CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

March 2016
1. Introduction

1 Background

Save the Children is currently supporting the process to build a Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (GPEVAC). See: http://www.end-violence.org

In preparation for discussions about the long term governance arrangements, Save the Children desired to learn from the experience of other multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) options for participation by NGOs, civil society and target populations in the global and/or national governance structures of MSPs in ways that are proportionate, representative and effective.

Save the Children commissioned a 10-day research study on this issue (See Terms of Reference in Annex 1). In particular, the study focused on:

- the ways in which civil society has been included in governance structures at global and national levels.
- lessons learnt on the advantages and disadvantages of different models of civil society participation.

For the purposes of this study, the terms “civil society” and “civil society organisations (CSOs)” are used to refer to NGOs (international and national), community based organizations, social movements, peoples’ organizations and other organizations and networks composed of people most affected and at risk. It does not include businesses, private foundations and other donors and research institutions. However, the different definitions used by the global partnerships reviewed are considered.

1.1 Methodology

At the start of the study, the consultant undertook a quick web based review of global initiatives that aim to promote aspects of sustainable development at national and sub-national levels. The purpose was to identify 6 – 8 initiatives that collectively meet the criteria below and that could be analysed in greater depth.

- All have a global, multi-stakeholder decision making body, involving civil society.
- All aim to have an impact across the world.
- Some have linked national level multi-stakeholders bodies, involving civil society.
- Some partnerships involve the disbursement of funds to country level.
- Provide the opportunity to learn lessons of relevance.

This process resulted in the selection of the following global multi-stakeholder partnerships for further review:

- The Committee on World Food Security (CFS): www.fao.org/cfs
- The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement: www.scalingupnutrition.org
- Global Partnership for Education (GPE): http://www.globalpartnership.org
- Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC): www.effectivecooperation.org
- Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBMP): http://www.rollbackmalaria.org

The literature relating to these partnerships was reviewed and a small number of interviews were conducted in order to collect information on the following issues:-
The purpose and approach of the partnership;
- The governance arrangements of the partnership and/or fund at global/national levels;
- The nature and means of civil society participation, including target populations;
- The achievements, challenges and factors determining results of participation.

A bibliography of the documents reviewed is presented in Annex 2. In order to facilitate further analysis, key documents relating to the governance of partnerships, civil society participation and evaluations are presented in Annex 3.

2. Findings

This section presents a comparative analysis of the partnerships. It is structured as follows:

- The purpose and approach of global partnerships
- Global level governance and civil society participation
- National level governance and civil society participation
- Funding for civil society participation

2.1 The purpose and approach of global partnerships

The reviewed global partnerships can be categorized according to their approach towards the achievement of their development goal(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary purpose</th>
<th>Global Partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. develop and promote the use of international policy guidance to inform national policies, plans and implementation</td>
<td>• Committee on World Food Security (CFS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. mobilize political action and facilitate technical and financial support for the development and implementation of national policies and plans</td>
<td>• the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement; • Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC); • Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBMP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. mobilize and disburse funds to support implementation of national plans</td>
<td>• Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Combination of 2 and 3</td>
<td>• Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children; • Global Partnership for Education (GPE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to highlight that this review is examining different types of partnership, with different purposes, membership and governance arrangements. A key distinction is between UN inter-governmental bodies such as
the CFS, which provide norms and standards to guide actions, and the other reviewed partnerships which are “coalitions of the willing” more concerned with directly promoting and supporting action.

The CFS is a United Nations (UN) inter-governmental body that aims to promote consensus between countries on policy guidance to inform national policies and plans. Ultimately it tries to promote policy coordination and coherence between countries. The CFS encourages UN agencies and other stakeholders (e.g. other International Organisations, civil society) to promote political action and facilitate support to countries. The CFS does not allocate funds to support implementation of national policies and plans. Although the CFS is a very different type of partnership to the other reviewed partnerships and the GPEVAC, it has important lessons for civil society participation.

Three partnerships (category 2) aim to facilitate high-level political commitment, action and resources for the implementation of national policies and plans. For example, the SUN Movement seeks to facilitate effective, coordinated support to countries by UN agencies, donors, civil society and others, aligned with national policies and plans. It does not aim to agree on policy guidance for countries, recognizing that this is the role of UN inter-governmental bodies such as the CFS. Furthermore, it does not allocate funds to support implementation.

On the other hand, the Global Fund is solely a funding mechanism that allocates on average US$ 4 billion per year to support programmes implemented at national level by different actors.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the most similar in purpose to the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children in that it aims to mobilize political commitment, facilitate technical and financial support, and mobilize and disburse funds through a global fund. For this reason, it perhaps offers the most relevant and interesting lessons for the GPEVAC.

2.2 Global level governance and civil society participation

This section describes:

- Governance arrangements at global level
- Civil society participation at global level
- Global civil society mechanisms

2.2.1 Governance arrangements at global level

The following table summarizes the global level governance arrangements of the six reviewed partnerships. The shaded grey boxes identify the highest level governing body, i.e. the supreme decision making body. More detailed descriptions of the different structures can be found in the governance documents of the partnerships (see Annex 3).

**Global level governance structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Global membership body</th>
<th>Oversight/Executive bodies</th>
<th>Technical bodies</th>
<th>Global funding mechanism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>CFS Plenary (endorses policy guidance)</td>
<td>CFS Bureau supported by CFS Advisory Group</td>
<td>Working Groups Secretariat (hosted by FAO)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The role of decision-making bodies

As can be seen, the CFS is the only partnership where decisions are made by the full membership, i.e. the CFS Plenary. In other partnerships, decision-making is the responsibility of a smaller representative body or bodies. This reflects the different purposes of the partnerships, i.e. agreeing norms and standards versus mobilizing action and resources.

