Education Out Loud Global Learning Partner Report

Civil society contributions to improve learning outcomes

January 2024
Education Out Loud Global Learning Partner Report: Civil society contributions to improve learning outcomes

Alexander Towne, Sladana Krstic, Desmond Bermingham, Jolanda Buter, Miriam Linder, Sam Boering

©Copyright Oxfam Denmark 2024
This publication was produced with the financial support of Education Out Loud. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the MDF-ACER Consortium and do not necessarily reflect the views of funding partners Oxfam Denmark and GPE.

With the exception of any material protected by a trademark, and where otherwise noted, all material presented in this document is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence.

Suggested citation
Authors
ACER

Alexander Towne  Lead Researcher and Project Manager
Dr Sladana Krstic  Education Advocacy Expert
Dr Desmond Bermingham  International Development Expert

MDF

Jolanda Buter  Senior Capacity Building Expert and Contract and Project Manager
Miriam Linder  Senior Advocacy and Policy Influencing Expert
Sam Boering  Senior Adaptive Management Expert

Acknowledgements

The production of this research report would not have been possible without the contributions of a number of individuals and partner organisations. First and foremost, we would like to thank Oxfam Denmark, the grant holder for the Education Out Loud (EOL) programme. Colleagues at both global management unit in Copenhagen and in the regional management units in Ghana, Uganda, and Nepal have been steadfast in their support and advice throughout the project. They have not only ensured that productive working relations have been maintained with grantees throughout, but they have gone the extra mile in ensuring we have been able to achieve our project vision and aims.

Secondly, we would like to thank wider colleagues at both ACER UK and MDF. This includes: Ilhan Farah, the ACER UK Corporate Communications Officer, for her project support services. Her work liaising with grantees and supporting meetings and research sessions was invaluable; Dr Brendan McGinley, an ACER UK research fellow, for his support in the grantee capacity building activities; And Zoe Lawson, Karin Rozendal, and Alev Kayagil from the MDF digital learning teams. Their feedback and queries during the associated learning module design and development has helped to refine the final research report.

We would like to thank the other EOL Global Learning Partners, whose engagement in our work has encouraged us and supported its improvement.

Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank the grantees who made this work possible. Colleagues in the GEAR Alliance, the CLEAR consortium, and IID, have enthusiastically engaged in the work of this project and have gone above and beyond to ensure we were able to achieve results. They have worked tirelessly to internalise the MDF/ACER action research and learning cycle and have strived to not only incorporate the lessons learnt into their own programmes, but also to share the approach with wider colleagues and associated organisations.
Executive Summary

This report shares the findings from an action research project conducted on behalf of Global Partnership for Education’s (GPE) Education Out Loud (EOL) programme by the Management for Development Foundation (MDF) and the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) Consortium, in its capacity as global learning partner (GLP). The project involved working directly with three organisations (grantees) in receipt of EOL funds, across five GPE countries. The Consortium supported them to conduct action research projects, which tested the underlying assumptions of their programme’s theory of change, in order to validate their approaches to advocacy and policy influencing (API) and support them to engage in adaptive management practices. This report shares the methodology used in this process and a synthesis of the key findings across and between the different contexts. The report is accompanied by a number of case studies, which explore the action research and wider context of the grantees in more detail. A summary of the findings is as follows:

Effectiveness of approaches, methods, strategies, and tools of API.

The research identified a wide range of effective API strategies. These can be grouped into the following five categories: bottom-up approaches, youth-led approaches, direct engagement, advocacy through the media, and policy document development. The findings highlighted that a deep contextual knowledge is necessary in order to engage in effective API. This is because the spaces and ways in which different grantees engaged in API varied from context to context, and what could be effective in one country may result in the removal of an organisation’s operating license in another.

The processes related to the development, design and implementation of evidence-based lobby and advocacy in education.

The research demonstrated that the MDF/ACER action research cycle could be applied successfully by grantees, in collaboration with MDF/ACER, to produce a range of knowledge that would allow grantees to engage in adaptive management practices. The main organisational changes committed to, centred around a new commitment to research as part of everyday project activities, and grantees noted the process has particularly helped improve their capacity to work with data and understand, map, and interact with their stakeholders. Nevertheless, the project operated on a restricted time frame and, as consortium support officially comes to an end, it is for the grantees to take ownership of the research outcomes and continue to build on them. As such, further research is needed to understand the longer-term impact of the process.

Organisational and partnership capacities to implement API.

All grantees in this study demonstrated they were able to effectively navigate their complex operating environments to implement API activities. All organisations engaged at a number of different levels within their society, from grassroots to national, and shared examples of their activities producing tangible change. A strong and consistent theme in this research was CSO collaboration and capacity building. Beyond the formal association of well-considered consortiums, the study highlighted two main categories of collaborative activities, which proved effective in increasing the impact of the organisations API activities. Namely, CSOs speaking with collective voice on issues, and CSOs cascading knowledge and skills gained from their extensive networks to each other.

Organisational capacities for implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management in the field of API.
The grantees in this study demonstrated that they had the ability, with MDF/ACER support, to develop actionable learning agendas, which provide insights that support adaptive management practices. All grantees identified a number of actions for their organisations, which were validated with their partners. Nevertheless, grantees face some obstacles when it comes to implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management practices in the field of API. Generally, these centre around the grantees’ size and research capacity. Furthermore, as noted above, the limited time that was available for this project in relation to the complexity of the learning process involved necessitates further research, to continue grantees development in this area.
Contents
Executive Summary .......................................................................................... 2
Acronyms and Abbreviations ......................................................................... 6
Introduction .................................................................................................... 7
Background ...................................................................................................... 7
  Project Context ............................................................................................. 7
  Project Background .................................................................................... 8
    Grantees ..................................................................................................... 8
  Adaptive Management for Social Change .................................................. 11
  Action Research .......................................................................................... 11
Methodology .................................................................................................... 11
  Overview ....................................................................................................... 11
  Research Focus ............................................................................................ 13
  Research Design and Methods ................................................................... 13
  Limitations of the Study .............................................................................. 15
Discussion of Findings .................................................................................... 16
  Effectiveness of Different Approaches, Methods, Strategies, and Tools of API .. 18
    Bottom-Up Approaches .......................................................................... 18
    Youth-led Advocacy Approaches ............................................................ 19
    Direct Engagement .................................................................................... 20
    Advocacy Through Media Approaches .................................................. 21
    Policy Document Development ............................................................... 23
  The Processes Related to the Development, Design and Implementation of Evidence-Based Lobby and Advocacy in Education – Action Research Process .... 25
    Action Research Process ......................................................................... 25
    Evidence of Change from Action Research Cycle .................................... 30
  Organisational and Partnership Capacities to Implement API ...................... 33
    Collective Voice ......................................................................................... 33
    Knowledge Cascading ............................................................................... 33
Organisational capacities for implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management in the field of API ..........................................................34

Global Learning Partner Learning and Reflections .........................35

Recommendations and Conclusion ..................................................35

References ....................................................................................37

Appendix .......................................................................................39

Appendix 1: Example Capacity Assessment Forms ..........................39
Appendix 2: Grantee Consultation Interview Guide .......................41
Appendix 3: Grantee Associate Consultation Interview Guide ..........43
Appendix 4: RMU Consultations Interview Guide .........................45
Appendix 5: Online Survey Questions ...........................................46
Appendix 6 – Score Card Example ..................................................47

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACER Australian Council for Education Research
API Advocacy and Policy Influencing
BAU Business as Usual
CLA Citizen-led Assessment
CSO Civil Society Organisation
EOL Education Out Loud
GLP Global Learning Partner
GPE Global Partnership for Education
MDF Management for Development Foundation
OC Operational Component
SCM Social Change Matrix
ToC Theory of Change
Introduction

Education Out Loud (EOL) is the Global Partnership for Education’s (GPE) fund for advocacy and social accountability, managed by Oxfam Denmark. The fund aims to support civil society organisations (CSOs) to be active and effective in shaping policy for the communities which they serve, particularly those that are vulnerable or marginalised. As part of EOL’s strategy, they have engaged a number of ‘Global Learning Partners’ (GLP) to enhance the evidence base for effective advocacy and policy influencing (API) and crucially to support the CSOs they fund (grantees), to develop their API strategies and become more effective in the implementation of these strategies. This report shares the findings from the work of one GLP; the Management for Development Foundation (MDF) and the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) consortium. This consortium worked closely with a number of grantees in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to develop action research projects, to test key assumptions in their programme theory of change (ToC). The aim of this was to support grantees to engage in adaptive management practices and ultimately improve the effectiveness of their API activities for inclusive education. This report shares the methodology used in this process and a synthesis of the key findings across and between the different contexts. The report is accompanied by a number of case studies, which explore the action research and wider context of the partner grantees in more detail.

Background

Project Context

It is well documented that there is a global learning crisis. UNESCO UIS (2018) estimates that 617 million children and adolescents are not proficient in either reading or mathematics. Two-thirds of these children are actually in school or were in school but dropped out. 258 million children, adolescents and youth are unable to access formal education (UNESCO UIS, 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic has further disrupted education and affected over 1.5 billion students across 190 countries, deepening inequalities in learning, especially for the most marginalised and disadvantaged children (EC, 2023).

GPE works with international partners, governments and other organisations to address this challenge and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4: “to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. GPE 2025 strategic plan (2022) is aligned with SDG 4 and aims to “accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century”.

