality in the union and in the country, one union has deliberately reserved a percentage of senior positions in the hierarchy that can only be occupied by women.

One of the Teachers' Unions visited used the regulations used during the time that the union was a government body to make sure that the 2% contribution from the salary to the teacher's union is deducted automatically from the salaries of the members' [Mozambican participants].

'It was noted that most teachers unions fight more on conditions of service for teachers, however study tour participants agreed that there is a need for teachers' unions to change their strategy and focus more on the interests of the children in order engage more effectively in dialogue with Ministry of education on matters of policy formulation and implementation' [Malawian participants].

'One of the TU visited also took the initiative to produce and negotiate with the Government a code of conduct for the teachers' [Mozambican participants].

2.5 Meaningful teacher training and development

'Proper long term planning on teachers pre-service training is essential to limit the possible unemployment problems that graduate teachers may face in the future' [Ethiopian participants].

'In Nepal, teacher-training colleges, higher secondary schools prepare primary teachers. Lately, the government has reviewed the minimum qualification for a primary teacher. However, the majority of primary teachers have only the minimum School Leaving Certificate qualification. VSO Nepal's Valuing Teachers research and other similar studies have shown that the pre-service training courses that schools deliver are neither relevant nor practical. The courses are more subject knowledge focused, with little emphasis on teaching methodology or inclusivity. Every year thousands of teachers complete their course but they are not technically trained. This has a direct impact on the status teaching profession in the eyes of society. However, in Zambia and Malawi, we found that the government plans how many teachers they need each year, according to the number of

vacancies as well as factoring in predictions about how many new teachers the country will require, and then decides the number of teachers to recruit for pre-service training. More emphasis is put on the pedagogic aspect of teaching, rather than just subject knowledge. If Nepal is serious to improve the quality education in public schools, it also should considering changing syllabus and the way of training' [Nepali participants].

'The study tour raised the importance for teachers unions of emphasizing continuing professional development issues as a way of engaging on the issue of the quality of education being delivered to children and to develop trust between the unions and the government and also with society' [Ethiopian participants].

'We learnt from Teachers' Union of Malawi, the Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ), and Zambian National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) that their members are supported by the teachers' union for their continuing professional development (CPD). The unions provide loans and scholarships to their members to their members for CPD activities, which are repaid after teachers complete their studies. Compared to teachers from these countries, teachers from Nepal do not have any professional development opportunities' [Nepali participants].

'Some of the teachers unions we visited have created clubs of self support where more experienced teachers serve as resources for newly qualified or less experienced teachers undertaking INSETT courses. The MoE in Zambia has also introduced distance education teacher training programmes which are delivered via radio' [Mozambican participants].

'The Rwanda Global Campaign for Education coalition will lobby the Government for setting up an accredited system of continuous professional development for teachers. The focus will be on lobbying for improved methodology of teaching. The process is being discussed with the Ministry of Education by member organizations of the coalition' [Rwandan participants].

2.6 Improving non-salary incentives for teachers

As well as engaging in lengthy discussions about the importance of improving teacher's salaries and living conditions, participants from all countries were impressed by some of the non-salary incentives provided to members of the unions visited in Zambia:

'Malawi participants were impressed by the way the Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ) supports the welfare of its members especially through the building material projects schemes and financial support from private financial institutions that provide credit facilities' [Malawian participants].

'Similarly, Donald shared that the teachers' union in Kenya runs cooperatives for teachers to enable them to contribute to savings and insurance schemes and access loans for housing or continuing professional development' [Nepali participants].

'The Rwanda GCE coalition will work on finding out the progress on teachers' loan scheme through 'Mwarimu SACCO' (Teacher's Bank), and find out more information about other incentives in place for teachers and whether they reach everyone. For example we intend to find out about the provision in place for teachers' medical insurance in private schools and then lobby for expansion of this scheme to public schools' [Rwandan participants].

2.7 Government strategy and responsiveness to civil society

'It was noted in Zambia that there is high political will in government to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Basic education is from grade one to nine, and free education is from grade one to seven. There is however a debate in parliament to extending free education to grade 12.

'The government is committed to increasing its GDP towards education from 3% to 8% and recruitment of more teachers has been given priority to ensure quality education, as well as improving conditions of service for teachers by addressing issues of salaries, loan facilities, provision of water, houses in rural areas and solar power' [Malawian participants].

'We were impressed by the commitment of the Ministry of Education to work with CSOs and the awareness and in-depth knowledge of the government officials about the role of coalitions and the difference they can make. The existence of multi-ministerial steering committees and collaboration between the various sectors and stakeholders to address the EFA goals was also impressive.