In the CFS, the Plenary is responsible for making decisions on policy guidance whereas the CFS Bureau, informed by the Advisory Group, makes decisions on the routine functioning of the CFS. Working Groups draft policy guidance for endorsement by the Plenary.

In the other partnerships, bodies that are open to all members play a consultative and lesson sharing role, e.g. SUN Movement Global Gathering, GPE Partnerships meetings and the RBM Partnership Forum. The decision making bodies, as with the CFS Bureau / Advisory Group, decide on the partnerships strategy, work plans and oversee the budget for its functioning.

In the case of the GPE and the Global Fund, the governing bodies also make decisions on the allocation of funds for programmes. The governance arrangements of the GPE Fund are the same as for the overall GPE, i.e. the GPE Board makes decisions on the allocation of funds supported by its sub-committees and the Secretariat.
The role of members of governing bodies

There are differences in the role of members of the different governing bodies. In all partnerships, except the SUN Movement, members represent countries, networks or constituencies. They are expected, therefore, to consult widely and ensure the voices of their constituents inform decision-making processes.

On the other hand, in the SUN Movement, members of the Lead Group and Executive Committee “serve for the good of the Movement in a personal capacity, rather than representing any particular nation, organization or network” (SUN Movement Executive Committee 2015).

Duration and renewability of terms

The duration and renewability of terms on governing bodies are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS Bureau / Advisory Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN</td>
<td>2 years (lack of clarity on renewability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPE</td>
<td>2 years (lack of clarity on renewability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPEDC</td>
<td>Unclear. 18-24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBMP</td>
<td>2 consecutive 2 year terms. At least a 2 year gap between end of 2nd term and any 3rd term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Fund</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evolution in the ambition, scale and governance of partnerships

During the research, it was intended to assess whether governance arrangements had evolved as a consequence of changes in the ambition and scale of the partnerships. In the time available, it proved difficult to assess evolutions in the scale of partnerships due to the difficulties in defining comparable indicators and finding relevant information.

From the rapid review of evaluations of partnerships, it appears that changes in governance arrangements have been driven more by a desire for improved effectiveness and efficiency than by changes in ambition and scale of activity.

An exception is the SUN Movement which has seen rapid growth in the number of countries joining the Movement since it was established in 2010. It now has 55 members. The SUN Movement perhaps provides the most useful lessons for the GPEVAC in that there was a conscious decision to gradually develop governance arrangements over time as the partnership grew in order to ensure an appropriate balance between inclusive and efficient decision making.

Examples of evolution in governance arrangements include:

The GPE started out as the Fast Track Initiative in 2002. The findings and recommendations of the 2010 evaluation led to various reforms aiming to improve the FTI’s performance and strengthen its governance and funding arrangements. This included renaming the FTI as the Global Partnership for Education (2011) and
modifying its mission, strategic goals and governance arrangements. The independent evaluation published in 2015 covering the years 2010 – 2014 found that: Changes in GPE governance have had positive effects on the legitimacy and efficiency of the Board. Since 2010 the GPE Board has become more representative, most notably in the participation of developing country partners. There is room for improvement in ensuring the participation of Southern civil society organizations, and in clarifying the rationale for involving private sector representatives and defining related selection criteria.

The CFS undertook major reforms in 2009 in order to broaden participation by the full range of stakeholders and to position the CFS as the foremost international policy forum for food security and nutrition (CFS Reform document 2009).

In its relatively short lifespan, the SUN Movement has experienced a steady evolution and formalization in its governance arrangements as the number of countries in the movement grew to 62 between 2011 and 2015. In 2012, following the Stewardship Report (Isenman et al 2011), a more formal governance structure was adopted, with the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) reporting to a Lead Group (LG) appointed by the UN Secretary General. Following the recommendations of the Independent Comprehensive Evaluation in January 2015, further changes were made with the establishment of an Executive Committee, accountable to the Lead Group, with the role of overseeing the development and implementation of the Movement’s strategy and its operating modalities, and support the SUN Movement Coordinator to galvanise political commitments to nutrition and to promote the ethos and values of the Movement (Source: Mokoro 2015).

The RBMP is currently undertaking a transition in its governance arrangements following an external evaluation carried out in 2013. The evaluation recommended the downsizing of the Board because decision-making was too slow and the cost of meetings too expensive. It also suggested that representation should be at a higher level from partner organisations. Furthermore, there were concerns that Board members were not effectively representing their constituencies. It was also recommended that alternative hosting arrangements for the Secretariat should be considered (other UN agency or independent entity) as the personnel rules of WHO limit flexibility to make changes in the Secretariat (Source: RBMP website).

2.2.2 Civil society participation at global level

Civil society representatives participate in the global governing bodies of all partnerships. Civil society also participates in the sub-committees, working groups and advisory groups of all the global partnerships. Given that the governance of the GPE Fund is the same as for the overall partnership, the civil society members of the GPE Board are involved in decision making on the allocation of funds, as well as oversight of how they are used.

Quantity and weighting of civil society participation

The table below shows that civil society occupies between 10-20% of the seats on the governing bodies of the partnerships. It is also notable that in four of the partnerships, the number of civil society seats is higher than the private sector and on a par with multilateral organizations. This weighting reflects the recognition that civil society organizations can represent the interests and opinions of the target population of the partnerships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Civil society</th>
<th>Multilat. Orgs.</th>
<th>Private sector &amp; foundations</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFS Bureau/ Advisory Group</td>
<td>12 (2 per region)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN Movement Lead Group</td>
<td>12 (8 developing, 4 donor)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Civil Society Participation in Decision-Making

In all partnerships except the CFS, civil society participants are fully involved in decision-making and have voting rights.

