



LEARNING IN EDUCATION OUT LOUD

Why? What? How?

October 2023



WHAT IS EDUCATION OUT LOUD?

School girl in Madrassa in Bafele, Burkina Faso.
Photo: William Vest-Lillesoe, Oxfam.

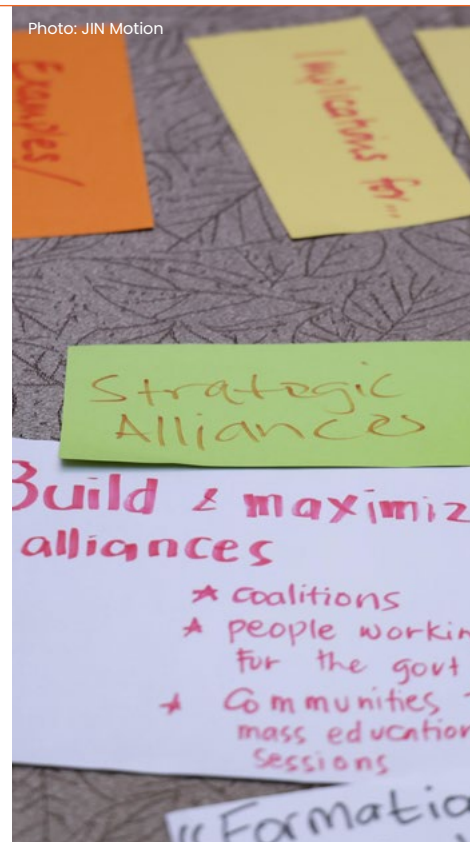
Education Out Loud is the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) fund for advocacy and social accountability. EOL supports stronger civil society engagement to transform education systems.

Education Out Loud strengthens civil society organisations to mobilise citizens and affect policy change in the education sector. It also helps make advocacy more effective at

the global, regional, and national levels, promoting transparency efforts around education policies and practices.

Managed by Oxfam Denmark, Education Out Loud is the largest fund in the world supporting both civil society advocacy and accountability for education with a funding envelope of US\$133 million between 2020 and 2026.

Photo: JIN Motion





Beatrice Angee is a teacher at World View Primary School, Palabek Settlement, Uganda. Photo: Emmanuel Museruka, Oxfam