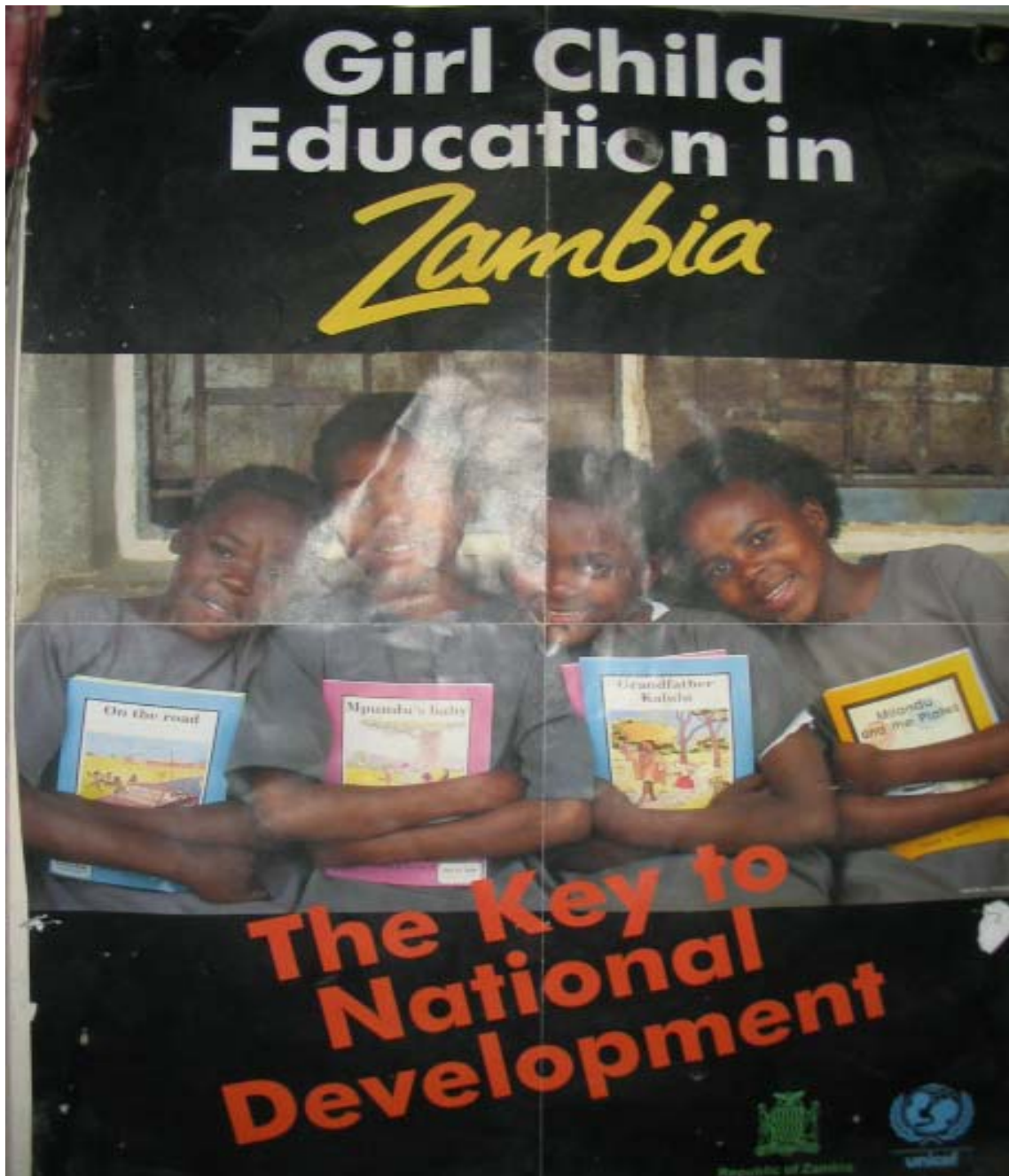
'We were also impressed by the team spirit existing between the different teacher unions & government bodies working towards the same agenda. The higher officials in the teacher unions do not have any political affiliation for any one of the political parties and reflect neutral views. This has helped them to gain acceptance both by their members and the government' [Ethiopian participants].

'The Rwanda GCE coalition will work on engaging with all education stakeholders, ranging from civil society up to Ministry of Education. We will work on re-enforcing the participation of the members in regular education meetings. We will encourage coalition members to work in partnership in order to maximize effectiveness and avoid duplication. Individual stakeholders will be held accountable for the tasks they take on' [Rwandan participants].

2.8 Innovative approaches to addressing gender equality through education

Strategies employed by coalition members visited (in particular FAWEMA and FAWWEZA) that impressed participants, from all countries included:

'FAWE has successfully lobbied for legislation and policies to ensure that both the girl and the boy are penalised when girls get pregnant. In the past only girls were forced to withdraw from school upon becoming pregnant, but with the new legislation, boys too have to withdraw from school to share childcare



responsibilities and allow the mother to re-enter school and continue her education. This has been a contributory factor to reducing early pregnancy and female drop out rates' [Ethiopian participants].

'The re-entry policy for girls who have had children before finishing education which FAWEZA lobbied for was seen as a good example to ensure that every girl has access to qualification. The Rwanda GCE coalition will find out about the re-entry policy in Rwanda and start lobbying to address this issue, in case it has not been introduced yet' [Rwandan participants].

'We were impressed by the provisions in place to make the learning environment more favourable for girls. These included: weekend boarding classes for female

students who do not have access to schools nearby, provision of sanitary pads etc' [Ethiopian participants].

'To motivate girls to attend engineering courses FAWE supports the MoE to organise girls clubs for sciences. Here girls receive additional teaching and support in the sciences and which has led to an increase in number of girls undertaking engineering courses' [Mozambican participants].

'Learning from the activities we witnessed in Malawi and Zambia, the Rwanda GCE coalition will lobby for sensitisation of civil society & teachers against gender-based violence. We will lobby for strengthening existing girls clubs, and setting them up where they don't exist, in order to boost girls confidence & self esteem' [Rwandan participants].

'Higher numbers of women in senior positions has been found to be a motivation for the female students. Coalition members visited during the study tour highlighted the use of radio and TV programs broadcasting experiences of successful women as role models strategy to raise the profile of gender equality in society and motivate girls to succeed in education' [Ethiopian participants].

'FAWE supported the creation of teacher training colleges specifically for female trainees. The colleges are designed specifically for girls from rural areas and upon completion of their training incentives are provided to encourage them to return to rural area and become role models for girls in school' [Mozambican participants].

2.9 The importance of pre-primary and adult education for the success of basic education

'In Zambia the adult literacy program used to be in another Ministry until 2006 when it was brought under the Ministry of Education to enhance coordination. There are 25 providers of adult literacy but only 3 are from MOE, the rest are CSOs. A technical working committee on adult literacy was formed and NGOs were brought on board to support the initiative. Adult education has been shown to be important both to enable adults to participate more effectively in society and to enable them to understand the value of education for their children and support them to succeed in and complete their education.

Early childhood development (ECD) [pre-primary education] is also managed under the MOE and there are two pre school institutions that train pre school teachers. ECD has been considered to be important because research show that once children are given a good foundation before joining grade one they perform better in other grades' [Malawian participants].