The situation in the CFS is more nuanced. Since the reform of the CFS in 2009, civil society participants in CFS Plenaries, joint CFS Bureau / Advisory Group meetings and other global structures, participate in the policy and process discussions on an equal footing with other stakeholders. Decisions are ideally made with the consensus of all stakeholders but are solely owned by Member States. Ultimate decision-making power in the CFS is vested in the member governments, the only participants who can vote. Where there is not multi-stakeholder consensus, decisions are made once Member States have reached consensus. During the CFS reform process, civil society supported this provision in order to reinforce the accountability of governments as duty bearers.

Whilst it was not a subject of deep review in this study, it is interesting to note that CS participants are also non-voting members in the Steering Committee of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP). GAFSP is a Financial Intermediary Fund administered by the World Bank. This contrasts with the Global Fund where civil society representatives do have voting rights. As in the CFS, CSOs that were involved in the design of the GAFSP argued that it should only be governments, which have ultimate decision-making responsibility.

The differences in approach are not as great as they might appear at first. In all partnerships the emphasis is on making decisions by consensus amongst all stakeholders wherever possible. The critical distinction is that in the CFS and the GAFSP, decisions are solely owned by governments.

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1. [http://www.gafspfund.org/content/steering-committee](http://www.gafspfund.org/content/steering-committee)
These variations in perhaps the most fundamental aspect of participation, suggest that there is a need to think carefully about the role of civil society in relation to different types of decisions. It is easier to conclude that CSOs should have full voting rights on issues such as internal partnership strategy and budget than on public policies and programmatic resource allocations.

**The definition of civil society**

None of the partnerships have a clear definition of civil society within their governing documents. Some of the governing documents (see Annex 3) highlight the types of organizations or people that are considered to be constituents of civil society.

The CFS provides the most detailed description of civil society constituents:

> civil society and non-governmental organizations and their networks with strong relevance to issues of food security and nutrition with particular attention to organizations representing smallholder family farmers, artisanal fisherfolk, herders/pastoralists, landless, urban poor, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, consumers, Indigenous Peoples, and International NGOs whose mandates and activities are concentrated in the areas of concern to the Committee (CFS Reform Document, 2009).

The emphasis on the organisations representing specific groups of people affected by food insecurity is noteworthy.

The RBMP refers only to NGOs in the description of civil society in its by-laws, which suggests that informal organisations and movements may not be able to participate in its governing bodies. Further reading suggests that participation in the partnership may be open to a broader range of civil society organisations but this requires further investigation.

There is variation between partnerships as to whether academia and research institutions fall within civil society or another category of participant.

**The participation of affected and at risk people**

There is also variation between partnerships in the emphasis that they place on the direct participation of people from target populations e.g. people at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, malaria, HIV/AIDS, poor education etc. There is considerable debate in all partnerships regarding the best way of ensuring that the voices of at risk people are heard as directly as possible.

Most of the partnerships consider affected and at risk people as belonging to the civil society constituency. There is an expectation that they will be included in the civil society constituency but normally without explicitly requiring this. The Board of the Global Fund includes one seat within the civil society constituency for a representative of affected communities living with HIV. This has resulted in more tangible and passionate dialogue (GPE Secretariat 2014).

Conversely, the Board of the GPE recently decided to establish a separate constituency for youth led and children’s rights organisations. This latter approach may help to hence their agency and capacity, ensuring highly legitimate inputs into the decision-making and accountability of the partnership.

The CFS and GPE do explicitly call for priority to be given to the people and communities most at risk. This is not just an issue of Northern versus Southern CSOs. It is also a consideration of the legitimacy of CSOs and
their representatives. The CFS and GPE recognize that organisations owned and led by people at risk have a high level of legitimacy. Ultimately, the voices of people at risk are most effectively heard when all types of CSOs are aware of their own legitimacy and their role in ensuring that these voices are prioritised in decision making.

Although it was not one of the six partnerships selected for in-depth review, it is interesting to note that the Climate Investment Fund includes two indigenous people, not as Board members, but as active observers who are invited to provide input to Committees and Sub-Committees based on their practical knowledge of environmental issues in areas where they live (GPE Secretariat 2014).

The level of autonomy and self-organisation of civil society

The CFS, the GPE and the GPEDC explicitly recognize in their governance documents, the principle of autonomy and self-organization for all constituencies, including civil society.

In the SUN Movement, the principle is not explicitly stated in guiding documents but is widely recognized within the Movement, at least at global level. However, CSOs reported during the independent evaluation of the Movement that they felt under pressure not to be very critical of other stakeholders both at global and national levels (Mokoro 2015). As with other members of the Lead Group, the UN Secretary General selects civil society members. The process with the newly established Executive Committee was different, with CSOs being able to propose their own representatives through their global SUN network for confirmation by the chair of the Lead Group. Hence, in theory, CSOs do not have complete autonomy to select civil society participants.

According to the by-laws of the RBMP (RBM undated), any organization wishing to be part of the NGO constituency (as well as other constituencies) should register with the RBM Secretariat, which will maintain an email list for each constituency. In the CFS, registration of civil society constituency members is entirely the responsibility of the global civil society mechanism.

The Operating Procedures of the Board of the Global Fund (Global Fund 2014b) state that each constituency will develop its own process to designate its representatives to the Board and determine the members of its delegation.