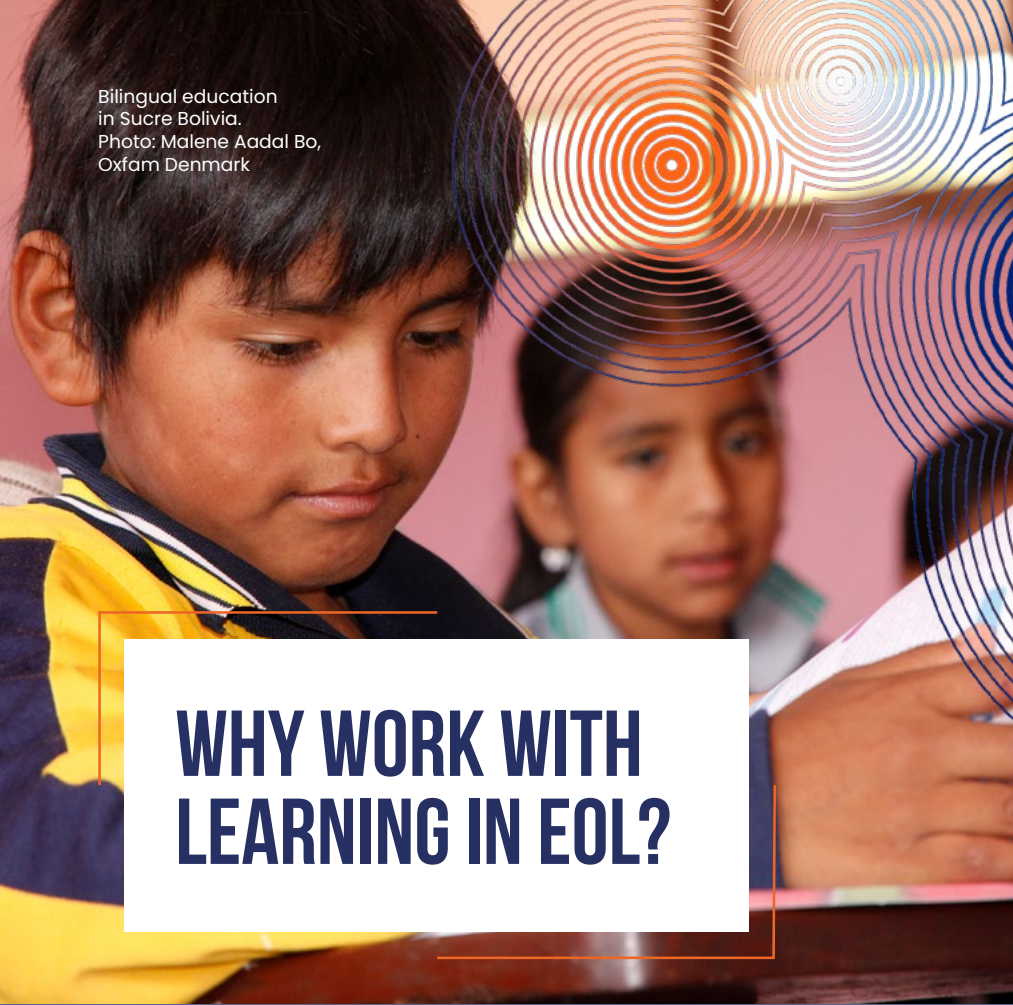
WHAT WE DO

Education Out Loud works with around 100 civil society organisations in more than 60 countries, funding civil society action across six main areas:

- **Policy dialogue:** participation of civil society in education planning and policy dialogue
- **Public engagement:** social mobilization, communication and campaigns supporting education
- **Data and transparency:** tool development to track public education budgets, programme implementation and increase accountability
- **Analysis:** research on education challenges and policy implementation
- **Strengthening civil society capacity:** regional and individual capacity support for education civil society/advocacy groups at the regional, individual and/or peer learning levels
- **Distilling of knowledge:** strategic research across the grant portfolio

EOL enhances civil society capacities to engage in education system planning, advocacy, and policy dialogue, and to monitor policy implementation as a way to promote transparency and accountability of national education sector policy. It also seeks to create a stronger and enabling environment at global and regional levels for civil society engagement, advocacy, and transparency efforts in education. We do that by providing grants for national education coalitions, national civil society organisations and transnational alliances.

Moreover, **EOL engages in and supports learning and capacity development of civil society organisations and coalitions.**



Bilingual education
in Sucre Bolivia.
Photo: Malene Aadal Bo,
Oxfam Denmark

WHY WORK WITH LEARNING IN EOL?

Strengthening civil society capacity is an end in itself. By embracing learning throughout, the EOL programme adds value and contributes to stronger, more strategic, and relevant, institutionally healthy, and sustainable civil society organisations, coalitions and alliances. This is done to strengthen their influence on the right to public, quality education for all, and strengthen transparency, social accountability, and civil society engagement in education policy dialogue.

A wider aim of EOL learning efforts is to **share lessons** from EOL implementation with the wider education community, contributing knowledge as a global public good to inform practitioners, funders, and country level stakeholders in efforts to improve the inclusiveness, transparency and effectiveness of education sector policy and implementation. EOL therefore provides a set of learning opportunities and facilities to promote learning throughout.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



How does learning among civil society actors contribute to transforming education systems and fulfil the right to free quality education for all?

- Learning enables civil society organisations to improve their **capacity to advocate and hold duty bearers in education accountable**.
- **Learning functions as an enabler.** Working rights-based, organisations are encouraged to not only focus on the intended outcomes and impact of their activities, but also to reflect on the process of how they work with each other and with their target group.
- Working with learning **enables organisations to access scarce skills and material resources**, while reducing duplication of efforts.
- Learning enables civil society organisations to **develop real expertise in education advocacy and social accountability** as they work in close collaboration and complement each other.
- Learning is **important, also for the coalitions, networks, and alliances** that EOL supports, as they are membership-driven and consist of a variety of organisations with diverse areas of expertise and constituencies representing different groups.