Civil society plays a very important role in GPE country-level work by contributing to the development and monitoring of education sector policies and plans. GPE has been providing funding to CSOs since 2009 and currently supports CSOs through its Education Out Loud (EOL) programme (GPE, 2023; EOL, 2023). As stated, the aim of the EOL programme is to support CSOs to be active and effective in shaping policy for the communities which they serve, especially those that are vulnerable or marginalised. It does this by providing training opportunities, access to national and international networks, and crucially funding. EOL has three categories for funding CSOs: operational component (OC) 1, 2, and 3. The criteria and operational focus for each OC is outlined below, and the current round of 133 million USD is allocated for between 2021 and 2024 and supports organisations across 61 countries (EOL, 2023).
OC1: Strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring. CSOs operating in this area are eligible for grant up to 137,000 USD per year (EOL, 2023).

OC2: Strengthen civil society roles in promoting the transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation. CSOs operating in this area are eligible for grant up to 250,000 USD per year (EOL, 2023).

OC3: Create a stronger global and transnational enabling environment for national civil society advocacy and transparency efforts. CSOs operating in this area are eligible for grant up to 320,000 USD per year (EOL, 2023).

Since GPE has been active in this area, there have been significant advances in access to education, especially for girls (CGD, 2022). However, further action is needed to address the learning crisis and achieve SDG4. This is particularly true for girls in marginalised communities or with other forms of disadvantage, because gender remains a multiplying factor when it intersects with other forms of disadvantage such as girls who also have a disability or come from a lower socio-economic background (UNESCO, 2022). It is within this context that this research project operates and tries to make a meaningful contribution towards the achievement of SDG4.

Project Background

The research project explores civil society’s contributions to advancing equity and improving learning through different approaches and methodologies for education API. It focuses on how CSOs engage in API to improve equitable learning outcomes, particularly in relation to gender, intersectionality, and social inclusion. The main objective of the research is to investigate, review and learn from three EOL grantees’ education API efforts, with the aim to identify strategies and practices that have proved effective in instigating change at local, regional and system levels, and shed some light on the conditions that have contributed to their effectiveness.

Actionable learning agendas were co-produced with the selected grantees, to jointly examine the conditions and reasons as to how identified strategies and practices have been effective. Through engaging in the action research and learning process, grantees and their associated partners will generate evidence on the effectiveness of their API practices, which will allow them to then engage in adaptive management practices and enhance future effectiveness. Whilst the project was conducted jointly with grantees, MDF/ACER provided overall leadership of the research and quality assurance. Nevertheless, this was very much a collaborative process, in which the consortium guided the research by providing advice, tools, and feedback, and facilitated critical reflection. To summarise, the research examines:

- Effectiveness of API strategies and practices.
- Different approaches, methods, strategies, and tools of API.
- The processes related to the development, design and implementation of evidence-based lobby and advocacy in education.
- Organisational and partnership capacities to implement API.
- Organisational capacities for implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management in the field of API.

Grantees
The grantees MDF/ACER partnered with as part of this action research project are IID (OC2, Bangladesh), School for Life (OC2, Ghana), and the GEAR Alliance (OC3, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). They are all recipients of EOL grants, from either OC2 or OC3, and are working on advocacy in the fields of gender, intersectionality, or social inclusion. All the organisations worked with in the project are members of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 56 diverse nations around the globe. The commonwealth has its roots in a shared history, which has left its mark on the political structures and institutions of the countries in the study and ostensibly produced a number of commonalities between the contexts. These include: presidential and multiparty systems; constitutional frameworks; independent judiciaries; regular elections; respect for the rule of law; a free press and active civil society; and the English language. Nevertheless, all contexts have their own distinct political history, culture, and challenges. As such, this mix of commonality and diversity means the contexts present a fascinating dynamic in which to explore effective API strategies. More information about the specific organisations in the project can be found below:

GEAR Alliance

The Girls Education Advocacy in the Region (GEAR) alliance was founded in 2020. It is funded by EOL and is made up from four sub-Saharan African organisations, which are Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) in Zimbabwe, Farming Communities Educational Trust (FACET) in Zimbabwe, Girls Activist Youth Organization (GAYO) in Malawi, and National Action for Quality Education (NAQEZ) in Zambia. FACET, GAYO, and NAQEZ lead activities within their respective countries, and mobilise boundary partners to form a group of CSOs that support the advocacy work of the GEAR alliance. SAYWHAT is the lead organisation within the group and coordinates the capacity strengthening of country level movements to improve CSOs skills and ability to influence.

The alliance was formed due to the shared problem of declining socio-economic spaces, which negatively affect girls access to quality education, particularly within rural and farming communities. As such, the overall goal of the coalition is to ensure adolescent girls and young women in Southern Africa rural and farming communities
have inclusive and equitable access to quality education. The alliance also has a number of sub-objectives, which are detailed below:

1. To strengthen the capacities of GEAR alliance CSOs in advocating for an inclusive and equitable education system for rural young women and girls in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe by June 2022.
2. To support in country advocacy activities by GEAR alliance CSOs on educational accountability for rural and farming community girls by June 2023.
3. To coordinate the participation of GEAR alliance members in pre, during and post review of regional and international educational frameworks at SADAC, AU and UN levels by June 2024.
4. To promote the vertical and horizontal linking and learning of gear alliance members as they conduct inclusive and equitable educational advocacy by June 2024.

School for Life

School for Life was founded in 1995 and is a lead civil society organisation in Ghana. It was founded due to the serious educational performance challenges faced in deprived parts of the north, particularly in terms of the high number of out-of-school children. The vision of the organisation is a Ghana where the right to relevant quality education is fulfilled leaving no one behind. It strives to achieve this vision by influencing national policy and programmes, delivering innovative and inclusive approaches to education, and engaging with strategic states and non-state actors through advocacy. Its four strategic areas and their associated objectives are:

1. Access to education for all - Promote access to education for children in deprived and marginalized communities.
2. Quality education - To promote and contribute to achieving good learning outcomes in basic schools.
3. School governance - To promote and strengthen the functionality of formal and informal education structures for accountable educational governance.
4. Equity in Education - To promote inclusiveness, fair allocation, distribution, and accountability of education resources.

IID

The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) was founded in 2013. It is a public policy institute in Bangladesh, which promotes informed public participation in the public policy process, and it focuses on a number of thematic areas, including education and skills. Within education and skills, they conduct policy research, assessment, and advocacy work at the national level. In their advocacy work, they also engage at the international level, being members of both the PAL Network and UNESCO’s Network on Education Quality and Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific.
Adaptive Management for Social Change

Adaptive management is at the heart of this research project, with MDF/ACER hoping to support the development of the necessary skills and knowledge for grantees to engage in the practice. It is a structured and iterative process aimed at making robust decisions in the face of uncertainty, with the primary objective of reducing that uncertainty through continuous system monitoring. In the context of API, several key principles underpin adaptive management. Firstly, it acknowledges the inherent complexity and unpredictability of social change processes. Secondly, the social, political, and institutional context is dynamic. This further complicates matters, and as a result, interventions may be either right or wrong at a given moment. Therefore, the crux of adaptive management lies in the commitment to ongoing learning and adaptation based on an understanding of what works and what does not. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of development interventions being politically informed and locally led, recognizing the intricacies of the local political and institutional landscape.

One practical approach to implementing adaptive management is the Theory of Change, which embraces complexity. It involves mapping the underlying assumptions of a theory and putting the intervention to the test. If the theory proves to be incorrect or the assumptions are invalidated, adjustments are made accordingly. Learning is at the core of this process and should be integrated into organisational and project strategies, particularly in API efforts where actor reactions to interventions can be highly unpredictable. It should be noted that adaptive management extends beyond merely modifying project strategies and approaches. It also encompasses managing the learning and decision-making process, requiring the establishment of tools and mechanisms for adaptation.

Action Research

Action research is a methodology that involves active participation and collaboration with practitioners to identify and address real-world problems or challenges in a specific context. It is a systematic approach that empowers individuals or groups to make improvements in their own practices, based on a cycle of observation, reflection, planning, and action (Stringer, 2014). As such, action research is a natural and complimentary methodology for adaptive management, as it generates insights and guides adjustments in project strategies. This project takes the methodology further by ensuring that the action research is simple and can easily be conducted with organisational limitations of the practitioners.

Methodology

Overview

The research investigated three grantees’ education API efforts, through a review of their existing approaches with the particular focus on their ToC. The review made use of the Social Change Matrix (SCM; see figure 1) to identify and agree on the various key assumptions that are underlying grantee change pathways to their vision of success. The assumptions were jointly analysed by the consortium and the respective grantee, in relation to the relevance and importance of the change in educational systems the grantee wants to bring about. These assumptions constituted the basis for an action research project for the grantees to conduct. Following the completion of the action research projects, all grantees participated in a validation workshop with their key partners and stakeholders, to rationalise the findings of their studies and any actions or recommendations that result from this work.
In addition to reviewing the grantees’ ToC and the development of SCM, additional research included a review of relevant documents, such as, policy and planning reports and other documents related to participatory API activities, and specific background literature in order to better contextualise the research focus in each country. Furthermore, each grantee underwent a capacity assessment in order to tailor capacity building activities to their particular needs. Where available, the research also examined any additional evidence-based education API approaches, such as citizen-led assessment (CLA). CLA is an important initiative implemented by CSOs that is supported by the EOL programme. The research explored other approaches to strengthen advocacy for equitable learning outcomes particularly in relation to gender, intersectionality, and social inclusion.

Each grantee and their API activities form a case study that includes in-depth investigation and documentation of how grantees conduct education advocacy in their countries. The three selected countries represent diverse contexts and challenges therefore enabling GPE EOL grantees in other countries to learn from these examples and identify the different approaches and advocacy strategies relevant for their contexts. It is expected that the report and case studies will inspire GPE EOL grantees, their partners and others to use different API approaches to improve equity and learning in their countries.