2.2.3 Global civil society mechanisms

Three of the reviewed partnerships (CFS, SUN and the GPEDC) have specific global civil society mechanisms or networks that are the primary means for civil society participation at global level:

- **CFS**: the Civil Society Mechanism for Food Security & Nutrition (CFS CSM), [www.cso4cfs.org](http://www.cso4cfs.org)
- **SUN Movement**: the global Civil Society Network (SUN CSN) [http://scalingupnutrition.org/the-sun-network/civil-society-network](http://scalingupnutrition.org/the-sun-network/civil-society-network)
- **GPEDC**: the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) [http://www.csopartnership.org/](http://www.csopartnership.org/)

The GPE does not have one dedicated mechanism for facilitating civil society participation but the majority of CSOs engage through the Global Campaign for Education (GCE): [http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/about-us](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/about-us)

CSO participation in the Global Fund is facilitated by civil society Board members and delegations from each of the three civil society constituencies\(^2\). There does not appear to be one overall civil society mechanism. How

\(^2\) Developed Country NGO delegation: [http://globalfund-developedngo.org](http://globalfund-developedngo.org)
these three delegations engage with members of their constituencies is unclear as is how they coordinate and work together.

The means by which CSOs organize themselves to participate in RBMP is unclear from the literature reviewed.

Hence, the CFS, SUN Movement, GPEDC and GPE provide the most useful subjects for reviewing how civil society organises itself to participate in the partnerships and their governance in particular.

*Purpose and activities*

The purposes of the global civil society mechanisms reviewed include:

- Selecting civil society participants in partnership global governing bodies (CFS CSM, SUN CSN, CPDE).
- Sharing information, analysis and experience (all).
- Developing common positions (CFS CSM, SUN CSN, GCE, CPDE).
- Providing support to national civil society mechanisms (SUN CSN, GCE, CPDE).

Different mechanisms involve different levels of complexity in their functions, depending upon the nature of the global partnership and civil society’s own approaches to participation. All of the above functions appear to be relevant to civil society within the GPEVAC.

*Organising principles*

A review of the governing documents of global civil society mechanisms (see Annex 3), suggest a number of key principles which could guide how CSOs organise themselves in the context of the GPEVAC. They include:

- Inclusive - open to all CSOs with experience in the issues addressed by the partnership with participation from all regions, civil society constituencies, sectors and types of CSOs.
- Priority - to organisations that directly represent the voices of target populations, particularly those organisations and movements that are led by affected people. Special efforts are made to ensure the full and meaningful participation of the people most affected. Written and verbal translation is critical.
- Consultative – strong efforts are made to share information and to ensure the views of members inform decisions about the functioning of the mechanism and common civil society positions and strategies.
- Diversity – different opinions, objectives, strategy and tactics are respected, whilst there is also a willingness to negotiate, reach consensus and agree complementary ways of working. Common positions will be presented when possible, divergent views will be communicated when not.
- Sovereignty – the autonomy of member organisations is respected. The mechanism nor any member organisation can speak on behalf of another unless consent has been given. The mechanism empowers members to speak in their own names.
- Gender equity – women and men should have equal access to opportunities, resources and decision making with special efforts made to address imbalances.
- Transparent - decision making processes and outcomes should be clear to all.
- Mutual accountable – all members and staff feel responsible for and are held collectively accountable for joint decisions, actions and outcomes.

It should be noted that not all the reviewed mechanisms state or operate according to all of these principles.

Developing Country NGO delegation: [http://developingngo.org](http://developingngo.org)

Communities delegation: [http://www.globalfundcommunitiesdelegation.org](http://www.globalfundcommunitiesdelegation.org)
**Governance of civil society mechanisms**

Each civil society mechanism has its own governing bodies. All of the mechanisms try to ensure that membership of the executive body reflects the full range of member organisations, constituencies and regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Supreme Body</th>
<th>Executive body</th>
<th>Governance documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFS CSM</td>
<td>Annual Forum</td>
<td>Coordination Committee (31 members)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/1/csm_proposal_en.pdf">http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/1/csm_proposal_en.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPDE</td>
<td>Global Council</td>
<td>Coordination Committee (15 members)</td>
<td><a href="http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/the_nairobi_declaration_for_development_effectiveness.pdf">http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/the_nairobi_declaration_for_development_effectiveness.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CFS CSM Coordination Committee (CC) has the largest number of members opting for a highly inclusive approach. The CC is composed of focal points from different constituencies and sub-regions. Each constituency and sub-region is responsible for selecting its CC member according to principles of inclusiveness and transparency. Similarly the GCE Board has representatives from the teaching profession, INGOs, international alliances and from each region of the world.

Only the GCE has a legally independent secretariat. The secretariats of other mechanisms are hosted by a member organisation which signs contracts with donors and typically, office space for secretariat staff.

Mechanisms seek to protect the secretariat from undue influence by the host organisation through letters of agreement, which recognise that the secretariat works on behalf of all members of the mechanism and is guided by its executive body.

**Selection of participants in partnership bodies**

The CFS CSM, the SUN CSN and the CPDE all have processes for selecting representatives in the governing bodies of global partnerships, typically from the executive body of the civil society mechanism. The GCE acts as the reference point for selecting the Northern and Southern CSO representatives on the GPE Board, but candidates do not need to be members of the GCE to be eligible. The International Federation of Teachers facilitates the selection of the teaching profession representative.

**2.3 National level governance and civil society participation**

This section describes:

- Governance arrangements at national level
- Civil society participation at national level
- National civil society mechanisms
2.3.1 Governance arrangements at national level

Three of the global partnerships have formal linkages with national, government led multi-stakeholder platforms that are responsible for developing national plans, overseeing implementation of activities and the achievement of the partnerships objectives. These national, multi-stakeholder governing bodies are:

**SUN Movement national multi-stakeholder platforms**: The SUN Movement promotes the establishment or strengthening of government led, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholders platforms (MSPs) at country level that are responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring national nutrition policies, plans and common results frameworks (SUN Movement 2012).

