EDUCATION OUT LOUD

Advocacy and Social Accountability

Call for Proposals

Guidelines for Applicants: National Education Coalitions

Operational Component 1 (OC1): Strengthen national civil society engagement in gender responsive education planning, policy development and monitoring

EDUCATIONOUTLOUD
advocacy & social accountability

GPE Transforming Education
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1. WHAT IS EDUCATION OUT LOUD?

Education Out Loud (EOL)– the Global Partnership for Education's fund for advocacy and social accountability - supports civil society to be active and influential in shaping education policy to better meet the needs of communities, especially of vulnerable and marginalized populations. It is resourced by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) (www.globalpartnership.org) and managed by Oxfam IBIS (www.educationoutloud.org).

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is dedicated to building stronger education systems in the world´s poorest countries in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality learning. GPE brings together governments from developing countries, donors, international organizations, civil society, teachers´ organizations, the private sector and foundations. It is active in more than 65 countries and prioritizes support to fragile and conflict affected countries.

In December 2020 the GPE board adopted a new strategic plan: GPE 2025. The five-year 'GPE 2025' strategic plan[1] has as its overall goal to accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century. It seeks to promote more equitable, efficient domestic education spending while offering innovative financing mechanisms.

The EOL programme was designed in 2017-18 on the backdrop of the GPE 2020 strategic plan, providing the overall framework for the wider EOL implementation efforts. However, this extension phase of OC1 provides an opportunity for NECs to besides consolidating earlier efforts, also contribute to GPE 2025.

Education Out Loud has the overall goal to enhance civil society capacity to further learning, equity, and stronger systems, by improving the participation of civil society, their efforts to strengthen advocacy and to ensure transparency and increased effectiveness in national educational policy and implementation processes.

The Theory of Change underlying Education Out Loud assumes that education outcomes are more likely to be achieved when there is widespread public engagement and demand for equitable, inclusive, effective and efficient quality education. Education Out Loud Operational

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[1] For more information, see GPE 2025 Strategic Plan
https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-2025-strategic-plan

Component 1 intends to build the capacity of civic groups to strengthen mutual accountability of education policy dialogue and monitoring and a broad diversity of civil society actors. Increasing the effective representation of civil society in institutional policy dialogue, improving the availability of relevant information to enable the development of more informed, gender responsive policies and supporting advocacy to advance the public interest in education, all comprise important strategies to help build strong public education systems.

Experience from support extended to NECs in 2020-21 and confirmed by the Rapid Review of OC1 recently conducted by the GPE secretariat, highlights the relevance and effectiveness of using the coalition modality as means to support joint civil society efforts to promote education advocacy. With support from EOL, many NECs have engaged in policy advocacy through LEG membership and by other means. This has enabled civil society actors to draw attention to a wide range of policy topics and to influence decisions on education policies.

This overall relevance is enhanced by the adoption of GPE 2025 emphasizing country level CSO participation in education policy processes. GPE 2025 further emphasises the critical role of mobilising domestic resources to finance education. Moreover, the strategic plan draws attention to the importance of regular monitoring of data to track and enhance education sector efforts. These are examples of efforts which are prioritised by NECs supported by EOL funds.

The EOL goal will be realized through the following three objectives:
Objective 1 (OC1): "**Strengthen national civil society engagement in gender responsive education planning, policy development and monitoring**"
This objective aims at improving inward accountability of governments to their citizens. To ensure the plans and policies developed and implemented are responsive to the needs of boys and girls especially the marginalized. The participation of a diverse range of civil society groups is vital to prevent 'elite capture' of policy spaces, ensure that there is healthy debate and deliberation, and to ensure that civic space is inclusive even of those traditionally lacking in institutional power. Facilitated processes to ensure equitable participation of marginalized groups is critical because the most marginalized people are often the least able to participate due to constraints in terms of time and opportunities costs, but also the norms that influence their relative power and position in society. Likewise, EOL support will be provided to facilitate the promotion of gender equality, and in order to improve policy implementation, respectively, for improving national education systems in the GPE supported countries.

Objective 2 (OC2): Strengthen civil society roles in promoting the transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation.
This objective aims to ensure that civil society groups are able to undertake strategic multi-level monitoring of education policy and budget implementation, and to use the evidence generated to formulate and act on relevant policy solutions and redress mechanisms. Groups working on transparency, governance and other sectors, on behalf of the public interest may be able to contribute valuable skills, creative strategies, and wider networks for collecting and disseminating information that can be used to strengthen education accountability. Consequently, EOL seeks to diversify the range of actors – and the evidence base – contributing to operationalizing the principle of diversity as a vehicle for increased accountability and transparency in the education sector.