In addition to the action research findings of the grantees, stakeholder consultations were conducted by MDF/ACER in each country. These were aligned to the specific research questions of each grantee and designed to support the development of the case studies and explore any commonalities between contexts. Respondents consisted of representatives from the grantees, grantee associate organisations and stakeholders, and the regional management unit (RMU). Where appropriate, other GLPs were contacted in relation to specific actionable learning agenda items or findings, in order to consider any additional inputs they may have, such as suggested literature and similar research findings, as well as to share our knowledge from the research.

In summary, the participatory research consisted of:

- Documents and literature review, including CLAs where available.
• Review of ToC and development of SCM.
• Grantee capacity assessments and tailored capacity building activities.
• Grantee led action research projects.
• Stakeholder consultations.
• Research validation workshops.

The programme deliverables include the following components:
• Three country case studies (1 per grantee).
• A final report with research findings and recommendations on API strategies.
• Capacity assessments for each grantee.
• A global workshop for reporting and dissemination and three country-based workshops for learning and policy influencing.
• Two online learning modules based on the grantees' API tools and tactics, refined based on the research findings.

Research Focus

As noted, this researched aimed to explore the following areas:
• Effectiveness of different approaches, methods, strategies, and tools of API.
• The processes related to the development, design and implementation of evidence-based lobby and advocacy in education.
• Organisational and partnership capacities to implement API.
• Organisational capacities for implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management in the field of API.

Research Design and Methods

The research was conducted in eight phases:

Phase 1  Inception (Identify grantees)
Phase 2  Research Design Development and Action Research
Phase 3  Document Review and Stakeholder Consultations
Phase 4  Analysis of Stakeholder Consultations
Phase 5  Validation Workshops
Phase 6  Reporting and Dissemination
Phase 7  Learning for Advocacy, Policy, and Influencing
Phase 8  Lessons Learnt and Way Forward

The eight phases are discussed in more depth below outlining the main aims, activities, and methods.
Phase 1: Inception.

This phase largely focussed on refining the project methodology with Oxfam Denmark. It also included the identification and selection of the grantees the project would work with, in addition to conducting a small literature review to improve contextual understanding. The research programme focusses on three countries/regions in Asia and Africa that were selected based on the following criteria:

- Availability of participatory/inclusive evidence-based API initiatives, such as CLA, or working in the field of gender equity and/or social inclusion/intersectionality.
- Variations in the way evidence is created and/or used for advocacy related initiatives, including the levels of participation of the groups of persons about whom evidence is created.
- Variety in relation to the levels in which advocacy and policy influencing efforts are undertaken (regional, national, international).

Phase 2: Research Design Development and Action Research.

This phase was tailored to the specific needs, preferences, and learning styles of the grantees. However, it broadly took the form of a series of workshops with grantees, to review their ToC using the SCM. The aim was to identify their key stakeholders and draw out the key programmatic assumptions within their ToC, mapping both on to the SCM. This then allowed grantees to prioritise their assumptions in relation to impact on their programmes intended outcomes. This allowed grantees, in collaboration with MDF/ACER, to develop a research agenda, identifying a number of research questions.

Following the development of the research agenda, the consortium worked with the grantees to develop participatory research methodology and frameworks, and associated research instruments. During this process, the consortium offered a range of formal and informal advice and support to the grantees, via activities such as regular reflective sessions and written feedback on documents and tools. MDF/ACER also conducted a capacity assessment of grantees, in order to develop a bespoke programme of learning for each grantee, to support them in the research process (see appendix 1 for example capacity development form). The main outputs from this phase include:

- Stakeholder and assumption mapping workshops
- Research frameworks.
- Research instruments.
- A range of capacity building workshops.

Grantees then conducted their action research project with continued MDF/ACER support.

Phase 3: Document Review and Stakeholder Consultation.

To conduct the stakeholder consultations the consortium took a mixed method approach, utilising focus group discussions, key information interviews, and an online survey. As stated, the sample consisted of grantees, their associate organisations and key stakeholders, representatives from the relevant RMUs, and other global learning partners (n=20). Furthermore, key documents, such as quarterly reviews, were identified and procured as part of this process, which were then also reviewed in conjunction with the other data collected. The interviews were semi structured and took place between July and September 2023. They were conducted in English, with the exception of a small number of important Bangladeshi stakeholders, where a translator was procured. All the documentation included in the study was also in the English language. The interview guides for the different categories of respondents and the questions included in the online survey can be found in appendix 2, 3, and 4.
**Phase 4: Analysis of Stakeholder Consultations**

Once collected, the data was coded, and key themes were identified. Following this, a number of internal workshops were held within ACER’s research team to rationalise the findings and key themes.

**Phase 5: Validation Workshops**

A workshop was held with each grantee and their respective stakeholders. The workshop revisited the organisation’s ToC and the SCM and situated their research findings within them. The workshops also rationalised their findings and any actions or recommendations that resulted from this work with their partners.

**Phase 6: Reporting and Dissemination**

This phase included the finalisation of country case studies and the research report. The research report presents the analysis and synthesis of the findings from the stakeholder consultations and wider action research process with grantees, to inform improvements of education API more broadly. The case studies explore the specific action research and process of the individual grantees. A global learning event on education advocacy was held. The event discusses learnings from the three country contexts, followed by discussions on how these learnings can be used in / adapted for other contexts.

**Phase 7: Learning for Advocacy, Policy, and Influencing**

This phase builds upon the findings of the study, through the development of two online learning modules. The focus of these modules is on 1) inspiring CSOs to use the SCM to reflect and improve on their own API strategies, and 2) inspiring CSO to use successful API strategies identified in the project. Additionally, three regional learning events were held. These were developed in partnership with the grantees and their RMU, and based on their ideas and learning priorities. These, for instance, included inviting sub-grantees and other local partners / EOL grantees, to share the learning from the project with them and introduce them to the action research process.

**Phase 8: Lessons Learnt and Way Forward**

The phase rounds of the project, focussing on the lessons learnt and exploring how the approach can further develop the evidence-based learning agenda for EOL. As mentioned previously, a global workshop was held and the consortium has proposed a number of additional research, support, and learning activities for Oxfam Denmark to consider.

**Limitations of the Study**

As is always the case with research, there are some identified limitations to this study. Firstly, the small sample size is a particular issue, as it makes it difficult to identify causal links between the organisations and actors in the study, and to confidently assert whether a pattern truly exists, or if they are just random chance. Closely related to this issue is that of project timescale. The project was conducted over a period of less than 12 months,
as such it is particularly difficult for organisations to have time to consider the implications of their findings, test their validity, and commit to medium to long term change in their organisational management and API strategies. To mitigate for this, an online follow up survey was used roughly one month after the initial stakeholder consultations. However, a much longer period is necessary to develop a more robust understanding of sustained organizational change and wider impact. Over this relatively short period of time, the project also experienced significant change in a number of the political contexts being studied, which included one election and the lead up to another. This limited the activities of grantees and their associates, and may have impacted the reliability of data they were able to collect.

There are two further main limitations to be considered. Firstly, due to the scale of the study, much of the evidence is based on the input from grantees and their associates, with limited opportunities to verify their claims. Secondly, the majority of the interviews and all of the documents reviewed were in the English language. This means the research was limited by the views of those who were able to use this medium of communication. As the organisations in the study are mission driven, the risk that they are misrepresenting their communities is small. However, they all serve marginalised rural and remote communities, where the English language is limited. Therefore, not operating in the local language has restricted the studies ability to be representative. To mitigate for this, where a stakeholder voice was recognised as particularly important, translation support was procured to ensure their views are represented.

Discussion of Findings

This project was able to successfully engage with all three grantees and their associates to review their ToC with SCM and develop participatory research frameworks. The grantees were all able to conduct action research projects, which reportedly have had significant implications for the way all the organisations operate. The specifics of these projects will be explored in more depth in the case studies, as this report focuses on the learning across and between the different grantees gained from phases 3 and 4. Nevertheless, the research questions and data collection methods can be found in table 1 below. The table also states the capacity building activities delivered to each grantee by MDF/ACER. This was based on the capacity assessment conducted during phase 2. The discussion of findings will be structured against the areas outlined in the research focus section.

Table 1: Grantee Research Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Collection Techniques</th>
<th>MDF/ACER Capacity Building Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| IID     | 1. To identify what motivates/demotivates policymakers to connect CSO-CBOs in policy process. | • Focus Group Discussions  
• Key Informant Interviews  
• Literature Reviews | • Pre-validation workshop: A workshop held with MDF/ACER to check the project was focussed and on track.  
• Qualitative Data Analysis: A workshop to explore different |
### School for Life

1. Do citizens groups have the capacity to influence government responsiveness?
2. To what extent does citizen’s awareness and knowledge of their rights affect their ability to demand accountability responsiveness from government?
3. Which citizen’s and government engagement spaces exist and which of them are effective?
4. In what ways can existing engagement spaces be made inclusive and effective?

- Focus Group Discussions
- Online Survey (Qualitative)
- Qualitative Data Analysis: A workshop to explore different approaches to coding qualitative data.
- Outcome Monitoring and Progress Markers: A workshop exploring how to effectively track the change you want to see.
- Power Dynamics: A workshop exploring the relationships between grantee stakeholders, particularly in relation to their behaviour and ability to change.

### SAYWHAT

1. What role can transnational agencies play to influencing governments to enact and implement education policies in the SADC region?

- Desk based review

### NAQEZ

2. What are the factors affecting girls, young women, and parents’ participation in bottom-up advocacy?

- Focus Group Discussions
- Key Informant Interviews

### FACET

3. How does popular culture “norms and practices” affect what girls want in relation to education?

- Focus Group Discussions
- Key Informant Interviews

- Qualitative Data Analysis: A workshop to explore different approaches to coding qualitative data.
- Interviewing elites: A workshop to explore how to adapt interview style and data interpretations when interviewing elite members of society.
4. Are there any observable change in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and young women in education and what approaches made them work?