'It is clear from the study tour that pre-primary education needs to be strengthened both in the hosting and sending countries to ensure that the quality of such education improves and prepares children more effectively for primary education. As much pre-primary education is provided by non state providers, its improvement needs to be coordinated with the involvement of both government and non-government bodies' [Ethiopian participants].

2.10 Improving access for children in remote areas through distance education

'Using distance education program accompanied with tutors and other supporting materials is found to be effective way of providing access for out of school children in rural areas' [Ethiopian participants].

Out of school children in Zambia are being targeted through the use of radio programs whereby programs are broadcast by a qualified teacher, but community teachers in rural centres act as mentors and facilitate the lessons following instructions from the radio. This programme targets about 75,000 out of school children. The government has plans to reach more learners in the near future through e-learning' [Malawian participants].

The Rwanda GCE coalition intends to work on identifying alternative ways of teaching in order to reach the most disadvantaged communities. This will include communities in remote areas, orphans and other vulnerable children, and adults. Zambia's model of teaching communities in rural areas through radio programmes could be suggested and adapted to Rwandan standards' [Rwandan participants].



Sudarshan is surrounded... by school children in Lilongwe

2.11 Bringing vulnerable children back into education through community schools

In Zambia there are community schools that have been established in areas where there is limited access to care and education for orphans and vulnerable children. Communities contribute towards the establishment of the schools and employ teachers. The community also provides food for the children since they can not afford to purchase their own lunch. It was noted that teachers are paid lower salaries than that of government servants but they are motivated by the kind of training they are offered which is geared towards volunteerism. The schools claim to perform even better than public schools which have well paid teachers' [Malawian participants].

In Rwanda, some faith-based organizations have started related models in disadvantaged communities in rural areas. This model can be explored to act as a pilot for developing community schools. The concept of community schools, as we understood it, is to cater for vulnerable children that are currently out of school (e.g. orphans) to prepare them for integration into mainstream schools. The community plays an active role in setting up the school and maintain the system through carrying out income generating activities to cover for teachers' salaries and school feeding programmes. Since Rwanda has got strong community programmes in place, the coalition will explore if there is an opportunity to link the model of community schools to these community programmes which are already in place' [Rwandan participants].

Ministry of Education in Zambia encourages the involvement of communities in reaching out of school children through community schools. There is an association of community schools, which is a member of ZANEC, which coordinates the community schools of the country, and liaises with MoE and donors on behalf of its members' [Mozambican participants].

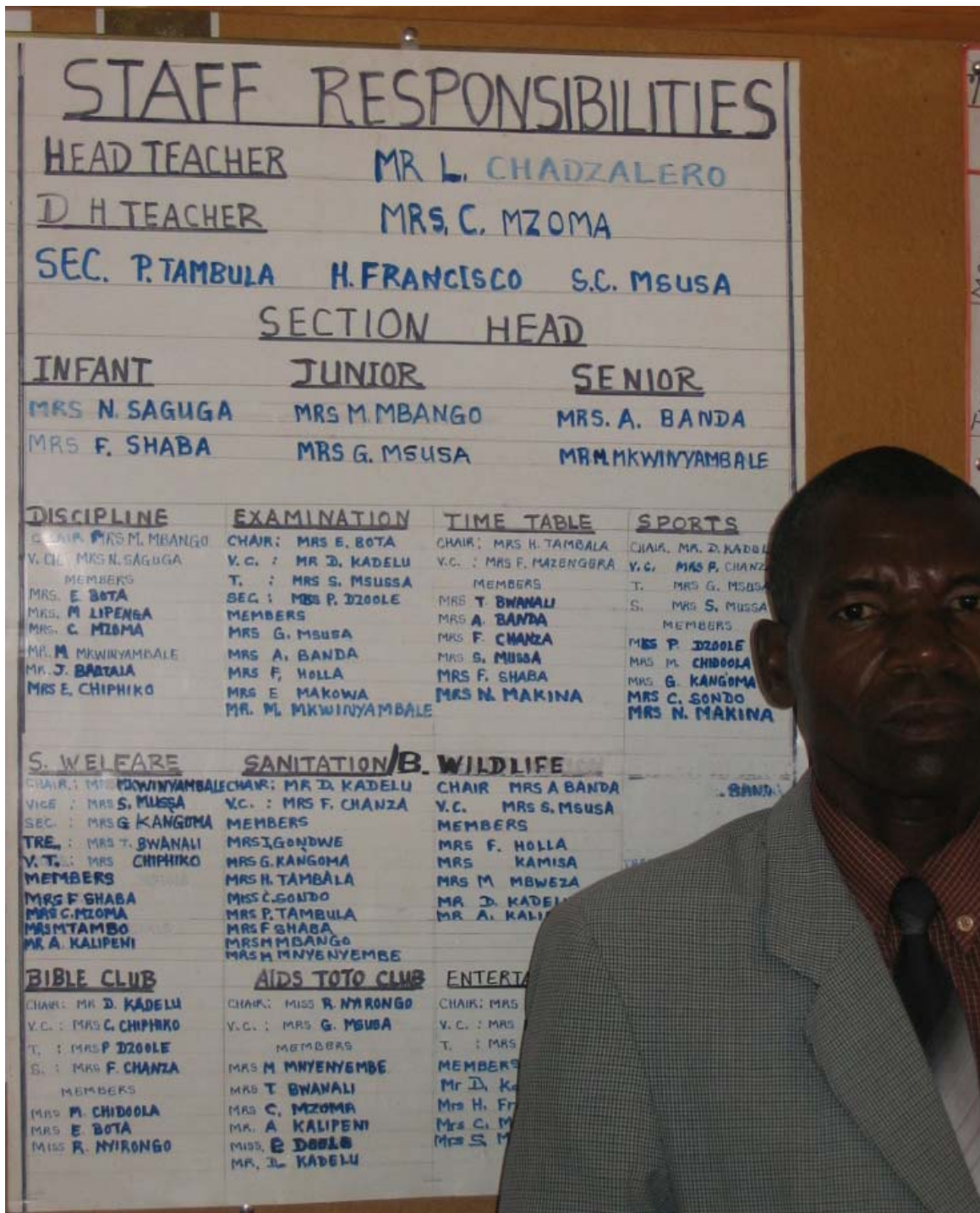
3 Some initial outcomes of the tour

Longer term outcomes of the study tour will be collated by VSO programme managers as part of their ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes. In particular they will be prompted to reflect on the study tour during their annual Programme Area Review processes later in the year, and record any outcomes arising from or related to the study tour.