Objective 3 (OC3): Create a stronger global and transnational enabling environment for national civil society advocacy and transparency efforts
This third objective aims to bring together consortia of civil society actors to work collaboratively on transnational initiatives or campaigns that bear on GPE country level work, particularly in the areas of aid effectiveness, financing, and cross-sectoral synergies. This is

important because in the current global system, many of the enabling conditions for effective national education policy planning and implementation in low- and middle-income countries remain subject to powerful influences generated outside the national sphere.

Education Out Loud's overall goal and three objectives

Goal: Enhance civil society capacity to further GPE 2020 goals in learning, equity, and stronger systems, by improving the participation of civil society, their efforts to strengthen advocacy and to ensure transparency and increased effectiveness in national educational policy and implementation processes

Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
• Strengthen national civil society engagement in gender responsive education planning, policy development and monitoring	• Strengthen civil society roles in promoting the transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation	• Create a stronger global and transnational enabling environment for national civil society advocacy and transparency efforts in education

The development of strategies and activities through the Education Out Loud fund has led to the articulation of three funding streams, or "Operational Components" (OCs), to meet each of the three objectives. Each OC has a specific emphasis on one of the three objectives.

Beginning in early 2021, successful OC2 and OC3 grantees are gradually moving from the concept note level to implementing full grants from EOL (see annex 2 and 3). These grants represent a range of novel thematic and tactical approaches across a diverse range of countries from which the entire EOL portfolio stands to benefit. OC2/OC3 projects implementation will materialise in 2022-23. This extension of OC1 into 2022-23 will offer strong opportunities for collaboration and synergy in EOL between grantees from all the three components.

This Call for Proposals is only related to OC1: *Strengthen national civil society engagement in gender responsive education planning, policy development and monitoring.*

2. WHO CAN APPLY FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS?

The present Call for Proposals falls under Operational Component 1 that provides support for National Education Coalitions (NECs). OC1 seeks to further build on and continue the work of coalitions that have been supported through the first phase of OC1 (2020-2021) and through the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) 2009-2019. This call for proposals is by invitation only and to be eligible for funding, National Education Coalitions must:

- Have been part of the restricted call in 2019 and be presently operational.
- Be established and operational NECs in countries which have become eligible for GPE funding since 2019 and are actively seeking to become a GPE partner.

- Be assessed to have the required capacity to manage and fulfil EOL requirements to manage a full OC1 grant as no Year Zero support is envisaged.

Coalitions assessed not to have the required capacity to manage and implement a full EOL OC1 grant will be able to benefit from EOL support through capacity building, learning collaboratives and exchanges, e.g. regional learning events.

All applicants approved for funding must go through due diligence and capacity assessments.

A list of countries in which existing coalitions are eligible for applying to OC1 can be found in Annex 1.

3. HOW IS EOL BEING IMPLEMENTED?

An important design feature of EOL is a strong focus on learning, capacity building and adaptive management. In all three operational components learning is a core implementation strategy focusing both on capacity building as part of implementation, and on learning as a strategic management principle. Through adaptive and contextual approaches, and with a sustainability goal, this will support an ongoing focus on enhancing advocacy and effectiveness in activities.

When working to create change through enhanced social accountability and advocacy processes in a given context, a profound and in-depth understanding of that context is essential. Such an understanding and the specific change pathways is the groundwork for developing a clear Theory of Change showing how and why the desired change is expected to happen in that particular context.

A sound political economy analysis of the context for the chosen education problem to be addressed, will need to include all those aspects of society, being social, political, institutional, cultural and even environmental, that will have implication for understanding the change processes and the pathways of change.

Moreover, the contexts we work in are most often complex systems which are not static but rather constantly changing on one or more parameters. Consequently, being aware of, and able to adapt to changing contexts is crucial for a project to remain effective and relevant. Such an adaptive management approach is part EOLs strategy and provides the flexibility for civil society grantees to adapt to changing circumstances and contexts.

EOL has set out a deliberately phased, investigative, and flexible approach to planning and implementation, organized and operationalized through adaptive management processes and a Learning Agenda. This includes focus on ongoing learning and capacity building and ensuring flexibility and adaptive management processes.