- Focus Group Discussions
- Key Informant Interviews
- Online Survey

Effectiveness of Different Approaches, Methods, Strategies, and Tools of API

The stakeholder consultations highlighted numerous examples of API approaches, strategies, methods, and tools from the grantees and their associates. These are outlined below and can be grouped into the following categories: Bottom-up approaches, youth-led approaches, direct engagement, advocacy through the media approaches, and policy document development.

Bottom-Up Approaches

**Tripartite Advocacy Strategy**

One organisation in Malawi shared their ‘tripartite’ advocacy strategy. Essentially, this strategy ensures a flow of grassroots evidence into the organisation’s national API strategy and helps connect local actors with national decision makers. They start by engaging the community level structures. This includes school management committees, child protection committees, the Community Development Committee, the disaster committee, and chiefs, with a particular emphasis on the latter group. They discuss the challenges faced by young girls in the specific community they are engaging with. This may include issues such as early pregnancy and child marriage. This provides opportunities for reflections by key stakeholders on how the government is delivering their services and what can be improved. These reflections provide the CSO with a nuanced understanding of policy implementation and are fed back into policy work at the national level. Representatives from the community are also encouraged to participate in the CSOs engagement activities at the national level, facilitating the connection of different power structures and levels of society. The organisation shared an example of local level input on the issue of girl dropouts. The tripartite approach gave them a platform, which they used to provide passionate input to the parliamentarian. The parliamentarians in turn felt it was great feedback, and it led to them championing these issues. Furthermore, this approach has also worked to validate the evidence the CSO presents to decision makers at the national level, further enhancing the effectiveness of their API activities.

**Network Collaboration for Grassroots Data Collection**

One of the grantees in east Africa worked closely with a teacher and education professionals’ membership organisations, in order to collect grassroots evidence and priorities, and feed them into their broader national strategy and awareness campaigns. This presents a novel approach to data collection for advocacy and builds on the fact that teachers are the main contact with the children the CSO is trying to support. This approach allows teachers to provide data on enrolment, dropouts, and girls challenges. Previous girls’ education challenges identified using this method include, dropouts due to early pregnancy, child marriage, and the commuting distance to school. Unfortunately, the CSO is unable to get information on learners from all localities, especially some rural and more remote areas. However, the information they do receive allows them to extrapolate the findings and build up a broader picture on the state of education in the country. This allows them to circumvent the chronic issue of poor publicly available data in the country. Their association with EOL
has supported them in this process, helping them further define the data they should be collecting. Furthermore, the organisation noted that the capacity building workshops held by the consortium on data analysis had also improved their ability to work with data they collect.

School Scorecard Tool

An organisation in Ghana shared information on their school scorecard tool. This technique allows citizen groups and CSOs to conduct a needs analysis of their community’s schools. The cards use a number of predetermined categories and help the citizens and CSOs prioritise what change is most pressing. Once the score cards are completed and the key issues identified, they then take the information to local leaders and school leadership teams to advocate for change. An example of how this is done, is town hall meetings. In these meetings, key stakeholder, including local leaders and media, will be invited and provided with opportunities to respond to the issues raised and any necessary follow up actions committed to. The organisation reported some API successes using this tool. For example, they had successfully used them to advocate for a range of new school furniture in the localities they operate in (200-300 items of furniture dispatched to some schools).

In the Ghanaian context, this citizen-led advocacy approach is not only empowering for communities, reportedly offering them different channels to air grievances and opportunities to take control of advocacy and school development, but also complimentary to the state system. This is because schools are mandated by the state to undertake similar needs analysis. However, sometimes they do not or cannot. As such, this supports them to meet their regulatory requirements. There is also evidence of success in this approach being combined with other API strategies. For example, in this context the information gathered is utilised as a primary source of evidence for the youth parliaments, which in turn use it to hold a range of actors to account. This includes school management committees and MPs. A key learning by the organisation, which supports the score card activities, is that they should be made as simple as possible, with no specialist knowledge required, to ensure they are accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. Another key learning is that it is not enough to score a school once. Follow up sessions are necessary to support positive change. See appendix 6 for an example score card.

Youth-led Advocacy Approaches

Capacity Building

Many of the organisations in the study engaged in some form of youth capacity building, which empowers them and provides them with the skills to advocate for their educational rights. These have the potential to support effective API and significant change. For example, as a result from youth capacity building activities in Zimbabwe, and the subsequent advocacy work of youths, as of 2022 all schools now having a sexual harassment policy. National standards for these are now being developed. Another good example of where this has been successful comes from Bangladesh. As part of a programme to support youth participation in democracy, the organisation held a camp or ‘hackathon’, to support youth to develop the skills they need to carry out advocacy. As part of the camp, they were able to collect data from over 800 youths across different parts of the country, which informed the development of a youth manifesto for the upcoming election. The organisation supported youth representatives to present the manifesto to a policy conclave, and MPs were reportedly very receptive to the ideas presented. Two key learnings from this activity by the organisation are, firstly, to try to keep the sessions as simple and engaging as possible. For example, they use lots of visuals and bring in contextual and actionable evidence. Secondly, is to ensure youth representatives prioritise their needs/ requests. This will be incorporated into the camps in the next iteration of the activity. The hackathons also allowed the organisation to conduct a range of follow up activities in communities across the country to further validate the findings and enhance API activities, and has inspired youth groups to conduct this type of advocacy work themselves, and crucially provided them with the skills to do so. Other organisations outlined successful capacity building activities and
broader youth engagement in developing specific roles for young people. For example, one organisation noted success in supporting youth to become education champions and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SHRH) defenders.

Youth Parliament

Some of the organisations either established or supported the activities of a youth parliament, which mirrors the work of the national parliament. This gives youth an opportunity to debate current policy issues and advocate for change from the youth perspective. There is some evidence of these types of forums being effective in influencing policy. For example, the youth parliament in Ghana was able influence the building of additional teacher accommodation. This particular issue was first picked up by the community journalists (later discussed) and the information was fed into the parliament, then the grantee was able to further raise the profile of the issue, via media exposure. This highlights the importance of creating a holistic and complementary ecosystem, which empowers youth to be active in the policy debate and generate their own evidence to support their priorities.

Female Only Spaces

Most grantees and their associates outlined the importance of providing girls with opportunities and platforms to raise gender specific issues. A good example of this in practice is the female caucus in Ghana. This is a relatively small-scale initiative, with a membership of between 15 and 35 girls. However, it has shown promising signs of impact. The caucus provides a safe space for young girls to speak about issues that affect them, in addition to an hour radio spot, which provides a platform for them to mobilise their priority issues. Examples of issues raised include sexual harassment, sanitary pads, and lack of changing rooms at school. There is evidence to suggests this has directly supported young girls who are at risk of childhood marriage. At least five girls have been in touch with the female caucus directly and, the caucus was able report these cases to local level actors, such as the traditional authorities, the police, education services, and the PTA, which were able to intervene.

Conferences

Partner organisations also found conferences to be a good way to engage youth in API. For example, an organisation in Zimbabwe holds an annual national students conference, where students from all institutions meet policy makers and key service providers, to discuss key policy gaps.

Direct Engagement

All grantees engaged in a variety of direct engagement activities with politicians and policy makers in formal and informal spaces. The study highlighted, again, that effective spaces and types of direct engagement vary from country to country. Therefore, a deep understanding of the local contexts is needed to be effective in API. For example, in Ghana it was noted that informal engagement channels and networks were only used to get organisations a seat at the formal table for discussions. However, in Bangladesh, there were a range of effective direct API strategies being deployed in informal settings.

In most examples of direct engagement discussed in this study, CSOs were generating evidence from grassroots and presenting it to decision makers, to raise awareness of urgent issues. This was conducted in a variety of
ways, with some organisations collecting their own evidence. However, the more effective strategies shared were those that allowed local communities, youth, or both, to develop evidence and present it to policy makers. As this reportedly had more resonance with decision makers and led to more action. This inadvertently highlights another key feature of direct engagement and role for CSOs in API, which is connecting different actors together. This includes different power structures, such as local and national leadership, parents and community members, and education practitioners and policy makers. Numerous examples were highlighted in this study of the CSO being the conduit for two parties to effectively communicate, which in turn led to positive outcomes. A particularly strong example of this was an initiative called ‘Hello MP’ in Bangladesh, which connected people from remote communities with policy makers and allowed them to respond to challenges directly. For instance, in one area, people could not go to school or hospital because there was no road. This project allowed the remote communities circumvent the corrupt ‘middle men’, which had been blocking such infrastructure developments, and straight to the policy maker, who was able to get the road built.

Examples of direct engagement activities are as follows:

- Round tables, with politicians, policy makers, and other CSOs.
- Engaging or establishing a parliamentary caucus.
- Questions to parliamentary select committees.
- 1-2-1 or small group session with decision makers.

In settings where more informal direct engagement is appropriate, there is some evidence to suggest it would be beneficial to deploy strategies that break down the formal barriers between CSO and officials. For example, using WhatsApp to speak to parliamentarians and arrange meet ups. An example of an effective informal meet up is a policy breakfasts, which facilitates informal discussion and debate with decision makers over breakfast. The grantee, which uses this approach, implements Chatham house rules at their policy breakfast, to encourage frank and open dialogue. They shared an example where this approach was successful. Prior to COP 27, they held a policy breakfast on loss and damage. Many policy makers, who were going to the COP, came to the meeting to discuss challenges in their constituencies, and the collation of the sessions findings was sent with the delegation to COP to inform their work.