On the last day of the tour itself, during the action planning workshop, the following outcomes were observed:

- Mohammed Abubeker Mohammed, the Ethiopia Ministry of Education representative declared that he had been convinced during the study tour of the value of education coalitions. He stated that he would be a strong advocate within the Ministry of Education for the **establishment of a new civil society education coalition in Ethiopia**. This would most likely build on the existing Basic Education Network, but develop from an information sharing network into an independent advocacy coalition that in time, could produce research, undertake budget monitoring and other independent EFA monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and collaborate with the government in order to help the country achieve the EFA goals.
- The Zambia participants were very impressed, during informal discussion with the Nepali participants, by the way the Nepali teachers unions had managed to unite into one federation of teachers union. Previously the six different teachers unions in Nepal were affiliated to different political parties, and their contact with each other was characterised by division and conflict, As such they were unable to present a united front in their negotiations with the government. However after a government policy change which required the unions to form a federation to represent all teachers unions with one voice, the unions have managed to improve communication between the different unions, collaborate more effectively and unite under the banner of the Teachers' Union of Nepal. The Zambian participants were interested in **a further study tour to Nepal** to learn from Nepal's experience of forming a single teachers' union federation, reducing conflict between unions and improving their ability to represent teachers' interests and lobby the government for improvements in the quality of education.
- Participants from both Malawi and Mozambique were very impressed with the Basic Education Teachers Union or Zambia (BETUZ) partnership with a private finance company which enable them to offer **low interest loans to teachers to enable them to build appropriate accomodation**. The possibilities for a similar schemes in Malawi and Mozambique are being explored, using the learning from and in liaison with BETUZ.
- Throughout the tour, Sudarshan Ghimire, from Nepal's Education Journalists Group, recorded the meetings and visits on video camera. The resulting footage will be edited into a **DVD showing highlights of the tour**. When produced the DVD will be available to all participants of the tour to enable them to more easily share the learning from the tour with their colleagues.

4 What next? How will we share our learning?



On the last day of the study tour an action planning workshop was facilitated during which participants were asked to decide which examples of good practice they would like to share with their colleagues on their return to their home countries. Each country group was asked to produce an action plan, detailing the good practice they would like to introduce, who should be involved, what needs to happen and when it should start.

The following bullet points provide a few (highly selective and not comprehensive) examples of the kind of activities that the tour participants plan to use to share their learning and introduce good practice they observed. For more details, detailed reports and action plans are collated in a separate document (sent to all tour participants with this report) which is available on demand from stephen.nock@vso.org.uk or the relevant staff member (see Appendix 1 for VSO Education Programme Managers contact details).

4.1 Ethiopia action plan

Examples of activities Ethiopian participants hope to implement:

- Approach the Basic Education Network, Ministry of Education and donors and find out their capacity to accommodate the role of the coalition and how they can collaborate constructively with CSOs, and teachers unions.
- Possibly form a committee to take forward the formation of a new coalition, or strengthening the existing network, i.e from the donors group, CSO, MoE.
- Encourage and invite the teachers' association representatives to be represented in the various coalition building meetings planned to take place.
- Undertake a needs assessment of the teachers association, and if the problems can be supported with the provision of human resources, place a VSO volunteer to work in the association.
- Visit government and public media agencies and check if they have permanent sections to address education related issues. Share with them our learning on the roles of the media to bring about positive change in the education sector. Invite media representatives when launching the Valuing Teachers research. Encourage the media group to become member of the coalition, when established.

4.2 Malawi action plan

Examples of activities Malawian participants hope to implement:

- Introduce a media forum for education journalists for effective advocacy, lobbying, policy reform and monitoring. Develop a media strategy that involves all journalists writing on education to establish a new forum.
- Develop a long term partnership and networking among involved teachers unions and coalitions members from six countries involved in study tour.
- Teachers union of Malawi (TUM) to introduce a research department to enhance evidence based advocacy Teachers Union of Malawi to partner with VSO to provide a volunteer to build capacity in research.
- Coalition members (Action Aid to lead), Government, Parliamentarians, and donors to develop joint advocacy and lobbying strategies to influence IMF and world Bank to remove harmful conditions.
- Teachers union of Malawi to negotiate with financial institutions to give credit facilities to teachers. Negotiations going on with *Blue Financial Services* in Zambia to establish an office in Malawi.
- Mobilise and sensitise communities during GCE Action Week and at other times of the year to increase their commitment to meeting school needs through voluntary initiatives.

4.3 Mozambique action plan

Examples of activities Mozambican participants hope to implement:

- Make sure that the Government policies are known and are taken into account when planning the work of the coalition
- Search for ways of raising the profile and voice of the coalition in parliament
- Both the coalition and the teachers union should continue or start to write project funding proposals for research studies and use the results for bargaining with and lobbying the Government
- Search for old and existing legislation regarding mandatory deductions from teachers' salaries for teacher union membership and see how it can benefit the Union not only for the member's contribution but also for other elements.
- The Union need to identify partners to work with them in building their capacity, possibly including the placement of a VSO volunteer.
- Study appropriate ways of supporting teacher training initiatives through bursaries or other incentives that will bring teacher's satisfaction. This would include INSETT clubs in TU Departments.
- The Union will examine the percentage of women occupying decision making posts, and discuss the need for a policy of reserving a percentage of posts for women.
- Work with the MoE and FAWEMO and other organisations to determine the local regulations and study ways of reducing a number of early pregnancies.
- Explore the potential of having distance education programmes using radio. Explore further how this is dealt with in Zambia. The MoE in Zambia expressed interest to engage in discussion with the MoE in Mozambique.