**GPE Local Education Groups (LEGs)**: A LEG is a collaborative forum of stakeholders who develop, implement, monitor and evaluate education sector plans at country-level. The LEG ensures that all parties are kept fully informed of progress and challenges in the sector. The LEG is involved in: Policy dialogue and harmonization of donor support in the education sector; Monitoring and promoting progress toward increased aid effectiveness; Mobilizing financial support. The LEGs are led by the national government and usually include: donors and development agencies, teachers’ organizations, civil society organizations, and private education providers. The specific composition, title, and working arrangements of a LEG vary from country to country (Source: GPE website, “What We Do”).

**Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM)**: Country Coordinating Mechanisms are central to the Global Fund's commitment to local ownership and participatory decision-making. These country-level multi-stakeholder partnerships develop and submit grant proposals to the Global Fund based on priority needs at the national level. After grant approval, they oversee progress during implementation. Country Coordinating Mechanisms include representatives from both the public and private sectors, including governments, multilateral or bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private businesses and people living with the diseases (Source: Global Fund website, Country Coordination Mechanisms).

The other partnerships do not have national level structures formally linked to the global level bodies. However, these global partnerships do try and promote linkages with relevant national structures. For example, the CFS “Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries” (CFS 2012) invite governments to establish national multi-actor platforms to assess the existing situation of land governance, identify gaps and propose actions to fill them.

2.3.2 Civil society participation at national level

Civil society is active at country level in the three global partnerships which have formal linkages with national multi-stakeholder platforms. It is not possible to provide a detailed description of the nature and extent of civil society participation as this varies considerably between partnerships and countries.

In the Global Fund, Country Coordination Mechanisms are required to include at least 30% non-government participants and, in particular, they must include representatives of communities living with the diseases. In developing the national request for funding, each country must conduct a "country dialogue" - actively reaching out to all key stakeholders to ensure that everyone's voice is included in the development of the concept note.

Most global level governance structures, particularly if they do not have funds on offer, are not in a position to dictate to national governments how civil society or other stakeholders should be engaged. However, they can provide principles and other guidance. For example, the GPE Country Level Process Guide (GPE 2014) provides the following advice on how to strengthen CSO and other stakeholders’ participation in Local Education Groups:
• If selected members represent the broader CSOs in LEG/DPG meetings, how is coordination of views and inputs done prior to these meetings, and how are the outcomes from these meetings shared with the broader group?
• Are the CSOs and other stakeholders receiving notice and relevant documents in time so that they can prepare and coordinate inputs to meetings?
• Is the current modality of meetings (Joint Sector Reviews, coordination meetings etc.) conducive enough to collect and capitalize on CSO and other stakeholders’ contribution? How can the modality be improved, so that different views and knowledge on education sector plan implementation can be better captured? (For some LEGs, one of the solutions was to set up thematic/sub-sectoral working groups.)

The SUN Movement strategy and roadmap strongly encourage national government focal points to include civil society in policy making and oversight through national multi-stakeholder platforms. The experience of civil society in these platforms varies between countries in terms of the level of autonomy and the openness of government and other stakeholders to civil society input and its accountability role (SUN Movement 2012).

2.3.3 National civil society mechanisms

Three out of the four global civil society mechanisms (except the CFS CSM) support the establishment and strengthening of national civil society alliances, coalitions or networks.

In the SUN Movement, CSOs participate in national multi-stakeholder platforms through Civil Society Alliances. The objectives of CSAs are described as follows (SUN Civil Society Network 2013):

• to actively contribute to the design, implementation and M&E of effective national policies and plans for scaling up nutrition (multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, multi-level); and
• to encourage and facilitate coordination among all civil society actors, including academia, international, national and local CSOs and ensure alignment of their strategies, programmes and resources with national nutrition priorities.

National Civil Society Alliances have their own governance structures, independent from the global Steering Group. Membership of the global network is voluntary and there is no obligation for CSAs to follow the steer or advice of the Steering Group, Secretariat or global CSN in general. However, CSAs do make a voluntary commitment to the SUN Movement principles of engagement and additional principles highlighted through the SUN conflict of interest process, and utilise the support available from the global CSN as they see necessary.

Within the GPE at national level, CSOs participate in LEGs through national civil society coalitions. There are currently national coalitions of civil society organizations active in the education sector in 86 countries. They aim to provide a platform for civil society and citizens as a whole to have an impact on education policy and practice in each country. They usually bring together local and national civil society education and child rights organizations, parents’ associations, teachers’ unions, international NGOs working in the country and other civil society movement representatives with an interest in promoting the right to education. Many include associations of disabled people, youth groups and marginalized communities. In 2008, the Commonwealth Education Fund produced an excellent paper to guide the development and functioning of national coalitions (Tomlinson, K. & Macpherson, I. 2008).

The CPDE has regional, sub-regional, and national coordination bodies, which convene existing platforms, development CSOs and sectoral networks/groups from the region to form a collective lobbying and advocacy work plan and implement the activities of the partnership.

2.4 Funding for civil society participation at global and national levels

Donors provide funding to enable civil society participation in the CFS (global level), the SUN Movement (global and national), the GPE (global and national) and the GPEDC (global and national).
GPE donors support nearly 50 national civil society coalitions through the Civil Society Education Fund. The GPE Secretariat has suggested that the Board also approve funding for pre-Board CSO constituency meetings in recognition of the difficulties that Southern CSOs face in jointly discussing issues on the agenda of the Board. It is only in the GPE where the global CS mechanism (i.e. the Global Campaign for Education) is able to manage the funds (the Civil Society Education Fund) and decide how funds are allocated and used.