A recurring theme amongst grantees in both types of settings was the impact of evidence led advocacy in any direct form of engagement. There are numerous examples of strategies for this highlighted throughout this report, but one particularly pertinent example is resource tracking. A CSO would monitor government disbursement of funds and wider resources, based on commitments made in official documentation, such as sector plans and transnational agreements. The CSO would gather evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, tracing disbursements from the national level all the way down to the school and individual beneficiaries. They will then collate and analyse the findings, and share them with organisations like education select committee, highlighting any discrepancies or wider issues like the slow release of funds. An example of impact from this type of activity is from a Ghanaian organisation, which successfully lobbied their parliamentary education select committee to increase the reach of school feeding programmes.

Advocacy Through Media Approaches

A recurring, and perhaps unsurprising, theme in this research was the use of the media by CSOs for API. A strong traditional media presence has shown promising results in terms of effective API work, with one respondent noting that one of the grantees was ‘too loud to ignore’. It was also noted by a different organisation that the fact their associated grantee offered media training was a particular draw for them and their wider network in working with them. The different strategies employed can be loosely divided into traditional and digital media.
Traditional Media

Traditional media encapsulates advocacy work conducted via well-established channels and non-digital technologies. This includes television, radio, newspapers, and other low-tech activities, such as loudspeakers on vehicles. The grantees in this study highlighted the breadth of activities that could be undertaken via traditional media, with many grantees using the media to give youth a platform and a voice. These include:

- **Interviews**: Representatives from the CSOs or youths interviewing politicians on radio or TV.
- **Debates**: Debates held on TV or radio. These can take a variety of forms, for example the United Kingdom parliamentary style was cited, and between a variety of people, for instance, between youth parliamentarians and local leaders.
- **Talk Shows**: Talk shows on key educational issues. One particularly innovative example of this is the ‘CLEAR hour’, which gives youth a platform to discuss advocacy and policy issues important to them. This is broadcast on radio and runs one or two times per week. The importance of mapping radio stations, to understand which have the widest engagement and listenership was stressed. This strategy not only provides an exciting platform, which youths can present evidence from their local area and speak on issues they are passionate about, but it is also an effective way to engage policy makers and politicians, as if they do not attend, the young hosts will only present one side of the argument.
- **Press Statements**: The use of press statements was also widespread amongst grantees. There was some evidence to suggest politicians and policy makers responded well to these. However, like in other API strategies, contextually appropriate messaging is key.
- **Documentaries**: Developing short documentaries to highlight areas for action was also another technique highlighted by multiple organisations in this research. CSOs go into under resourced schools (and other public service environments) with film crews to highlight the need for support. They then air the footage on TV, at a prime time. There is evidence to suggest this type of strategy is effective in influencing positive change. However, it should be noted that this is not always at the policy level, with examples of high worth individuals providing additional resources to deprived settings.

Digital Media

Digital media encapsulates API strategies on digital technology, such as social media platforms. The use of digital media can be divided into two distinct categories: CSO mobilisation and youth engagement. For CSO mobilisation, organisations generally used WhatsApp to communicate with their members or stakeholders. This allowed them to collect evidence and survey to understand key priorities. WhatsApp was also used for similar purposes between CSOs, to collaborate and develop collective positions on, which then allowed them to speak in one voice and deploy more effective API strategies. Furthermore, learning partners looking to conduct similar action research projects should note that WhatsApp was also a more effective platform for communication between MDF/ACER and grantees in many instances than email. However, for more official communications email was always preferred in all contexts.

In terms of youth engagement, it was noted that using this type of media was more effective for engaging youth, due to their increased engagement with these types of platforms. There is limited evidence to substantiate this
claim. However, it is a reasonable assertion. For example, in 2021 in Sub-Saharan Africa mobile phone subscriptions and access to mobile internet increased to 46% and 40% of the population respectively (GSMA, 2022), and there is evidence to suggest that the youth are more likely to own a smart phone (Silver and Johnson, 2018). One particularly innovative strategy for engaging youth on social media comes from a CSO in Malawi. They identify the most popular social media influencers in a particular area and get them to promote key messages on girls’ education as defined by the CSO. This is seen as an important awareness tool and reportedly supports changing attitudes amongst key gatekeepers, by improving their awareness of the benefits of sending girls to school or, conversely, the harms associated with not sending them. In practice, they take the influencers into villages, where girls education challenges are high. The influencer acts as a crowd puller, and then they share their platform with women who have been identified as higher achievers, such as legislators and high-ranking military officials. These women then share their inspirational messages. Whilst this strategy has shown evidence of effectiveness, there are some potential negative impacts to this influencer driven approach to API. Namely, the CSO highlighted that there are some instances of girls dropping out of school, because there has not been an event like this held in their village yet, and they want one.

Risks of Advocacy Through Media

Using media as part an API strategy clearly has many benefits in terms of exposure and engagement with the organisations cause. However, it is not without risks. Most organisations in the study noted the importance of maintaining positive relationships with the media, as in some contexts one story can be the difference between being able to operate and the government shutting the organisation down. One grantee shared an experience of being misquoted in an online article and having to go to the offices of the journalists and convince them to remove the story. The costs associated with media advocacy were also noted by many. The amount and extent of this is dependent on the context and type of media being used. For example, one grantee noted that newspapers require a fee to give the story prominence in the paper and, in some, cases any access at all. Other organisations noted that they had to put in place Memorandums of Understanding with media houses and key media personalities, to ensure their messages are aired and given prominence. This suggests a pay to access culture is prevalent in many of the countries included in this study, and the other organisations and donors should be prepared for these payments if they are to follow a media-based API strategy.

There is also risk associated with CSOs providing media platforms to their associated youth. For example, one grantee developed a community journalism programme, who gathered grassroots evidence and fed it into the youth parliament. For instance, they visited a school which had no furniture. They documented this and provided the evidence to the youth parliament. This then allowed the youth parliament to invite officials to debate the issue. They then were able develop a resolution for stakeholders to take action. Whilst this approach by the CSO provides an engaging way for youth to take ownership of their local challenges, it also put the journalists in situations, which are not always safe, with the CSO citing a number of examples where young girls had been threatened as they raised issues that offended people. To mitigate for this several actions were taken. These include: providing every journalist with a smartphone (also enhancing the quality of their journalism via pictures and videos); collaborating with security agencies to provide all journalists with identity cards; training not only on the issues they can raise, but also on how they should raise them; and crucially, a screening process, which means those who have views aligned to specific parties are not selected, due to the increased risk associated with political activism.

Policy Document Development

The study highlighted that CSOs produce a range of written documents as part of their API strategy. Written documents are generally developed at the end of an advocacy project to formalise the findings and
organisational position, bringing together all the evidence they have produced and usually including a collective message or request collaboratively agreed on with partner organisations. Whilst these types of documents tend to be viewed as a more traditional approach to API, they still demonstrate effectiveness. The types of documents mentioned in the study include the following:

Letters To Officials
These letters may cover a variety of issues, such as raising awareness on key issues, asking for progress updates, and requesting the government’s position on an issue. Unfortunately, insights gained in this study suggest that direct letters are not an effective method of API, and government responses are generally vague and do not address the topic raised. As such, they should be reserved for important issues and used in conjunction with other API techniques to maximise impact.

Policy Briefs and Position Papers
All grantees on EOL are required to develop documents like this. The documents are seen as effective tools to maintain ongoing dialogue with parliamentarians on key issues. There is some evidence from the consultations to suggest that when CSOs collaborate with each other and develop collective positions on key issues, it increases the impact of such documents.

Voluntary National and Local Reviews
Some of the grantees in the study shared that they had participated in voluntary national reviews, assessing national progress against the SDGs. They noted that at the end, they produced a range of documentation, which was submitted to the government. This was highlighted as an effective accountability tool, which produced positive policy change. For example, a Zimbabwean based CSO noted that following submission of the voluntary national review documents to the government, they increased the allocation and distribution of budget for marginalised girls and expanded a menstrual hygiene management programme.

One organisation shared that they built on the voluntary national reviews, by doing voluntary local reviews. They would work with grassroot level stakeholders to look at the gaps in each and every policy that has impact on education, with a particular focus on access to education for the people from marginalised communities. They then produce a report that is designed to feed into the Voluntary National Review report.
The Processes Related to the Development, Design and Implementation of Evidence-Based Lobby and Advocacy in Education – Action Research Process

Figure 2: Action Research Process

This project used the action research and learning process outlined in figure 2, to support grantees to review and improve their development, design and implementation of evidence-based lobby and advocacy in education. This project has shown that this process works, having demonstrably produced a range of research findings which grantees can apply to their API activities. However, as the project draws to a close and official MDF/ACER support comes to an end, the onus is now on the grantees to take ownership of this work and follow through on their identified actions. Therefore, further work is needed to understand if the process has sufficiently empowered grantees to carry on with work without MDF/ACER support, presence, and additional funding. This section will explore the action research process used by the consortium and any evidence of change in grantee practices resulting from engaging in this process.

Action Research Process

This segment will look at the key elements and areas of exploration in the different stages in the MDF/ACER action research and learning cycle. Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is important to tailor the process to the specific needs, preferences, and learning styles of the grantees.