There are four main approaches and tools to implement the Learning agenda supported by the Grant Agent:

- As a first step a **Year Zero** is introduced as an opportunity for facilitation and collaboration between the Grant Agent and the applicant in the period between concept note and full proposal submission (this will not be applied in the present call as it represents a continuation of efforts, including Year Zero, undertaken during 2020-21)
- Support to development and implementation of **Learning Plans** throughout the implementation period. Applicants who received EOL support in the first phase must present updated learning plans on the basis of experience and efforts made in 2020-21.

- All OC1/OC2/OC3 grantees are eligible for tailored **Learning Partner** support. Applicants can propose learning partners as part of their proposal.
- A **learning collaborative** approach in the learning agenda seeks to strengthen development of mutual partnership between grantees, with a focus on long term sustainability.

An alarming example of changed context is the current pandemic. According to UNESCO, many countries have implemented nationwide and localized school closures affecting close to 1,5 billion learners worldwide. This is an immediate, severe and thorough change in the context in the whole education sector and at the same time an emergency situation with a need for immediate solutions for the many children affected, not least the most vulnerable marginalized groups.

The changed situation also has critical implication for the work of civil society and serious risks of deepening inequality for different groups' access to quality education. EOLs objectives and goals continue to be the same but the changed context offers opportunities for addressing new types of problems and approaches for implementation, for instance combining immediate needs with innovative social accountability processes and monitoring tools. The flexible approach of EOL can accommodate such strategies and projects.

4. WHAT CAN BE FUNDED UNDER THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS?

As mentioned, **Operational Component 1 (OC1)** aims to *Strengthen national civil society engagement in gender responsive education planning, policy development and monitoring*, by supporting National Education Coalitions (NECs) in their core functions of supporting greater coordination and collaboration across civil society in the engagement of national policy setting and monitoring. It seeks to make the wider national education movement more robust by enabling National Education Coalitions to effectively engage members in conducting innovative and participatory advocacy and representing voices of civil society organizations and people in policy dialogue.

This Call for Proposals aims to strengthen the above engagement by ensuring that:

1) NECs are more inclusive, particularly for marginalised and local groups.
2) NEC capacities are increased, particularly in relation to engagement in policy dialogues.
3) Civil society capacities, participation and strategic influence in formal education policy processes have increased in selected countries.
4) Learning collaboratives´ established generating lessons learned for institutional strengthening of civil society organisations.
5) NECs are active in monitoring and accountability mechanisms of public national education to ensure the delivery of transformative policies and programmes that accelerate access, learning outcomes, and gender equality, leaving no one behind.

Eligible NECs can apply for funds for one single grant that aligns to all the above five areas of intervention. Applicants must clearly indicate for each proposed project outcome to which of the five EOL outcomes they contribute to.

NECs applying for an OC1 grant will be required to design a project including its corresponding results-framework that explains:

1) How the national education coalition will become more inclusive;
2) How it will increase its policy influencing, technical and organizational capacities;

3) How it will increase its engagement and influence in formal education policy processes;
4) How it will contribute to the generation and sharing of lessons learned and the establishment and strengthening of learning collaboratives,
5) How the national education coalition will provide inputs to the monitoring of the GPE grant preparation and implementation and thereby helping hold partners accountable; and
6) How it will engage with other grantees implementing OC2 and OC3 grants (see Annexes 2 and 3).

Learning Collaboratives are communities of learning and practice which work together to support the realization of learning goals established by National Education Coalitions and other Education Out Loud grantees.

National Education Coalitions funded by EOL during 2020-21 will be required to submit further details on their learning needs and learning plans and this will form part of EOL assessments and decisions on EOL funding. This may take the shape of an updated version of the initial learning plans submitted for the first phase of OC1. In the case of new NECs submitting proposals for the first time to EOL, submission of new learning plans are required.

Furthermore, OC1 grantees in 2022-23 are expected to take an active part in learning collaboratives that have been started in 2021. They will be expected to include such planned efforts in their submission for EOL support in 2022-23. This will include peer learning amongst NECs – often organised according to language and geographical regions to enhance relevance and limit logistical constraints. But learning collaboratives organised along thematic lines and across the EOL grantee portfolio may also offer NECs better access to experience and networks provided by OC2 and OC3 grantees.

Likewise, such thematic learning collaboratives will provide OC2/OC3 grantees with enhanced opportunities to tap into the knowledge and experience possessed by NECs from having worked with the national context for education policy. Regional Coalitions, EOL Regional Management Units (RMUs), and Learning Partners will provide support for coalitions in their region, as they decide how they can engage in this collaborative effort.