In the SUN Movement, the majority of the funds for the global Civil Society Network and national Civil Society Alliances are made available through a UN hosted Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). A committee in which donors and UN agencies make the funding allocation decisions manages the MPTF. CSOs are present as non-voting observers. The global CSN also secures some additional bilateral funding, as do some of the CSAs from in-country donors.

For the CFS CSM, donors make the majority of funds available through an FAO hosted MPTF, although some donors do provide grants directly to the CSM.

### 2.5 The results of civil society participation and factors determining success

This review reveals that CSOs have had significant impacts on the processes, outputs and outcomes of global partnerships and government and other stakeholders often appreciate their participation. Clearly this is not always the case, particularly in countries where civil society engagement is not very welcome. However, the study reveals the clear added value that civil society can bring to evidence based policymaking, implementation and monitoring.

There was insufficient time during this study to analyze the achievements and determinants of success of all partnerships. Below we present some key findings from the CFS, the SUN Movement and the GPE, as well as factors influencing the outcomes of civil society participation at national level.

#### 2.5.1 Civil society achievements in the CFS

It is widely acknowledged that the reforms of the CFS would not have happened without social movements and other CSOs mobilizing the political will for the reform and shaping the new CFS. In Chapter 6 of her book “Food Security Governance”, Nora McKeon (2015) describes some of the strategies, tactics and impacts of civil society on CFS policy guidance on issues such as the governance of natural resources and investment in agriculture.

The CSM has been successful in influencing the terms of debate and the outcomes of (CFS) negotiations, particularly when social movements have engaged strongly. For example, on the issue of the governance of natural resources McKeon describes how:

> Throughout the negotiations⁵ the testimony and proposals brought to the debate by organizations of those most directly menaced by violations of their rights to land and other natural resources were particularly effective.

Some key issues on which civil society won arguments are identified:

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⁵ on the “Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries”
... the protection of customary tenure, a strong gender approach, priority restitution, and redistributive reforms... and states’ obligations to regulate their corporations’ operations beyond their own territorial boundaries.

Overall, McKeon concludes that:

Civil society has successfully occupied the global policy space... The CSM’s invariably substantive and disciplined input is appreciated by all parties. The fact that its positions are voiced by representatives of sectors who are most affected by the decisions under discussion has enhanced their legitimacy. The Mechanism is attracting attention throughout the UN world as a practice to be emulated.

2.5.2 Civil society achievements in the SUN Movement

The Independent Comprehensive Evaluation (ICE) of the SUN Movement highlights the contribution that civil society is making through the CSN in promoting high-level political awareness and commitment, in both donor and developing countries, to scale up nutrition. As one non-CSO interviewee stated: "We would not be where we are today without them [civil society]". According to an ICE survey respondent, in some cases, “national civil society alliances are credited with spearheading SUN processes in-country” (ibid).

The global CSN is considered to be effective in promoting and supporting the establishment and strengthening of national CSAs. The support provided to CSAs by the CSN – with limited resources – was widely recognised and valued by many ICE informants.

The ICE states:

the achievements of SUN Civil Society Alliances (CSAs) vary from country to country, and their relatively short period of operation to date has limited their impacts. Overall, many CSAs are still at an early stage of development, with few SUN activities off the ground. However, a few CSAs are already having significant influence on national policies and plans (Mokoro 2015: 55).

Examples of these outcomes include:

Madagascar SUN CSA – Hina’s advocacy efforts granted them a private audience with the Prime Minister and a commitment to hold a workshop with all ministers and donors to start discussing increased investment in nutrition. This commitment was reaffirmed by the Minister of Agriculture of Madagascar during the closing plenary of the 2014 SUN Movement Global Gathering (SUN Civil Society Network 2015: 79).

The CSA in Kenya is recognized by other stakeholders (from government and UN agencies) as having successfully advocated for a stronger nutrition component in the national health policy. The policy was revised based on their input4.

CSOs within the SUN Movement have been strong advocates for the decentralisation of national policies, capacities and resources, recognising that this is a pre-requisite for scaled up actions and major reductions in malnutrition. At least 24 CSAs are working at the subnational level to support decentralized, multi-stakeholder structures and processes (SUN Civil Society Network 2015).

2.5.3 Civil society achievements in the Global Partnership for Education

The review of the GPE suggests that the last five years have seen a shift in perception about the role of civil society from one of service delivery only to a key policy dialogue actor as well. A Civil Society Review (GPE

4 http://blog.results.org.uk/2015/02/02/sun-movement-success-in-kenya/
Secretariat 2014) concluded that: *civil society representatives on the Board and Committees seem to have had significant influence in a number of cases relating to Global Partnership policy issues.*

According to one informant from civil society, there are now minimum standards for inclusive and democratic participation in the GPE as a result of civil society participation. The new GPE strategy would have been more narrowly focused without civil society participation in the Board. CSOs also advocated for aid money to leverage domestic investments by requiring 6% of GDP and 20% of national budgets to be spent on education (Source: civil society Board member).

Civil society contributes to national plans, which are subject to informed public debate. Increasingly governments are being held to account by citizens rather than donors. Teachers are also much more involved in policy making. Without civil society participation donor voices would have dominated (Source: civil society Board member).