4.4 Nepal action plan

Examples of activities Nepali participants hope to implement:

- Activate the GCE network as a coalition after the GCE week, by drafting a terms of reference...and new constitution
- Establish the secretariat office, and decide one advocacy ask for the coming year: the issue the coalition is going to focus on.
- Share good practice of budget tracking to members through a dissemination workshop, articles in the newspaper, through the newspapers of VSO, EJG and the teachers union.
- Identify resource persons for developing training courses on budget tracking for coalition members, in particular for journalists, Teachers' union leaders and VSO partners and volunteers.
- Establish a link between the Nepal Department of Education Gender section and the women's section of the Teachers' Union to FAWEZA and FAWEMA.
- Disseminate and share good practice of Zambia and Malawi regarding professional development opportunities and other welfare schemes (health insurance, loans) for union members.

1.5 Rwanda action plan

Examples of activities Rwandan participants hope to implement:

- Set up a steering committee of the coalition to formulate a structure and statute.
- Set up working groups for developing and implementing specific tasks
- Organise a workshop on lobbying and advocacy
- Lobby for refresher courses/ in-service training for primary & secondary school teachers
- Identify alternative ways of teaching most disadvantaged communities & lobby for their implementation
- Develop campaigns for strengthening girl clubs; awareness raising campaigns (GCE, International Women's day); and find out about the re-entry policy for girls.
- Engage MINEDUC in dialogues about progress on teacher loans and other incentives for teachers (e.g. housing, or transport)

2. Evaluation and recommendations for future study tours

Personal learning objectives

Of those participants that returned their evaluation forms, all replied that their personal learning objectives had been either largely or fully met.

Only one participant commented that his objectives were not fully met, noting that:

‘We did not have time to see the budget monitoring tools that coalitions use to collect information. We did not also visit the coalition office in Malawi. It would have been more useful if we could have seen the tools’.

Pre-departure Preparation

- ‘The information on pre-departure workshops guidelines was very useful to run workshop for partners’
- ‘The VSO Education Programme Manager conducted a pre departure preparation workshop. So everything went on smoothly’
- ‘Understanding the objective of study tour was vital’.

Content of the Tour

- ‘The selection of partners was relevant. The system of interviewing participants every evening and preparation meetings before meeting key organisations and people was very helpful. Every one had a chance to share their views and the process was very participatory’.
- ‘I was very much impressed with the organisations that I visited in Malawi and Zambia because they had formed one coalition of all the education stakeholders to address on the educational issues. We are also preparing to form such coalitions in our context too’.
- ‘Good to have knowledge of how other people elsewhere in view of education’.

Follow-up activities

- ‘We have prepared follow up activities and time lines. Partners who attended the LINKS tour shared their experience at the Annual conference of VSO education volunteers last week’.
- ‘We will form the network of education stakeholders and call the conference to share our learning’.
- ‘Share the experience with members and adapt relevant to their context. Sharing of information and continue to collaborate with the organisations visited’.

What were the top three benefits of the tour for your organisation?

- ‘I learnt how the coalition works; learnt how teachers unions are working with the government and for their members; and established networking links with participants from other countries’.
- ‘I will disseminate and discuss the best practices that I learnt with other members within our organizations’. The tour helped me to understand how to get involved in the formulation of education policies, and build partnerships with other educational stakeholders.
- ‘Improved advocacy skills. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation and skills in budget tracking. Enhanced networking with like mind organisations’.

- 'I learned about: advocacy for professional development of teachers; Loans for teachers to help them; and radio program of adult literacy'

Did the LINKS study tour have any 'unexpected outcomes?'

- 'Yes. One of the unexpected outcomes from this tour is that I learnt how to deal with immigration officers , and learning about African education systems'
- 'Confidence. Practice. Networking'.
- 'Translation was of great help in communicating of my view'

How can we improve the effectiveness of LINKS tours?

- 'As participants were from different countries, they seemed liking to work within their own country groups and there was a bit less interaction between cross-countries informally. Perhaps we could have improved this tour by introducing an environment in which the participants from different countries would interact with each other'
- 'We can improve the effectiveness of LINKS tours by designing follow-up programs. It is very much effective to form coalitions of all educational Stakeholders to address the educational issues collectively'.
- '1. Need for vigour networking at local and international levels. 2. Help establish and improve educational networks and coalitions in countries. 3. Where coalitions/ networks like ours are dormant or non-existent, provide Capacity building workshops or seminars'.
- 'Meeting again for evaluation of the effectiveness of action plans of member countries'.

Other recommendations:

- In future, close attention should be given to gender balance when selecting members for such a tour. As the VSO Nepal Education Programme Manager lamented: 'All three participants of the LINKS tour from Nepal, were male'. Overall the female participants were out-numbered by more than 2 to 1, with 13 male and 6 female participants. While this may reflect the gender inequality in the countries represented, for future tours, more effort should be made to ensure a better gender balance is achieved.
- Roles and responsibilities for coordinating the tour have to be clearly established. Responsibility for organising evening entertainment, note-taking and chairing in meetings, chairing and facilitation of review and preparation meetings, collection of learning points, travel logistics, organising shopping visits and visits to internet cafes etc have to be divided up equally between host and visiting staff to avoid one person being put in charge of everything by default.
- The choice of accommodation should take into account the participants needs for email access and their dietary requirements (vegetarian, religious or other restrictions).
- In tours involving cross border travel local staff should accompany participants across the border in case difficulties arise, and triple check visa requirements in advance and, crucially, upon participants' arrival at the airport or border.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participants list and contact details

Nepal		
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Appendix 2: List of resources available for VSO staff, volunteers and partners working in education advocacy

The following resources are available from the web addresses below (accessed July 2007) or from stephen.nock@vso.org.uk

Some of these resources, and many others, can also be found on the resource pages of the websites of VSO, GCE and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI):