Define Action Research Focus
Following the identification of grantees, as the figure illustrates, a number of workshops are held with the grantees. These workshops explore the underlying assumptions in their programme ToC and align them to the quadrants on the SCM. The main aims of these workshops and key questions to consider are:

- To get clarity on the vision of the grantee’s efforts, particularly in reference to the inclusion and gender related objectives.
- To map the various API (evidence-based advocacy) activities and identify their expected outcomes (who will change / what will change).
- To explain the SCM and align grantee desired outcomes to it.
- To review relevant project documents for the identified assumptions and add them to the SCM.
- To analyse the influence relations and visualise them by drawing arrows between the actions undertaken in order to influence stakeholder behaviour towards the envisioned objective.
- To conduct stakeholder analysis and map stakeholders to the SCM quadrants (power / interest), whilst considering the questions such as:
  - Who are their stakeholders and why are they stakeholders?
  - Do we have them all (who else could win/ gain/ lose from the ToC).
  - Are the expectations in relation to stakeholder behaviour mapped (what do you expect them to do differently, and how will they react in relation to your API efforts? Why do you think that?)?
  - What conclusions can be drawn from the following fundamental stakeholder questions:
    - Are stakeholders willing to change (what do they have to gain and lose in the process?)?
    - Can stakeholders change (what are supportive or hindering aspects in relation to capacities, stakeholder relations, and other factors that determine the stakeholder landscape?)?
- To identify additional underlying assumptions through the use of the SCM (making implicit assumptions explicit through the use of "if – then - because" statements).

Figure 3, 4, and 5 below provide illustrative on how the ToC assumptions and stakeholders were mapped to the SCM using the virtual whiteboard software, as part of the workshops in this project.
Figure 3: Overview of SCM Workshop Process
Following this initial round of workshops, a research agenda was developed with the grantees. The aim of the agendas is to identify:

- Which assumptions the grantees would like to, or need to, know more about in order to become more effective as organisation?
- What can and will they do with the information gained through action research?
- Initial prioritization, through activities such as voting and discussion.
- Who would/should be involved in collecting the information in the learning agenda?
- What are the internal and external conditions that need to be in place for using the information and translating it into revised strategies?
- A number of key research questions.

**Figure 6: Example of assumption prioritisation and scoring**

Figure 6 provides an illustrative example of how different assumptions were prioritised with grantees, in order to develop a research agenda. The yellow squares are some of the main assumptions drawn out of ToC, and the red circles represent votes by grantee colleagues and their key stakeholders, to prioritise the importance of the assumption in relation to realising the main impact of their organisation’s ToC.

**Develop Action Research Plan**

In the next phase of the cycle, the focus moves to the grantee, in collaboration with the learning partner, developing a participatory research methodology and frameworks. Key elements of this phase in the cycle include:

- Producing a research framework
• Defining the instruments to be used
• Planning the distribution of tasks and roles
• Reviewing budget implications
• Identifying and agreeing project milestones

The development of the research methodology and framework is grantee led, with organisations deciding on the most appropriate methods and instruments for their contexts and capabilities. The learning partner provides input, feedback and advice throughout. This is provided via document reviews, formal written feedback on research frameworks and instruments, informal discussions, and the facilitation of regular reflective sessions. This approach is taken to support a sense of ownership of the research by the grantees. In this project, this approach was well received by grantees and reportedly worked to develop the desired sense of ownership.

Conduct Action Research

Once the grantees have developed a robust research plan and framework, they move into the next stage of the cycle, which is to conduct the action research. This is inclusive of data collection, analysis, validation, and dissemination. Learning partner formal and informal support continues throughout this stage. A main focus for the learning partner is to support the capacity development of the grantees during this stage, to ensure the quality of the research and associated actions are as robust as possible. A key element of this is formal organisational capacity assessment of the grantees, which results in a bespoke programme of learning for each grantee. This was delivered in the form of capacity development workshops. All grantees reported that they found these sessions valuable and they worked to increase their research capacity.

Evidence of Change from Action Research Cycle

The consultations found that engaging in the MDF/ACER action research process had supported a major change in grantees and their stakeholders’ attitude to and/or perception of research, and its incorporation into their standard operating practices. Prior to this work, many of the grantees shared that whilst they tried to use evidence informed practices, they saw research as out of the scope of their activities. This was due to a variety of reasons. For example, cost, organisational capacity, and perceived value added. This was further reinforced by the comments of one RMU, which stated that other grantees, which were not working with ACER/MDF, felt for a variety of reasons unable to participate in similar action research projects. However, all organisations reported that going forward they either had or intended to incorporate research as an essential part of business as usual (BAU) activities. Some grantees remarked that they were surprised on the potential organisational impact a small scale, low effort research project can have, particularly those which directly engaged with key stakeholders. Furthermore, it was also noted that the cost of such activities was not prohibitive, and that data can generally be collected alongside BAU activities. This has led to some of the grantees in the study establishing research units or allocating more resource to these types of activities, and further underlines the need for simple, action orientated research designs. Nevertheless, it should be noted it is the action research element and the testing of programmatic assumptions that is innovative and new for grantees in this study, not the use of evidence. The study found that many grantees in receipt of EOL funding incorporate evidence into their API strategies, and an action learning cycle is a core part of the overall EOL learning agenda.

100% of grantees and their associates said they would engage in a similar action research project with MDF/ACER again.
There were two key areas highlighted by grantees and their associates where the action research process had supported a change in organisational practices. Namely, in the use of data and in mapping and understanding their key stakeholders.

Data

In terms of the use of data, a number of grantees noted the impact of the capacity building activities offered by MDF/ACER, with a particular emphasis on the data analysis workshops. One grantee noted that this had triggered a whole organisation reflection on how they used data in their work and had supported them to identify gaps in their work and develop more focus on how they track the effectiveness of their strategies. This grantee is now developing a tool to support their teams conduct this type of outcomes assessment. However, interviewees did raise concerns that due to contextual factors, like the government not publishing its budget allocation and disbursements in full, it may be difficult to find evidence to support the achievement of all outcomes. This more considered use of data was also reflected in insights from other grantees, who felt the process had made them more conscious of the need to track policy implementation to ensure outcomes were achieved. Previously, they felt their focus had been more short term, moving on to new advocacy priorities once the decision makers signalled a commitment.

Mapping and Understanding Stakeholders

In terms of mapping and understanding stakeholders, all grantees involved in the project expressed that working with the SCM had had a positive impact on their organisations. It is expected the grantees will follow this through by implementing some changes to their API strategies or organizational practices. Grantees noted that it afforded them a new and more structured way to identify their key stakeholders, especially when determining and prioritising which voices are needed to influence change in a particular area. It also allowed grantees to reflect on their work, and that of their associates, to understand their ability to influence policy at different levels of society, and refine their API activities accordingly. For example, one grantee in the study reflected that when testing the rhetoric of theirs and their partners ability to work and influence at the transnational level, they learnt their capacity in this area was much weaker than anticipated.

Grantees found that they were able to engage with a number of stakeholders, which they had not previously. For example, an organisation in Zambia noted that working with SCM had led them to unexpectedly engage with young women and girls. They had not previously done this, because they felt they did not have the capacity to do so. As such, they only engaged with teaching staff and education professionals. They felt this change in approach brought a new dimension to their work and improved their connection to the communities they serve. Furthermore, they felt this gave them a competitive advantage in terms of API with decision makers, as they noted, the government would see their work, as the district authority had to grant them permission to conduct research in schools. Another example comes from an organisation in Zimbabwe. They stated they had started engaging with men. This is because it is men who marry the young girls, and, in turn, become obstacles in them returning to school post pregnancy or drop out. As such, they have an important voice in the debate and are a key target for the organisation’s advocacy activities.

The findings indicate that there are a range of benefits from engaging new and more considered voices. For instance, one organisation shared that as a result of engaging new and important voices as part of the research, they experienced a snowball effect in terms of their advocacy work, with a councillor taking the initiative to
independently follow up on their findings with other actors. Other benefits include a perceived increase in organisational profile in their focus communities, and an increased ability to bring in relevant voices from those communities. This has reportedly helped redress the power balance between donor priorities and community need.

Nevertheless, increased stakeholder mapping and engagement comes with its own organisational challenges. Firstly, one grantee noted that people do not engage without a reason. Unfortunately, in some grantees experience, people will expect payment for input. As such, if this is the case in the context in which they work, organisations would need to have access to a small budget to conduct their research activities and researchers would need to be extra conscious of bias in the findings. A mitigation strategy for this, would be for organisations to build in action research activities when they are submitting proposals for new funds.

Secondly, there are a range of contextual factors, which may cause obstacles for engagement. It is important that when grantees discover these types of findings in their action research, they reflect on what it means for their API strategy and wider organisation. One such example highlighted in this project is that in some contexts communities did not feel it was their role or responsibility to advocate for improved education, but rather this should be left to the government. One respondent compared this to when they were a teacher and they would give their students homework, and the students and parents would complain they were being made to work for him. Wider stakeholder engagement also contributes to a more complex environment for an organisation to navigate, which want to practice bottom-up advocacy. This is because the more voices involved contribute to a more complex and contradictory environment. One grantee noted a difference in priorities of male and female stakeholders, with women generally being more inclined to support the organisations work and message, and men being more inclined to ask what was being done to support young boys.

Another example of complex contextual environments raised from increased stakeholder engagement comes from Zambia. One organisation’s members (teachers) spend five minutes out of their lessons to check in with girls and ensure they are okay, and their needs are being met. It has produced feedback, in which girls say they will get married and find a man to take care of them, and did not have aspirations beyond this. This input from the girls is in direct conflict with the API message and goals of the organisation involved in the study. This is complicated further by cultural practices and situational factors. In the school one respondent works in, she shared that parents generally want their girls to be educated, but circumstances, such as, distance to school, early pregnancy (or the potential for), and financial need, pressure parents to make different choices. This leads to parents marrying their daughters off in what they see as a respectable way. This means that parents may also not be receptive to the work or messaging of the CSO working in advocacy for girls’ education. In this particular case, one of the grantees developed a community focused advocacy campaign on the issue, trying to demonstrate that a different path is possible for girls and construct an aspirational narrative. Wider findings also suggest CSOs working in this area could use positive role models to reinforce this type of messaging and the value of education. This would help to counteract the effect of when girls see people who are uneducated with money, which convinces them to drop out. Nevertheless, this strategy does not necessarily seek to understand the underlying causes of these attitudes, practices or situational factors. There may be a need for CSOs to explore and understand these and incorporate them into their API activities. This improved understanding of the root causes affecting and restricting change, will allow them to operate more effectively in the inherently complex environment of advocacy and social change.
Organisational and Partnership Capacities to Implement API

All grantees in this study demonstrated they were able to effectively navigate their complex operating environments to implement API activities. All organisations engaged at a number of different levels within their society, from grassroots to national, and shared examples of their activities producing tangible change. A strong and consistent theme in this research was CSO collaboration and capacity building. The study engaged with a variety of organisations, including two consortiums and a number of grantee associate organisations, which were intimately involved in the activities of EOL. In terms of the consortiums, it is clear they were developed giving great thought to the different skillsets and networks they brought with them. This careful consideration gives weight to the phrase ‘the whole is greater than the sum of the parts’, with evidence suggesting that each organisation’s unique capabilities increasing the impact and reach of the collectives API activities. Beyond this formal association, the study highlighted two main categories of collaborative activities, which proved effective in increasing the impact of the organisations API activities. Namely, collective voice and knowledge cascading.