According to UNESCO 2015, key results of national civil society coalitions include:-

- As of June 2015, coalitions had participated in a total of 310 relevant education sector policy and review forums.
- The number of coalition members has increased by 50% since 2013.
- 90% of coalitions include member organizations representing women and girls, youth, and people with disabilities, and all coalitions represent at least two of these groups.
- 42 coalitions have participated in regional and/or global consultation processes on the post-2015 framework or other regional or global advocacy processes.
- Out of the 43 coalitions that reported a local education group (LEG) in existence in their country, 37 were engaging with it. 27 out of the 37 coalitions are full members of the LEG.

Further examples of the influence of national coalitions on education planning and policy processes can be found on the GCE website: [http://campaignforeducation.org/en/civil-society-education-fund](http://campaignforeducation.org/en/civil-society-education-fund)

### 2.5.4 Factors determining the performance of civil society mechanisms

The review of civil society mechanisms suggests key factors influencing civil society participation in multi-stakeholder platforms and their ability to influence decision-making.

A favourable political environment is fundamental:

- Political agreement that civil society are full participants in the debate;
- The acceptance that autonomous civil society mechanisms are an inherent part of the design of global partnerships;
- All constituencies in the partnership (civil society, private sector, multilateral organizations etc.) have their own spaces, given their different identities, roles and interests.

Internal factors have are also critically important, including:

- Reaching consensus between CSOs on the organizing principles guiding how they work together;
- The clarity of governance and administrative arrangements, i.e. civil society mechanisms are led by representative steering groups which consult the broader membership, whilst secretariats and host organisations play administrative support roles;
- Agreement that priority be given to organizations directly representing people most affected and at risk;
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- Developing consultation mechanisms within civil society to ensure that voices from local and national levels are heard regionally and globally;
- Strong technical support from experts in NGOs and academia;
- Effective technical support from the global to national mechanisms, e.g. on issues such as governance, advocacy skills, capacity building etc;
- The responsible approach of CSOs in their advocacy work encourages donors to provide resources to support the functioning of the Mechanism.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The review of existing partnerships identifies important precedents, which can be used to promote full and meaningful civil society participation, especially at risk children, in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. The findings of this study suggest a range of key issues, practices and principles that could help inform decisions on ways of engaging civil society in the governance arrangements of the partnership. They apply to the governance of the partnership and associated funding mechanisms at global and national levels.

Key issues to be considered for meaningful civil society participation

- A phased approach
- Quantity and weighting
- Role of participants
- Extent of participation in decision-making
- Definition of civil society
- Autonomy and self-organization
- Selection of participants in governing bodies
- The participation of people at risk
- Civil society mechanisms at global and national levels
- Funding for civil society participation

3.1 A phased approach

The review of the evolution of multi-stakeholder governance arrangements and civil society participation within them suggests that mechanisms should be light and flexible at the start of a partnership and become more formalized as it grows whilst trying to retain the partnership's dynamism and ability to act. Achieving appropriate balances between control and flexibility, and between inclusiveness and ability to make effective decisions, are constant challenges. This applies equally to the governance of the partnerships and the civil society governance mechanisms. The SUN Movement provides relevant learning on this issue.

3.2 Weighting of civil society participants

There is a strong basis for arguing that the number of civil society members of governing bodies should be high relative to other non-state actors, given that CSOs can help bring the voice of people at risk, as well as bringing experience based evidence about the effectiveness of policies, actions and investments.
3.3 Role and approach of participants

It is widely accepted that participants should not represent the narrow interests of one organization or group of people. In all except one partnership reviewed, civil society participants in governing bodies act on behalf of the wider civil society constituency of sub-constituencies. It is vital that civil society members share information and consult widely and ensure that the common and divergent positions of CSOs inform partnership decision-making. Mechanisms need to be established to enable these activities, as well as to ensure that civil society representatives are accountable to broader civil society. The CFS and GPE provide key experiences in this respect.

3.4 Extent of participation in decision-making

At the very least, civil society participation in policy and strategic discussions should be on an equal footing with governments and other stakeholders. This is the case in practice in the partnerships reviewed but the principle should be made explicit in governing documents, as is the case in the CFS. The Global Partnership for Education provides a strong precedent for CSOs having full voting rights in the governance of the partnership and associated funds.

3.5 Definition of civil society

It is important to reach agreement that civil society is not limited to NGOs. Often more informal grassroots organisations and movements most legitimately represent the voice of people most at risk. It is important to ask the question of what type of organization has the greatest legitimacy to speak on the issues under consideration in governing bodies.

3.6 The participation of affected and at risk people

Priority participation in governing bodies should be given to people and organizations that most legitimately bring the voice of at risk people to the decision making process. This principle should be stated in governing documents. Wherever possible, at risk people should be enabled to participate directly and an unmediated manner, i.e. children representing children.

3.7 Autonomy and self-organisation

The principle of civil society autonomy and self-organization should be explicitly recognized in GPEVAC governance documents (CFS, GPE and GPEDC). The selection of participants in the governing bodies of partnerships at global and national levels is best achieved through autonomous civil society mechanisms at these levels.

3.8 Terms of office

A period of 2 years is a common tenure for members of governing bodies, frequently with the option to renew for a second term.

3.9 Civil society mechanisms at global and national levels

CSOs might establish and/or strengthen existing independent global (CFS, SUN, GPE, GPEDC) and national (SUN, GPE) civil society mechanisms as the means of facilitating participation. It is important to ensure effective linkages between global and national mechanisms.
The role of global and national civil society mechanisms might include: selecting representatives in multi-
stakeholder platforms; sharing information widely; consulting members on issues under discussion in the wider partnership; facilitating common positions; discussing complementary strategies and tactics.