VSO's position papers page: www.vso.org.uk/resources/position_papers.asp

The Global Campaign for Education's resources page:
www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/resources_listall.php

The Overseas Development Institute's publications page:
www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/ODI_pubs.html

1. ANCEFA (2003) *Capacity Building and Development for Education Networks*. Dar es Salaam: ANCEFA.
www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Sep2003/ANCEFA_capacity0903_EN.pdf
2. Beyond Access (2006) *Working with the Media on Gender and Education*. London; Institute of Education and Oxfam.
www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Aug2006/Girls%20Education%20Media%20Guide.pdf
3. BOND (2005) *The How and Why of Advocacy*. London: BOND.
www.bond.org.uk/pubs/guidance/2.1howwhyadvocacy.pdf
4. CAFOD, Christian Aid and Trocaire (2007), *Monitoring Government Policies a toolkit for civil society organisations in Africa*.
www.internationalbudget.org/MonitorGovPol.pdf
5. CSCQBE (2007) *Powerpoint presentations delivered during VSO LINKS Malawi- Zambia Education Advocacy Study Tour*. Unpublished.
6. GCE (2006) *Teachers For All - what governments and donors should do (GCE policy position paper)*. Johannesburg: GCE.
www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Mar2006/GCE%20Teachers%20For%20All.pdf
7. GCE (2006) *Every Child Needs a Teacher (GCE campaign briefing)*. Johannesburg: GCE.
www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Mar2006/GCE%20TEACHER%20CAMPAIGN.pdf

8. GCE and ActionAid (2007) *Education Rights: A Guide for Practitioners and Activists*. Johannesburg: GCE and Action Aid. Introduction available at www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/May2007/Intro.pdf Other chapters available on the GCE website (as above).
9. IDS (2006) *Budget Analysis and Policy Advocacy The Role of Non-Governmental Public Action*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/wp/wp279.pdf
10. ODI (2004) *Tools For Policy Impact, A Handbook For Researchers*. London: ODI. www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/Policy_Impact_toolkit.pdf
11. ODI (2005) *Successful Communication: A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organisations*. London: ODI. www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/Comms_toolkit.pdf
12. ODI (2006) *A Toolkit for Progressive Policymakers in Developing Countries*. London: ODI. www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/EBP_toolkit.pdf
13. ODI (2006) *Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations*. London: ODI. www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/Political_Context_Toolkit_web.pdf
14. ODI (2006) *Policy Engagement for Poverty Reduction – How Civil Society Can be More Effective*. London: ODI. www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Publications/Documents/CSPP_BP.pdf
15. Save the Children (2003) *Working For Change in Education - A handbook for planning advocacy*. London: Save the Children. www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk/jsp/whatwedo/theme.jsp?section=education
16. VSO (2005) *START - Simple Toolkit for Advocacy Research Techniques*. London: VSO. www.vso.org.uk/Images/start_tcm8-10504.pdf
17. VSO (2006) *Advocacy at VSO - guidelines for VSO staff and volunteers*. Unpublished.
18. VSO (2006) *Making Education for All a reality: without radical education management reforms EFA is a distant dream (VSO policy briefing)*. Unpublished.
19. VSO Malawi (2007) *Making Things Happen: A Review of Malawi Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education*. Unpublished.

Appendix 4: Table of information about some of the GCE coalitions supported by VSO (on next pages)

Table of information about some of the GCE National Coalitions supported by VSO Education Programmes

To be read at 200% magnification, or printed and blown up to A3. More information can be sourced from Programme Managers.