Collective Voice

In terms of collective voice, all grantees shared evidence of extensive CSO networks within their countries and regions. All used these networks to develop collective positions on educational issues, which in turn allowed them to speak with one voice. The evidence suggests that this not only increased the impact of the API activities, but also reaped a number of additional benefits. For example, in some contexts, there is fatigue among policy makers on CSO activities. Speaking with a collective voice works to reduce the number of demands on decision makers and helps to prioritise areas for action and validate CSO demands. Furthermore, in complex political environments, where CSOs must be careful of the government’s perception of them, this likely reduces the risk associated with API activities. One particularly apposite example of CSO collaboration achieving positive outcomes comes from Zambia. Respondents shared that Zambian CSOs convene a pre-budget forum. This brings together a number of key stakeholders and CSOs to review the budget and identify any gaps and, crucially, associated solutions. In a previous pre-budget forum, they shared they had identified the issue of low education budgets, with the education budget standing at roughly 11% of the total. The forum collaboratively produced a position paper highlighting the issue, with particular reference to the SADC commitments of a 20% of total expenditure threshold for education, which has been agreed to by all member states. This collaborative action reportedly produced a budget increase, up to 13.9% of total government expenditure.

Knowledge Cascading

The evidence collected also suggests that cascading knowledge is a key pillar of CSO relationships and collaboration. Many grantee associate organisations noted access to EOL or wider training events was a key benefit to their relationship with the grantee. There were numerous examples shared where grantees either invited their associates to EOL training events or cascaded the knowledge gained to their partners after the events. This includes training to improve organisations understanding of and approach to advocacy, education finance governance sessions held by ActionAid, and the capacity building sessions offered by MDF/ACER. If the knowledge was cascaded following an event, this was usually done by sharing videos, which highlights the benefits of remote engagement with the GLP, where meetings and training can be easily recorded, reviewed, and shared. There were also examples shared where grantees had developed their own bespoke training courses based on identified partner needs. For example, one grantee held sessions on proposal writing, in addition to producing 10 free online modules to support their partners to understand the basics of public policy. Nevertheless, knowledge cascading is not without risk. One grantee noted that they had found the lack of capacity amongst their partners a challenge and admitted to getting carried away with knowledge cascading and training, which ultimately led to them exhausting the limits of their team resources and caused delays in the
project timeline. Furthermore, in Bangladesh, it was shared that capacity building activities also have the potential to have negative impacts on partner organisations. This is because once staff had improved skillsets via the training, they leave the partner organisations in pursuit of higher salaried positions.

Organisational capacities for implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management in the field of API

The grantees in this study demonstrated that they had the ability, with MDF/ACER support, to develop actionable learning agendas, which provide insights that support adaptive management practices. All grantees identified a number of actions for their organisations, some of which have been highlighted in the previous sections and are explored in more depth in the case studies. The actions that resulted from the grantee studies were validated with their partners, and were resoundingly accepted. However, that is not to say that the validation sessions did not produce robust debate, which tested the logic of the grantees proposed actions. As noted previously, it is now for the grantees to take ownership of their identified actions, reflect on them, and apply them to their organisational activities. The commitments made imply that the grantees have capacity to do this. However, further research would be needed to substantiate this.

It should be noted, however, some limitations in grantees ability to implement actionable learning agendas and adaptive management practices in the field of API were identified in this study. Generally, these centre around the grantees’ size and research capacity. The grantees the project worked with had small research teams, as such it was a challenge for them to balance the time required for the project with their BAU activities. This meant the timing of data collection activities had to be carefully considered, to ensure they did not happen at pinch points in the wider organisation’s activities. Some grantees were able to overcome this by integrating data collection activities into their BAU activities. For example, conducting interviews or focus groups during policy conclaves.

A similar situation occurred with project meetings, where grantees were not able to attend due to other priorities. An additional dynamic to this issue was that grantees did not feel able to decline or rearrange meetings with MDF/ACER, likely due to the power dynamics, and just opted to not attend. This was resolved by a degree of flexibility by all parties and the development of clear communication expectations and processes, which utilise preferred mediums of communication (WhatsApp in this instance).

A final lesson highlighted by the size restrictions of the research teams, was related to the capacity building sessions held by the consortium, which are fundamental to upskill many of the grantees and allow them the capacity to autonomously take these practices forward. Whilst all grantees highlighted how much they felt the project had supported them to develop their skills, one RMU did note that there was a perception that these sessions were sometimes seen as additional workload. As such, GLPs should be careful to ensure the value of these sessions is communicated effectively and the content is engaging. These factors combined emphasize the need for organisations undertaking similar activities to ensure the research projects are small scale, with a limited number of research questions and data collection techniques. All grantees in this study initially planned over-ambitious projects, which would have been unlikely to have been completed considering the time and resource constraints. Therefore, an important role for any learning partner is to temper research ambition and ensure projects are manageable. This will support partners to complete the research and ultimately engage in adaptive management practices.
Global Learning Partner Learning and Reflections

The MDF/ACER team found this project to be highly rewarding and impactful, and grantees reported significant learning from the engagement. As such, the team is keen to document their key lessons learned for future iterations of the project and for other organisations wishing to conduct similar work. Therefore, in addition to the insights already shared above, the section below highlights a number of the key learnings and reflections by the GLP.

Grantee Selection and Engagement
The GLP feels that we had genuine and deep level of engagement with grantees and RMUs as part of this project. This is supported by a number of commitments from grantees and RMUs to maintain the partnership beyond the scope of this project’s funding cycle. Nevertheless, there were some challenges. For example, beyond the standard technological barriers that arise from remote working, we experienced that grantees had conflicting agendas and priorities, which at times made engagement difficult. To reduce the impact of these challenges, MDF/ACER found that the buy-in to the project aims, visions, approach from CSO leadership teams was essential, and that the amount of time and management required by the learning partner to maintain this should not be underestimated.

Planning for the Unexpected
The MDF/ACER team found that it is important to be flexible in the project planning process to allow for unexpected developments. For example, there were elections being held in some of the grantee countries during the project, which led to a shift in grantee priorities and delays in the project timeline. As such, to remain respectful of grantee’s work, contingency planning is essential to account for such delays, and we recommend revisiting the project timeline jointly with grantees regularly. Furthermore, the MDF/ACER team found that it was essential to procure translation services to include key voices in our consultations. Therefore, it is important to account for such unexpected costs when budgeting.

Project Approach
As outlined in previous sections, the MDF/ACER action research and learning cycle was able to effectively support grantee organisational learning, and the team were surprised by how enthusiastic grantees were in exploring the activities of their organisation and committing to change. The use of the SCM proved particularly successful in supporting grantees to identify their main assumptions and research questions. Nevertheless, the MDF/ACER team did note that grantees found the concept of research daunting and found it challenging to move away from the more traditional conceptions of research. This meant that the grantees were usually overly ambitious in the scope of their research projects. This necessitated support from MDF/ACER to ensure the project aligned to the ethos of the project: simple research that produces actionable findings and can easily be conducted with organisational limitations of the practitioners.

Recommendations and Conclusion
The overall objective of the research was to investigate, review and learn from the EOL grantees and their partners’ education API efforts, with the aim to identify strategies and practices that have shown to be effective in instigating change at local, regional and education system levels, and shed some light on the conditions that have contributed to their effectiveness. This report has highlighted a number of examples of effective API practices and commitments to engage in adaptive management practices, in addition to

On average grantees scored the project an 8/10 for the action research projects impact on their API activities.
highlighting a variety of emerging trends in API approaches, methods, strategies, and tools between the organisations and contexts. In terms of the next steps, two additional actions are recommended.

Firstly, the research was conducted on a reasonably short time frame, as such it is difficult to truly understand the impact without revisiting the grantees at a later stage. Therefore, a post evaluation should be conducted with grantees to explore the longer-term impact of this work. The project aimed to endow grantees with the skills needed to take this work forward and empower them to build on the findings and apply them to the work of their organisation. This will move the work out of the realms of an academic exercise towards real world impact and improved educational services for girls in the grantees’ countries.

Secondly, similar work should be conducted with other EOL grantees. This will allow for more organisations to engage in an innovative action research and learning process, which tests their programmatic assumptions and the logic of their ToC change pathways, whilst benefiting from the capacity development opportunities that occur from close collaboration with MDF/ACER. Furthermore, it will allow for documentation of a wider range of API techniques and practices and build on the knowledge base presented in this report, working to validate or discount any of the linkages and themes identified.