We work with learning to...

- Inform and improve the practices of EOL grantees and related civil society organisations to enhance their effectiveness and strategic impact on education policies, their implementation and social accountability throughout the education sector.
- Inform and influence the practices of the wider stakeholder group around education advocacy and accountability including the GPE secretariat/partners, International and national NGOs such as Oxfam, ministries of education and other decision-makers at national and regional levels in relation to civil society participation in education policy processes.



EOL grantees participating in workshop on education advocacy in challenging contexts facilitated by Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Nairobi 2023
Photo: JIN Motion

HOW EOL WORKS WITH LEARNING

EOL's approach to learning promotes the value of collaboration, peer learning, experience exchange because...

- Collaborative working arrangements have the potential not only to use existing resources most effectively, but also to **build capacity in collaborating organisations.**
- Collaborative working arrangements **create a synergy of purpose, values, skills, and expertise** that enables participating organisations to both add to and benefit from the relationship.

- Working together, organisations **see and try new ways of engaging stakeholders.** They are challenged to forge new theories and approaches to resolving challenges.
- Working with other organisations **provides fresh ideas and opportunities for skills development** through creatively sharing the best of what each organisation has to offer.
- Contacts are also exchanged, and the potential for each organisation to leave the collaboration with **enhanced skills, networks and reputation** is created.





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Photo: JIN Motion

WHAT DO WE WANT TO LEARN?

Collecting, sharing, and using lessons learnt

In EOL, lessons learnt by grantees are collated and documented through monitoring, reflection, research, and analysis of project results and experiences exchanged in learning collaboratives. Ensuring that lessons learnt are used and feed back to influence grantees' own practices to improve performance require that the lessons learnt are internalised and used by grantees.

To aid this process, Education Out Loud has a set of learning questions linked to its global results framework. Grantees report on lessons learnt and best practices around these questions. Using the different platforms for learning and communication in EOL, the lessons learnt, and best practices are shared with grantees and other civil society organisations – as well as with the larger stakeholder group like governments, decision-makers and donors to ensure knowledge generation on the effects on education

policy and system transformation, when real representation and participation of civil society is ensured.

Learning Questions for National Education Coalitions (NECs):

- Which strategies seem to be the most effective or counter-effective for engaging in policy dialogues with national authorities in education?
- Which strategies seem to be the most effective for civil society influence on education policies?
- Which strategies and methods tend to be the most effective for expanding representation and inclusion of marginalised groups in NECs?
- Which strategies seem to be the most effective for strengthening the capacity of NECs?
- Which strategies seem to be effective for enhancing strategic planning in civil society organisations?

Learning Questions for national civil society organisations:

- What seems to be the best ways to apply a human rights-based

approach or a gender perspective in studies on education policies?

- What tends to be the most effective ways to present data/evidence to catch the attention of politicians?
- What are we learning regarding the involvement of citizens in the definition of research methods and in research processes as such?

Learning Questions for transnational alliances:

- What tends to be the most effective and efficient strategies for influencing policies and practices internationally?
- What are the best ways to establish and operationalise social-accountability-mechanisms at global, regional and/or national level?
- What are the best ways to organise alliances in international settings?
- Which strategies are the best for creating an international learning environment among civil society organisations?



HOW WE IMPLEMENT LEARNING IN EOL

Shahed in school in Amman, Jordan.
Photo: William Vest-Lillesoe, Oxfam

The learning elements in the figure are implemented throughout the EOL programming cycle. Some are further explained in the boxes that follows.



GRANTEE LEARNING PLANS

- Dialogue-based learning needs assessment with each grantee.
- Balance learning within organisational, thematic and advocacy learning areas.
- Prioritise learning goals, activities & methods.
- Identify Learning Partners/ support.