For the preparation of the grant proposal, the National Education Coalition may choose to receive technical support from selected learning partners, including GCE and the Regional Coalitions[2].. RMUs have the responsibility of linking NECs to Learning Partners for this support function. Education Out Loud OC1 is providing dedicated resources to the Global Campaign for Education and the Regional Coalitions for their role as coalition learning partners during the planning and implementation of OC1. GCE and its Regional Members may also receive EOL support for their regional and global advocacy activities thus assisting NECs gains access to wider policy arenas.

5. WHICH GRANT AMOUNT AND DURATION IS IT POSSIBLE TO APPLY FOR?

Education Out Loud Operational Component 1 (OC1) will provide grants with a duration of 24 months (January 2022 - December 2023) within the range of USD100,000 to USD300,000 for eligible National Education Coalitions. The specific size of an eventual grant will be determined based on fulfilment of the below assessment criteria, including applicant capacity and past track record of managing an EOL grant (if applicable).

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[2] EOL is providing support to the following regional coalitions: Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) (www.arabcampaignforeducation.org); Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) (www.aspbae.org); Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) (https://redclade.org/), all of which are members of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) (www.campaignforeducation.org)

6. HOW TO APPLY

Only eligible applicants will receive an e-mail with an invitation to apply for funding, including a link to Oxfam IBIS grant application portal. This will enable NECs to register as applicant with access to relevant project proposal information and templates.

Upon registration applicants will receive an email with a link to a personal application page where a registration form must be filled. From this page, applicants must also download the relevant templates that must be completed.

Having completed all required templates, applicants must upload them on their personal application page (to be accessed through the link they received in the email).

Note that the system will only accept and validate applications for which all required documents have been uploaded. Applicants are free to choose how many times they want to come back to their personal application page. If an applicant wants to change a document that has already been uploaded, one can delete the first uploaded document before uploading a new document. Take note that all documents must be uploaded before deadline. The personal application page will close for uploads or changes at deadline. Only applications submitted through the personal application page will be accepted. No submissions using email will be accepted. Applicants will be able to submit electronically signed documents.

A project application consists of the following documents:
1) Project proposal (completed template)
2) Results framework template (completed standard format)
3) Project Budget (completed template): Note that budget must include costs of external evaluation and financial audit at end of Project.
4) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (completed standard format)
5) Learning Plan (in case of OC1 grantees from the 2020-21 phase: an update of existing plan shall be submitted)

The Application Deadline is **November 10, 2021 (at 23:59 CET at the latest)**. Take into account that uploading your documents can take up to 30 minutes. No applications will be accepted after this date or time. It is therefore highly encouraged that applicants complete their applications early to avoid any complications. Proposals not containing all of the above required documents will not be accepted.

Should you encounter technical problems while registering as applicant or in uploading the application, then take a screenshot and send it to *info@educationoutloud.org* from the email address used to register. You will then be contacted for technical support.

7. WHAT WILL WE LOOK FOR IN THE PROJECT PROPOSALS?

Project proposals that comply with the general criteria for funding and basic requirements will be assessed and scored according to the following weighted areas/topics. The maximum number of points for an application is 100. Applicants who received EOL OC1 funding in 2020-21 are required to include in their applications reference to experience gained and results accomplished during this first phase.

Situation analysis of national education policy context (20)
- Analysis of the national education system and policy context (including relevant and updated information and reference to sources of information and evidence)
- Context-based situation and stakeholder analysis (analyses all relevant causes and diverse characteristics of the problem, target groups, beneficiaries)
- The COVID-19 context and its implication on education system in the country.

Theory of Change and Strategic Approach (20)
- Presentation of the strategic logic anticipated in the specific Theory of Change.
- Quality of the strategy (clarity of assumptions and evidence for changes)
- Appropriate approaches (human rights-based approach; gender perspectives)
- Sustainability (if benefits of project interventions are likely to remain after funding has ceased, and the proposed EOL support will support other efforts by the applicant).