It should be recognized that there are a significant number of organisations and networks working on the issues of violence against children and child protection at global, regional and national levels. As much as possible, it will be important to involve them in the development of global and national civil society mechanisms, alleviating any fears of duplication or competition.

Reaching consensus on organising principles for global and national mechanisms is critical to ensure complementary ways of working between different types of CSOs. A key principle for consideration is giving priority within the mechanisms and in external representation to the voice of children most at risk.

3.10 Funding for civil society participation

Donors should make funds available to enable meaningful civil society participation in governance mechanisms at global and national levels. There are various possible sources of funding. It will be important for some better-resourced NGOs to make contributions to the budgets of the global and national mechanisms. Membership fees could be considered but are likely to cover only a small proportion of costs. National CSOs should encourage national governments to include costs of civil society participation to be included in requests to donors to support the development and implementation of national plans and programmes.

There could be a specific civil society window within the global fund that could be used to support the operating costs of global and national civil society mechanisms. It is important to clarify that this recommendation does not refer to funding for civil society programmes.

A key question is who should make the decisions regarding the allocation of funds to civil society national mechanisms. The principle of autonomy and self-organisation suggests that CSOs themselves should do this through their global mechanism, as is the case in the GPE. However, the disadvantage of this approach is that the administration of funds can divert attention from the core activities and the decision making process can lead to internal tensions within civil society.

This paper was commissioned by Save the Children and written by Chris Leather.

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savethechildren.net
Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the Review

1. Background

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children is a multi-stakeholder initiative led by UNICEF to accelerate implementation of SDG target 16.2 on eliminating all forms of violence against children. It is still in its development phase and is not due to be publically launched until March 2016 although 'soft' launches have already taken place around various international events.

The Global Partnership is seen as offering the potential for governments, ‘UN family’, civil society, faith leaders, the private sector, philanthropists and foundations, researchers and academics, and children themselves to work together to confront the unacceptable levels of violence faced by children worldwide.

In its ‘zero draft strategy’ the partnership has identified four key foci:
- Promoting an evidence-based package of interventions or ‘building blocks’ for violence prevention to drive action at the national level.
- Supporting a small group of pathfinder countries that have demonstrated a strong commitment to accelerating efforts to make children safe.
- Expanding the global movement to end violence.
- Creating a broad-based platform for sharing knowledge on best practices, promising initiatives and proven strategies to address violence.

2. NGO Engagement in the Governance of the Partnership

The long-term governance arrangements of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children are still under discussion. The clearest indication of what these might look like at the global level comes from an early discussion paper:

“The Partnership will be led by a global Steering Group responsible for overall strategic guidance, management oversight, governance, convening, advocacy, and coordination. It is suggested the group be composed at the level of Ministers, UN Agency Heads, senior leaders of civil society organizations, philanthropic foundations and the private sectors, and the Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSGs) on Violence Against Children and Children and Armed Conflict. UNICEF should play a key role in this group, under the leadership of the Executive Director, as one of two or three co-chairs”.

An Interim Advisory Group is currently providing transitional support at the global level in this area, with this arrangement is expected to continue until mid-2016. One INGO representative currently sits on the body. As indicated above, it is also expected that different stakeholder constituencies will be represented in the final governance structures including NGOs and other Civil Society Organisations.
In addition to global level governance arrangements, it is anticipated that national level governance structures may also be required in a small number of countries where the support and resources of the partnership will be focused (in so-called ‘pathfinder countries’).

3. Purpose of the Consultancy

In preparation for discussions about the long term governance arrangements, Save the Children wishes to learn from the experience of other multi-stakeholder partnerships of a similar nature about options for ways in which NGOs and civil society can be involved in MSP global and/or national governance structures in ways that can be seen as proportionate, representative and effective.

Save the Children also wishes to explore ways in which the key stakeholder group – children themselves – could be included in any governance structures whether at global or national level. This represents a challenge that most other MSPs are unlikely to have confronted and any lessons learnt are likely to come from other beneficiary groups.

4. Approach and Tasks

A consultant is required to carry out as desk-based review of a selection (6-8) of MSPs that are seen as reasonably comparable with the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. The consultant will be expected to propose the MSPs to be reviewed for consideration by Save the Children before embarking on the review.

The review itself will focus on:

- The ways in which NGOs/CSOs and beneficiary populations have been included in MSP governance at global and national levels
- Lessons learnt about the advantages and disadvantages of different options
- Interviews with 2-3 key informants (i.e. civil society representatives in governance structures of the selected MSPs)

On the basis of this review an options paper of approximately 20 pages in length is required, summarising the findings of this review and containing recommendations about how to best include representatives from civil society and children in the governance of the partnership.

5. Timeline

It is estimated that the desk review and preparation of the options paper will require 10 days of work.
Annex 2: Bibliography


GPE (2013a) GPE Board and Committee Operating Procedures [http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/board-and-committee-operating-procedures]


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## Annex 3: Key documents

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| **GPE** | GPE Global Governance Manual:  
http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/global-governance-manual |  
http://groups.com/gpe-nth-ingo-civsoc/  
2014 GPE Secretariat Civil Society Review:  
http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/civil-society-review-2014 |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| **GPEDC** | Mandate for the GPEDC:  
http://effectivecooperation.org/files/Mandate%20of%20the%20Global%20Partnership/formatted_proposal_for_mandate.pdf | CPDE Website:  
http://www.csopartnership.org/ |
| **RBMP** | Roll Back Malaria Partnership By-Laws:  
http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/files/about/rbm_bylaws.pdf  
Roll Back Malaria Operating Framework:  
| **Global Fund** | Operating Procedures of the Board and Committees of the Global Fund  
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