GLOBAL & REGIONAL LEARNING PLANS

- Assess past learning efforts.
- Analyse trends.
- Identify strategic learning priorities.
- Analysis of learning needs and priorities across grantees in each region.
- Identify Learning Partners from learning partner pool.
- Identify/continue Learning Collaboratives.
- Timeline and budget.

LEARNING COLLABORATIVES

- A group of grantees that come together to increase their knowledge, skills, and capacities by exchanging experience or engaging in joint advocacy.
- Can focus on advocacy strategies, specific sub-themes in education or organisational capacity.

- A continuous effort/learning process of 3months to a year.
- Facilitated by a regional coalition, learning partner or lead grantee.
- Produce a joint learning product/ material/strategy that can be used and shared more widely.
- Commitment by participating grantees to use learning in their organisations.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Test Theory of Change and assumptions.
- Allow flexibility and adaptation of strategies, plans and budgets.
- Support grantees to become learning organisations that build in regular reflection/feedback loops.
- Support grantees to set up adaptive management systems.
- Distill and document lessons learnt to inform adaptations.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT PLATFORM

- Platform for EOL or learning partners to set up training or learning collaboratives.
- Ability for learning partners to manage participants, upload material, carry out tests and evaluations.
- Ability for participants to access material/modules, links and chat with each other and the learning partner.
- Ability for EOL to monitor and keep track of learning efforts.

Global learning partners

Selected research organisations undertake strategic research and capacity development activities across the portfolio. The four Global Learning Partners for 2022–2024 are Accountability Research Center, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning and a consortium of Management for Development

Foundation and Australian Council for Educational Research.

Current research topics of the Global Learning Partners include:

- Role and strategies of civil society in national education policy
- Education advocacy in challenging contexts of conflict and fragility

- Promotion of gender equality and social inclusion in education advocacy and policies
- Role of civil society in the promotion of transparency and accountability in education
- Innovative uses of new technologies as transformative tools for improving transparency and integrity in education.
- Governments' engagement with civil society in education sector policy design and implementation
- Analysis of civil society's approaches and methodologies for education advocacy and policy influencing

Moreover, the Global Learning Partners support EOL in strengthening its systems, for instance development of learning plans and strategies and Adaptive Management systems.