Issue	Guyana	Malawi	Mozambique	Nepal	Rwanda	Zambia
History of the coalition	The Guyana GCE Coalition was formed in July 2005 following an agreement amongst attendees at a workshop to analyse the recommendations of the VSO Guyana Valuing Teachers research report <i>Making Teachers Count</i> . The coalition met regularly between its inception and GCE Action Week 2006.	The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education was formed in July 2000 Research commissioned by ActionAid Malawi and OXFAM Malawi found that government, and NGO partners were doing innovative projects but these projects were restricted to one region or district. A recommendation was made that a coalition be formed that would draw all expertise together and be able to share it across the country.	Movimento de Educação para Todos (MEPT) – Movement for Education for All (MEA) was founded in 1999 during preparations for the Dakar EFA meeting of April 2000. In 1999 a number of NGOs working in education sector came together to prepare a document that would be presented to the Dakar meeting by two representatives of Mozambique civil society. The main objective of the creation of this movement was to bring together in the same forum all individuals and organizations that share the vision of education set in the Jomtien meeting in 1990 which set the goal of "Universal education for all by the year 2000".	GCE Nepal first started as a steering committee for the 2003 Global Action Week. The same organizing team came together for the 2004 Action Week for year 2004. This time, the steering committee tried to include more organisations in order to make the action week more effective and as a result, 15 organizations joined in and made the action week success with the participation of more than 22,000 children. Following the Action Week 2004, the steering group decided to turn into a national committee as GCE-Nepal.	The GCE Rwanda Coalition was formed in 2005, after VSO Rwanda's Valuing Teachers Research <i>Seen But Not Heard</i> identified the need for civil society organisations to come together to advocate for increased education financing and recruitment of primary teachers to enable the country to deliver good quality Universal Basic Education for all.	ZANEC (Zambia National Education Coalition) was established in 2001 through a consultative process among a number of civil society organisations with a shared concern for education development in Zambia. The initiative was intended to create a more effective partnership between government and civil society in the advancement of national education development programmes. ZANEC plays an important role in monitoring the performance of the Ministry of Education and engaging government on education sector reforms. ZANEC's programme also targets gender equality and the promotion of HIV/AIDS awareness in the education sector.
Make up of the coalition	The 14 members of the Guyana GCE coalition are: Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU); Guyana Adult Education Association; Young Women Christian Association; The Commonwealth Youth Programme; Youth Challenge; Every Child; UNESCO; Operation Restoration; The Open Door Center; VSO Guyana; Adventist Development and Relief Agency; UNICEF; World Teach and the Building Community Capacity Programme.	15 organisations working in basic education - local and international organisations, the teacher's union etc - were invited to join the coalition at its foundation. The Coalition has since grown in size to today's membership of 67 CSOs and 13 District Networks.	The Foundation for Community Development (FDC) hosts the movement while the Movements work for its formalization and finding a donor to cover for the costs of renting an office. MEPT is a movement composed of national and international non-governmental organizations such as the Foundation for Community Development (FDC), Mozambique Women Forum, The Mozambique Christian Council, The Mozambique Teacher's Union, The Mozambique Association for the Disabled, Action Aid, Oxfam, etc.	GCE Nepal members include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education Action Aid Concern-Nepal CWIN-Nepal EJG (Education Journalist's Group) IFCD (Innovative Forum for Community Development) GAN (Global Action Network) NNTA (Nepal National Teacher's Association) Global March Against Child Labour ILO Plan Nepal; Read; Room to Read; Save the Children Norway; Save the Children US UNDP UNESCO UNICEF VSO Nepal WE (World Education) WFP (World Food Program) <p>There are two other education coalitions in Nepal, the Association of International NGOs Education Taskforce (AIN) and the Education Journalists Group (EJG).</p>	GCE Rwanda Coalition members include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNEP (Syndicat National des Enseignants du Primaire) ActionAid ACT (Association of Committed Teachers) FAWE (Forum of African Women Educationalists) SNEC (Syndicat National des Enseignants Catholiques) ECAM (Education for Children Advocacy Ministries) CESTRAR (public sector workers' trade union) VSO Rwanda 	ZANEC is a network of non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations and teachers' trade unions promoting Education for All goals through advocacy, research and capacity building.
NGO-Teacher Union link	GTU is a leading member of the coalition, which has been supported by two VSO volunteer placements – one of whom was a UK MP, who undertook a needs analysis for the union which made recommendations for improving the union's management.	The Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) is a member of CSCQBE and is shortly to receive a short term VSO volunteer to help the union develop a strategic plan perform needs analysis to identify responsibilities for a future 2 year volunteer capacity development placement	ONP (Organização Nacional de Professores) National Teacher's Organization – is a leading member of MEPT. A VSO volunteer is placed at the union to support the organisation in the following areas: strategic planning; research; member relations and communications; government and donor relations; fundraising; advocacy and lobbying training; GCE Global Action Week activities and gender and HIV & AIDS mainstreaming activities. This volunteer works in close liaison with another volunteer placed at the coalition secretariat (see below).	After VSO Nepal decided to embark on their Valuing Teacher advocacy research project, TUN was consulted and involved from the very beginning of the research process. TUN has since used VSO Nepal's report <i>Lessons From the Classroom</i> on Teachers' Motivation, research reports for lobbying purposes. Currently VSO Nepal supports the Teachers Union by providing strategic planning support, and by working to establish a national female teachers' forum to address the shortage of female teachers. VSO volunteers are also alongside the Union leaders to develop their lobbying skills and their capacity to take a lead role in budget monitoring activities.	With the assistance of a VSO volunteer placed at the primary teachers union, SNEP, for the first time most schools in Rwanda were informed about the GCE Global Action Week. The union became more proactive during the 2006 Global Action Week campaign in local primary schools than in previous years.	