Project Intervention Design and Relevance (25)
- Quality of intervention design (results-based project – coherence between objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities)
- Clarity of activities and how they build on results/achievements from the first OC1 phase linked with major learnings (in case of OC1 grantees from the 2020-21 phase)
- Alignment and lobby to address the post covid commitment towards continuing education and in addressing the gaps.
- Alignment to national SDG4 plans (coherence with defined goals and strategies in national SDG implementation including participation in VNRs or qualified justification if this is not the case)
- Alignment to the GPE partnership compact in the country
- Alignment to Education Out Loud OC1 objective and five outcomes
- Alignment to views and interests of beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders
- Integration and synergy with EOL OC2 and OC3 grantees and projects, and other relevant EOL stakeholders.
- Realistic proposal (to what extent are the objectives likely to be achieved)
- Reasonable budget (budget alignment to narrative project proposal)

Presence of Learning Approach (15)
- Acknowledgement and understanding of institutional learning needs
- Proposal emphasizes learning for national education coalition (foresees documentation and production of lessons learned)
- How the proposed learning approach builds on learning from similar past interventions
- Strategies for documentation and sharing of learning and utilizing learning collaboratives and learning partners
- Proposal foresees adaptive planning and management strategies (How new leanings will be adapted and integrated during project implementation)

Organizational capacities and experience for implementing the project (20)
- NEC and RMU assessment of coalition performance during EOL first phase.
- Experience in the areas of intervention (organizational trajectory and results in education, policy influencing, partner strengthening, engagement with policy makers)
- Technical competence available for the implementation
- Organizational performance with other funders (results achieved, financial trajectory)
- Current donors and projects of the coalition relevant to the EOL project
- Contribution of EOL funding relative to other funding sources
- Anticipated engagement (if any) with and support from Regional Coalitions

8. HOW WILL THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS TAKE PLACE?
STEP 1: All project proposals received within the deadline by November 10, 2021 will be assessed. The proposals will be checked against the general criteria outlined in this document to confirm eligibility for funding and that all required documentation is duly

completed and submitted. Proposals not complying with general eligibility criteria and basic requirements will be rejected and not reviewed further.

STEP 2: Project proposals complying with general criteria and basic requirements will be assessed by the grant agent's Regional Management Units (RMUs) that will score each proposal according to the above-mentioned pre-established criteria and weight.

STEP 3: The GMU will calibrate RMU assessments. GMU may decide that an applicant does not hold the required capacities to implement an OC1 grant and may therefore not provide financial support to the proposal and in stead offer differentiated capacity support (see below regarding access to other EOL support).

RMUs will submit recommended project proposals to the respective Regional Independent Selection Panel (RISP) for final assessments and approval.

STEP 4: Based on the proposal assessment, and following the differentiated support approach to coalitions, the RISP may decide to limit grants to cover only core operational costs. Smaller budgets for policy advocacy and civil society mobilisation could, in those cases, be included for such coalitions not to lose presence in civic and political space.

9. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DECISION ON THE PROJECT PROPOSAL?

If a project proposal is accepted for funding by the RISP, existing grantees from the first phase of OC1 2020-21 will be required to update due diligence assessments. New NECs will conduct a due diligence self-assessment together with the RMU. In both cases a successful due diligence is a condition for signing a full grant agreement.

Coalitions will also be required to submit for grant agent approval the following documents taking into considerations feedback received after RMU and RISP assessments
- Activity Budgets
- Project Implementation Plans
- Risk Management Template

In line with Oxfam policy the grant agent may screen applicants to prevent illegal or wrongful activities in regard to Education Out Loud supported projects. Such efforts will be done on a case by case basis.

After the grant agreement has been signed, the applicant has the responsibility to implement the project, carry out project activities and to monitor that the expected results are achieved. It will also need to collect lessons learned and to present financial and narrative reports to Oxfam IBIS on project progress on determined periodic basis.

If an applicant's proposal is not accepted for funding, e.g. because of not meeting capacity assessment criteria, such applicants may still be offered access to joint EOL OC1 learning events and other capacity building support.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Afghanistan	Angola	Bangladesh
Benin	Bolivia	Burkina Faso
Burundi	Cabo Verde	Cambodia
Cameroon	Chad	Cote d'Ivoire
Dem. Republic of Congo	Guinea	Egypt
El Salvador	Ethiopia	Eswatini
The Gambia	Ghana	Guinea- Bissau
Haiti	Honduras	Indonesia
Kenya	Kyrgyz Republic	Lesotho
Liberia	Madagascar	Malawi
Mali	Mauritania	Moldova
Mongolia	Mozambique	Myanmar
Nepal	Nicaragua	Niger
Nigeria	Pakistan	Papua New Guinea
Philippines	Rwanda	Samoa
Senegal	Sierra Leone	Solomon Islands
Somalia	South Sudan	Sudan
Tajikistan	Tanzania	Timor-Leste
Togo	Tunesia	Uganda
Vanuatu	Vietnam	Yemen
Zambia	Zimbabwe	

ANNEX 2: List of OC2 grantees can be found here.

ANNEX 3: List of OC3 grantees can be found here.