The overarching aim of the consortium is to support organisations in the EOL family to transition from engaging in action research projects to becoming learning organisations. Such organisations will constantly challenge their own API assumptions and engage in adaptive management practices, which ultimately will lead to improved and more inclusive education systems in their respective countries.
References


Appendix 1: Example Capacity Assessment Forms

### EOL Action Research Capacity Development Form

1. Please read through the proposed modules in the attached Capacity Development spreadsheet. Seven research methodology modules are described, providing the name and aim of the topic, and asking you to provide your capacity level for it.
2. Discuss with your partners and with any other relevant stakeholders, which modules would be a priority for your action research. Note that each grantee provides one set of priority ratings.
3. Using the spreadsheet attached, rank the priority of the six modules from 1 (highest priority) to 7 (lowest priority) for your action research.
4. Email this completed spreadsheet to ACER with the modules ranked from 1 to 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Aim of the topic</th>
<th>Your capacity level</th>
<th>Overall ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Literature Reviews and Document Analysis</td>
<td>To understand how to review and summarise relevant information in your area of research and to incorporate relevant policy and project documentation. This includes ability to define critical issues regarding equity in education.</td>
<td>1= not confident at all, 2= a little confident, 3= reasonably confident, 4= confident, 5= highly confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Qualitative Data Collection: Interviews</td>
<td>To provide an overview on how to conduct interviews (including Elite interviews). This module will cover areas of access, mechanisms to encourage participation, power relationships, and similar issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Qualitative Data Collection: Focus Groups</td>
<td>To provide an overview on how to conduct focus groups. This module will cover areas such as understanding power relationships, ethics regarding participation, dealing with conflicting opinions, biases, diverging dynamics, and similar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Monitoring Tools and approaches: Outcome Mapping and Progress Markers, and Outcome Harvesting</td>
<td>To understand how to monitor and evaluate actual changes in the actions and outcomes, frame and target messages and use different channels.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dynamics of advocacy research</td>
<td>To develop ability to find common ground, to analyse power holders personal and institutional interest, and to account for the proximity to powerholders. The latter informs on the effective dynamics created through the action research.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Qualitative Data Analysis: Using tools such as Dedoose</td>
<td>To understand the process of analysing qualitative data, using tools such as Dedoose.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Reporting Research Findings</td>
<td>To learn how to summarise your research findings, and how to link them to the research questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2: Grantee Consultation Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Loose Time Allocation*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you summarise your organisation's API approach (strategies and practices that you use)?</td>
<td>5-12 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. How effective would you say they are?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What results have you achieved in the past?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Could you tell me more about the process used to achieve this/ engage with stakeholders?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How would you describe your organisational and partnership capacities to implement API?</td>
<td>12-19 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How has the action research project affected the work of your organisation? i.e. what do you do now, which you didn’t do before or vice versa.</td>
<td>19-26 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Has ACER/ MDF support changed the way you incorporate evidence into your advocacy and policy influencing work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. If so, what has been most helpful?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. How have the findings from your action research changed your ways of working? If you haven’t completed the research yet, how do you think they will affect your ways of working?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. How have your prioritised and decided which changes to make?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. What barriers have you come across or do you foresee in making and sustaining these changes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. How have the findings of the project changed the way you approach advocacy and policy influencing? If you haven’t completed the research yet, how do you think they will affect your approach to advocacy and policy influencing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. How have your prioritised / decided which changes to make?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. What barriers have you come across or do you foresee in making and sustaining these changes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What challenges or obstacles were encountered during the project's implementation, and how were they addressed? Did they affect the overall impact of the project?</td>
<td>26-33 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Has the project had any unexpected impacts (negative or positive) on the organisation? If so, how have they been managed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Are there any lessons learned from this project that you would like to share?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>How has the project influenced the organisation’s reputation or perception in the communities or with the target groups you work in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Looking ahead, what do you anticipate will be the lasting effects of the project on the organisation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Times assume the interviews start on the hour and it takes 5mins to complete the pre-tasks.*
## Appendix 3: Grantee Associate Consultation Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Loose Time Allocation*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you give me a brief overview of your organisation and how you are associated with [insert grantee] and Education Out Loud?</td>
<td>5-14 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. What would you say is [insert grantee] greatest strength when it comes to their API approaches?  
   a. Could you tell me more about the process used to achieve this/ engage with stakeholders? | 14-23 mins |
| 3. Since [relevant grantee] have been engaged in this action research, have there been any observable changes in their ways of working, e.g. in the way they work with you? | 23-32 mins |
| 4. How has the action research project affected the work of your organisation? i.e. what do you do now, which you didn’t do before or vice versa.  
   a. Has [relevant grantee] encouraged or inspired you to do anything differently as a result of this project?  
   b. Have you attended any workshops run by ACER/ MDF?  
      i. If so, did they support you to change the way you incorporate evidence into your advocacy and policy influencing work?  
      ii. If so, what has been most helpful?  
   c. How have the findings from the project changed your ways of working or the way you do advocacy? | 32-41 mins |
| 5. Are you aware of any other organisations in your region who are using similar advocacy and policy influencing approaches to [insert grantee]? If so, what are they doing? | 41-50 mins |
6. If offered, would your organisation participate in action research project similar to this one in the future?  
   d. Why? / Why not?

*Times assume the interviews start on the hour and it takes 5mins to complete the pre-tasks.
# Appendix 4: RMU Consultations Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Loose Time Allocation*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What would you say is [insert grantee] greatest strength when it comes to their API approaches?  
   a. Could you tell me more about the process used to achieve this/ engage with stakeholders? | 5 - 16 mins |
| 2. Have there been any observable changes in the ways of working by grantees engaged in the action research, which you haven’t seen in other EOL grantees?  
   a. If so, what are these?  
   b. If no, in your discussion with grantees, do you know about any changes they plan to make as a result of the research?  
   c. What do you think are the main barriers to grantees making and sustaining these changes?  
   d. Are there any changes in ways of working that you hope/expect to see? | 16-27 mins |
| 3. Are you aware of any other grantees in your region who are using similar advocacy and policy influencing approaches? If so, what are they doing? | 27-38 mins |
| 4. Have you attended any workshops run by ACER/ MDF?  
   a. If so, what do you think has been most helpful for grantees?  
   b. Have you discussed these sessions with the grantees? | 38-49 mins |
| 5. Did (or will) this action research project affect(ed) your ways or working or the work of your organisation? i.e. what do you do now, which you didn’t do before or vice versa.  
   a. How have the findings of the project informed the way you approach advocacy and policy influencing? | 49-50 mins |

*Times assume the interviews start on the hour and it takes 5mins to complete the pre-tasks.*
Appendix 5: Online Survey Questions

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, what was the impact of the action research project in partnership with MDF/ACER on your advocacy and policy influencing activities? (1 = no impact; 10 = extremely high impact)
   a. Please explain your answer.
   b. How, if at all, did ACER/ MDF support this?

2. What are the key lessons from your research regarding the effectiveness of your advocacy and policy influencing activities?
   a. How, if at all, did ACER/ MDF support this learning?

3. Which of these key lessons will need to be taken up by your organization(s)? What will you need to do differently?
   a. How?
   b. What does that take (organizationally)?
   c. What kind of outside support would you need?

4. What were the main challenges of your action research?
   a. Did ACER/ MDF support you to overcome these challenges? If so, how?

5. What was a particularly significant moment in the partnership, influencing your API? What was it about, and why was it important?
## CLEAR PROJECT

### Scorecard Template for Citizen Monitoring of Service Delivery in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Region:</th>
<th>District:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Facility Assessed:</td>
<td>Community:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period of Assessment:</td>
<td>From: To:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOTAL SCORE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Areas</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>% SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons</strong></td>
<td><strong>Follow up Actions Required</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### THEME 1.0. THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE/SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

1.1. Availability/Appropriateness of Classrooms for teaching and learning (i.e. number of classrooms, KG, Prim./JHS, size, ceiling, floors, etc.)

1.2. Availability of headmaster’s office

1.3. Availability of staff common room and store room

1.4. Adequacy and appropriateness of furniture in classrooms (chalkboard, chairs, tables, cupboard, etc.)

1.5. Accessibility of school building to PWDs (i.e. ramps, rails, detached chairs, tables, etc.)

1.6. Maintenance of the school building

1.7. Security of the school (does the school have a day and/or night security, etc.)

1.8. Availability of, and maintenance of playground.

1.9. Encroachment on School lands

**TOTAL SCORE: Physical Structure:**

#### THEME 2.0. STAFFING (HEADTEACHER AND TEACHERS).

2.1. Availability of staff with the required number

2.2. Availability of staff with the right qualification

2.3. Regular attendance and punctuality of staff (from attendance book)

2.4. Tracking of teacher’s attendance (availability of attendance book, etc.)

**TOTAL SCORE, Staffing:**

**%SCORE**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 3.0. GENERAL TEACHING AND LEARNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Pupils’ attendance to school (register)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Availability and adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Availability of School/class Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Coaching/support to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. Teacher-pupil ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. Pupil-textbook ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7. Availability of teaching and learning materials for PWDs (inclusive education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8. Supervision of teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SCORE, General Teaching: %SCORE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 4.0. SCHOOL FEEDING, HEALTH AND SANITATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1. Availability of School Canteen for the School Feeding Programme (SFP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Availability and adequacy of Water in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of storage facilities for the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of containers, cups, hand wash basins and tissues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Availability and adequacy of first aid facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4. A functioning SHEP/Coordinator for the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Availability and adequacy of gender sensitive toilet and urinal facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6. Availability and adequacy of dustbins/disposal pits/sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7. Availability and adequacy of cleaning materials (brooms, brushes, dusters, soap etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SCORE, School Feeding: %SCORE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 5.0. PA AND SMC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Existence of SMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. Functionality of SMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. Existence of PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4. Functionality of PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5. Community involvement in School management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SCORE, PA &amp; SMC: %SCORE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERALL TOTAL SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL %SCORE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>