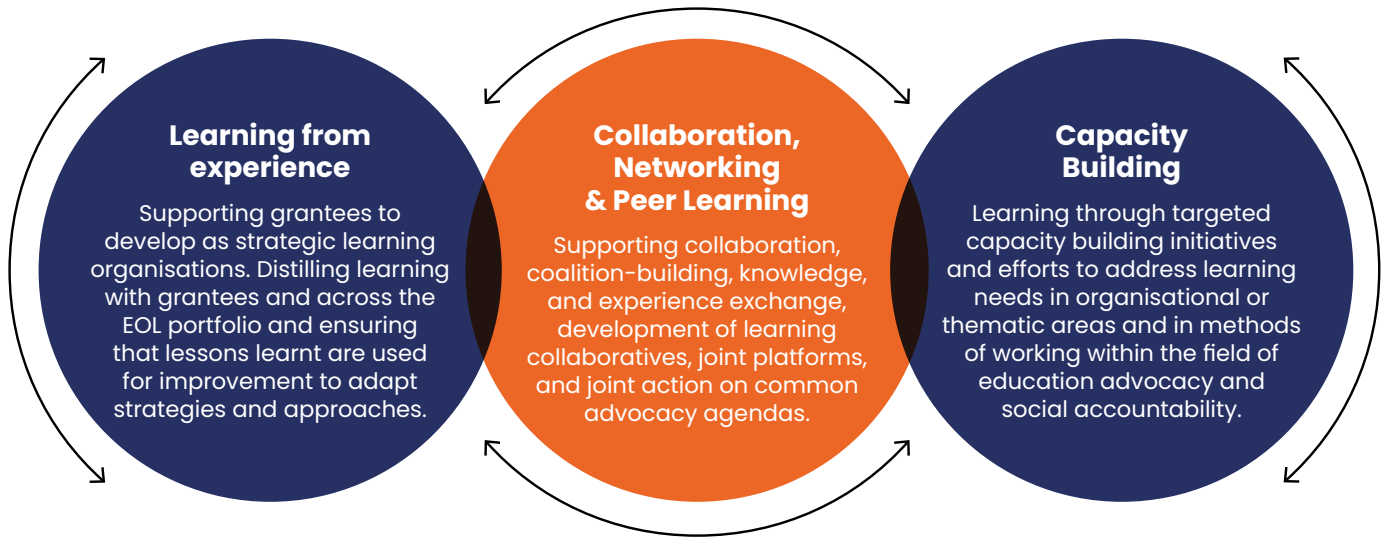
REGIONAL LEARNING PARTNERS

- Peer organisations, organisational development practitioners, research institutions or consultants that support learning among grantees.
- Proven experience in relevant thematic, advocacy or organisational areas of learning.
- Grounding in the global south and knowledge of grantees' context.

- Legitimacy – shared values, rights-based approach to civil society participation and education. Experience and methodological capacity in facilitating learning processes in organisations.
- Capacity to work with a gender transformative approach.
- Ability to engage grantees in action research or collate experience across the EOL portfolio.

EOL's three main approaches to support learning

- The approaches are interrelated and complementary.
- It is not a 'one size fits all' approach. It is based on thorough learning needs assessment and strategic considerations.



THE CHANGE TRIANGLE - FOR CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING

EOL grantees participating
in workshop on education
advocacy in challenging
contexts facilitated by Institute of
Development Studies, University
of Sussex, Nairobi 2023
Photo: JIN Motion

The terms capacity development and capacity building are used in different ways by different stakeholders, but can be understood in the following way:

In its simplest form, capacity is the **'ability to'** or **'power to'** do, be and relate. For an organisation to be able to effectively deliver its strategy and fulfil its mission, it needs to have a strong vision of what it is striving for, based on core values, effective leadership, governance structures, a comprehensive strategy, appropriate internal systems, and competent staff.

Organisations are complex, organic, and ever-changing. Civil society organisations not only try to influence the environment in which they work but are also influenced by that environment. Organisations cannot

function effectively in isolation; they need to invest in their relationships with other actors within their environment. They need to be able to relate, network, lobby, and facilitate change processes.

EOL uses **The Change Triangle** as an integrated and holistic model on organisational capacity. The Change Triangle consciously interlink thematic competencies, organisational capacity, and advocacy targets. The three elements in the change triangle are mutually interdependent and strengthen each other when planned adequately. The change potential of a civil society organisation, a coalition or an alliance of organisations is only as strong as the interaction between the three elements.

Capacity Building & Capacity Development

The development of organisational capacity can be consciously catalysed (**capacity building**) or may be expressed as patterns of changed practice or behaviour (**capacity development**)

DEFINING ...

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Elements of organisational capacity include, but are not limited to:

- Organisational Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Leadership development/governance
- Participation/inclusion
- Internal democracy
- Internal/external communication
- Gender equality
- Transparency
- Legitimacy and constituency building
- Financial Management
- Fundraising

THEMATIC CAPACITY

The concept of thematic competences refers to the professional focus of an organization, in this case education sub-themes:

- Education system transformation
- Education financing/budget monitoring
- Gender Transformative Education
- Education in fragile contexts/emergencies
- Technical Vocational Education and Training
- Early Childhood Development
- Education Monitoring and Information Systems
- Climate Education

ADVOCACY CAPACITY

Advocacy processes are composed of several of the following steps/elements:

- A clear alternative proposal for change
- Rights-based and evidence-based
- Mapping and analysis of power relations
- Short and long-term objectives
- Alliance building
- Building ownership
- Support from research & international institutions/organisations
- Influencing and use of media
- Interface with state and private actors
- Negotiation



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information on Education Out Loud, visit educationoutloud.org
or contact info@educationoutloud.org