<p>Coalition activities</p>	<p>The Guyana GCE Coalition organised activities for the 2006 GCE Global Action Week including: developing a file of evidence on the theme 'Every Child Needs a Teacher'; organising campaigning activities in schools; appearing on TV shows to promote the campaign; and sending the GTU General Secretary to the UK to speak about situation of teachers in Guyana at a series of awareness raising events, and to lobby the DFID Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development, during one of GCE UK's regular meetings with the Minister.</p>	<p>The coalition works in 3 committees – working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy analysis and lobbying; • a campaign to improve teacher training; and • taking part in GCE activities <p>Each org. provides a staff member to sit on each committee</p> <p>Any issues that have been agreed as priorities, during the coalition's strategic planning process, that need research, are researched, and the findings are sent to the policy committee to take them forward. For example the coalition has been working on budget monitoring, and teacher absenteeism, and evidence from VSO's Valuing Teachers research was used by coalition members during PRSP policy discussions.</p> <p>The Coalition has managed to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vibrant alliance of 67 member organizations and 13 District education Networks advocating access, equity, relevance and quality basic education. Successful proposition of Teacher salaries, Teacher Training, Teaching and Learning Materials and School Inspection as priority poverty expenditure (PPEs) in the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP). • Lobbying with Education, Budget and Finance Committees of Parliament for increased resource allocation to the Education Sector. • Recognition and Partnership with government and development partners and other CSO networks on Educational issues. • Membership and links with global, continental and regional networks on EFA. • Participation in the GCE 'Week of Action' since 2001. 	<p>The structure of the movement is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The general assembly is the decision making body. All the decisions concerning the implementation of MEPT activities are taken during the annual assembly meeting. • The advisory body. This is composed of the founders of MEPT. The body has the mandate of proposing plans to be discussed and made action points by the assembly. • The fiscal body. The mandate of this body is to check and monitor the implementation of the activities agreed at the assembly meeting. This body is composed of three full time members and it meets once every three months. • The board of directors. This is composed of organizations elected at the general assembly. The board of directors represents MEPT in all official and non official institutions. It meets once every month. The elected members appoint the president of the body of directors. • The secretariat. This is the executive body of MEPT. It can be represented at the national, provincial or district level. The secretariat is led by the President of the board of directors or by the national co-ordinator if he/she is delegated by the Director. The secretariat is actually composed of two members, the coordinator and a programme officer. <p>A VSO Volunteer is currently supporting the movement to: develop a strategic plan; research government and donor FTI and EFA related policies and monitor their implementation; improve communications, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation and coordination with ANCEFA and GCE International; and to assist with the coordination of GCE Global Action Week campaign activities. This volunteer works in close liaison with the volunteer placed at the Teachers' Union.</p>	<p>TUN actively participated and appealed to all its members to get involved in the "Welcome to School Campaign" - part of GCE campaign in Nepal for last two years. As result of TUN members' enthusiasm and involvement, many children went to the classroom for the first time.</p> <p>EJG has emerged as a national forum for advocacy and research in education. It is currently actively involved in the task force constituted by the Ministry of Education (after it was suggested by EJG), for formulating an integrated media mobilisation strategy for quality education.</p> <p>It has established itself as a strong watchdog of the country's education system: by constantly monitoring education policies and their implementation both at the national and local level through its network. The Group also organises discussions, forums on different education themes, which have played a crucial role in bringing educational issues into public debate and providing valuable inputs to the policy-makers.</p>	<p>The GCE Rwanda coalition organised a number of activities for Global Action Week 2006 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lively performances by school children in front of thousands of children, local leaders which gained coverage on national radio and in national newspapers and numerous campaign events in schools across the country; • the production of a campaign video about teachers' issues; <p>A 'Big Hearing' was organised in the country's national stadium in Kigali. This event saw marches by pupils, students, teachers, politicians, and a colourful bus emblazoned with campaign slogans calling for Universal Basic Education (UBE) for all. The bus represented all types of children in Rwanda: in-school, out of school and drop outs. Thousands of children, teachers and parents presented their case to national politicians. A media campaign on the issue of Every Child Needs A Teacher was implemented through both radio (as the best medium to engage local people) as well as and printed media. Over 1000 people were present. School children presented sketches, songs, traditional dances, poems, and speeches, posters with messages. Teachers presented poems and speeches. They were speeches by the VSO Rwanda director and a member of parliament.</p>	<p>In 2004 ZANEC received support from VSO, Oxfam and GCE International to research IMF imposed public sector wage bill caps in Zambia. The research exposed the IMF-imposed wage freeze on Zambian public service workers which resulted in 9,000 qualified teachers left unemployed, while schools went without teachers.</p> <p>As part of the campaign, two Zambian teachers visited Washington for the Autumn 2004 Annual Meetings of the IMF and World Bank, where a lobbying meeting between the teachers and representatives of the Fund was organised. The policy report was disseminated to the press corps present at the Annual Meetings, and the Economics Correspondent of the UK's Guardian used the briefing as the basis for questions he then asked of the Managing Director of the IMF at their press conference. As a result the New York Times and the Guardian both ran articles about the story, as did the national press in Zambia. The IMF immediately published a rebuttal on their website.</p> <p>In January 2005 the Zambian government announced that after in-country negotiations with the IMF, it was agreed that the wage freeze could be relaxed to allow the government to increase its education budget by 4% in an attempt to tackle the teacher shortage crisis.</p> <p>As well as increasing the budget (from 20% to 24% of total government expenditure), and lifting the wage freeze, the Minister employed 5,000 new teachers in 2005 (from the 9,000 unemployed teachers), paid all outstanding housing allowances for public service workers, and increased the public sector wage bill from 7.99% to 8.12% of GDP (a move previously blocked by IMF economic dogma which dictated public sector wage bills should rise to no more than 8% of GDP).</p>
<p>Challenges coalitions have faced</p>	<p>'It was observed that a number of NGO education stakeholders are timid about engaging in advocacy... One can only assume that there is an element of fear of confronting the government on any issue since a number of civil society initiatives that challenged governance, rights, and probity have been quashed and their protagonists have been maligned and hounded. A few have been threatened'</p>	<p>The CSCQBE was initially based at the teacher's union office but after some time, partly because sometimes the government was not happy with the union's confrontational approach to negotiations, and partly because the identity of the coalition was becoming synonymous with the union, coalition secretariat was moved to an independent office.</p> <p>Initially government members were invited to join the coalition, but this soon proved to be not conducive to open debate, as Ministry staff were able to forewarn the Minister of issues, who then tended to prepare overly defensive responses to questions, before the civil society members of the coalition were even able to ask them!</p> <p>In CSCQBE there is also some evidence that the stronger members, often international organizations,</p>		<p>GCE Nepal is currently led by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. The main focus of GCE Nepal activities has been the Ministry led 'Welcome to School' enrolment campaign.</p> <p>Civil society members of the coalition have expressed concerns about the space available for them to: raise their issues in the current structure; and to plan advocacy campaigns independently from government, donor and UN agencies. To address this problem CSO members of GCE Nepal are discussing the possibility of forming separate CSO only policy, media and public campaigns working groups as part of GCE Nepal, whilst maintaining the valuable mechanism for dialogue with government and UN agencies that currently exists.</p>		<p>Insufficient know-how and capacity within ZANEC to fully undertake some technical work involving advocacy, information technology, budget tracking, monitoring.</p>

		<p>become dominant – because of their greater financial and human resources. There is therefore a danger that the voice of national unions, NGOs and CBOs that represent teachers, parents and/or disadvantaged students is drowned out by that of the dominant INGO(s).</p> <p>The voice of stakeholders at district level is also an issue in CSCQBE – whilst national activities have been very strong, activities at district level have been weaker. Work is underway to: strengthen the voice of district level stakeholders by strengthening District Education Networks where they exist; establish new networks where they don't; strengthen communication between district networks and the national coalition and accountability to district level stakeholders.</p>			
Sustainability / financing issues		<p>CSCQBE receives financial support from the Commonwealth Education Fund.</p> <p>VSO has supported the coalition by providing a volunteer to act as assistant coalition coordinator and via staff inputs on the steering committee.</p>	<p>MEPT was set up with the support of FDC, the installation used as office belong to FDC and all accounts and other financial work is done by FDC staff in their accounts systems.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Education Fund is the main donor of MEPT; it contributes with 75% of the total costs. UNESCO, Oxfam GB and Ibis give funds for specific programmes.</p> <p>Funding was being sought [<i>at the time of writing of the source document – May 2006</i>] to enable the movement to rent larger offices.</p>		ZANEC received funding from the Commonwealth Education Fund and Irish Aid (Development Cooperation Ireland).