INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this report

This report provides a summative account of both policy and programme activities of the Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) during the period under review; January to December 2013 and January to July 2014. The aim of the report is to inform the members including the Trustees and development partners on key developments and progress made since the last Annual general meeting held in June 2012 for the June 2010/December 2011 financial year.

1.1. What is CSEC?

The Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) which was formerly known as the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE) until 2011, is a coalition of 84 diverse independent and voluntary organisations (Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-based Organisations, trade unions, religious based organisations, etc) which have come together in the pursuit of the right to quality basic education in Malawi. The coalition also established 27 District Education Networks that span across all the three regions to uphold the mandate of the CSEC at district level.

The CSEC was founded in July 2000 with the aim of achieving measurable change in the quality of basic education through supporting and influencing the implementation and monitoring of government policies in Malawi. The Coalition articulates government commitments and advocates for viable policies to achieve the national education planned goals of gender equity, free enrolment and completion of primary education, reduction in adult illiteracy etc. In addition, the CSEC has a long-term commitment to monitor the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals of which Malawi was a signatory during the April 2000 Dakar Conference. Malawi is also a signatory of other international emerging goals.
1.2. **Vision, Mission and Values of CSEC**

1.2.1. **Vision**
To become an effective internationally renowned civil society that achieves the highest level of excellence of advocacy for accessible quality Education for All resulting into a literate society that will contribute to the national development in the global knowledge based economy.

1.2.2. **Mission Statement**
We advocate for a right to quality education for all by complementing government efforts towards a literate nation through diverse skills of our member organisations and the development of local networks in every district.

1.2.3. **Core Values & Common Ideals**
The basis of the Network’s value system is that Education is;

a) A universal human right

b) The key to poverty alleviation and sustainable human development is achievable if government mobilizes political and available resources.

The network further promotes the following common ideals;

a) respect for human rights, especially children’s rights;

b) promoting better working conditions for teachers;

c) Gender Equality; and

d) Accountability and Transparency.

1.3. **Objectives of the Coalition**

1.4.1 **Objectives:**

a) To advocate for actions and policies needed to ensure that every person in Malawi can realize their rights to quality education;

b) To provide a common platform for civil society organisations campaigning on issues of quality education for all;
c) To facilitate co-operation with national, sub regional, regional and global networks in pursuit of its aims, such as ANCEFA and SANCEFA;

d) To facilitate formation of a national movement with a long-term commitment to promote and monitor the implementation of the right to education and the achievement of education policies;

e) To raise resources to support activities of member organizations

2.0. **KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN 2013/14**

2.1. **EDUCATION BUDGET ANALYSIS AND POLICY ADVOCACY**

a. **Input into national formulation of the budget by the national Secretariat**

The Coalition made budget consultations with selected school communities and developed an issue paper for submission at the planning phase of the education Budget in February 2013. This Paper was submitted to both Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance. Education budget advocacy yielded positive results. Following the submissions, and with support from other partners such as parliamentary committees on education and budget and finance, Teachers Union of Malawi and Action Aid Malawi, the Government has increased the development budget for the sector from MK 6.5 Billion to MK 9.3 Billion. The allocation for the Education Sector as whole was slightly decreased from 18.6% of the National Budget to 18.04%. We have noted that Education as a sector was still allocated the lion's share of the budget. In view of the current economic challenges that Malawi is facing including the recent devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha, most sectors’ allocations have been reduced significantly, for example, allocation to ECD as been reduced by 50% (2013/14 Financial year budget)

b. **2012/13 Education Budget analysis Dissemination/**
The Coalition made an in house budget analysis of the 2012/13 Education Budget and presented these findings to the local Donors, Ministry of Education and Members of Parliament. The analysis helped Members of Parliament to understand the budget better and thus make relevant critique in Parliament. This was evident by the MPs’ call for more information on the education budget prior to the seating of Parliament. The Education Committee Chairperson in Parliament further commended CSEC for convening such meetings in order to prepare MPs on education issues. The meeting further provided space for the committee to question the Ministry Officials on how resources are allocated to different districts and programs like Early Childhood Development.

The Coalition further commissioned an independent body to consolidate its analysis and produce a full report on the 2012/13 Education Budget. The report was finalized and sent to publishing house for printing and further dissemination to education stakeholders.

c. Engage Members of Parliament on the Education Act

The Coalition held two lobby meetings with two different committees of the Members of Parliament on the delayed enactment of the revised Education Bill (2008) and the need to adopt compulsory Education. During the meeting members indicated that they want Malawi to adopt Compulsory Education as per the Malawi Constitution’s provision that there shall be free and compulsory primary education. They however indicated that the Ministry of Education withdrew the bill from Parliament because it does not want the country to adopt compulsory education. The MPs called on the coalition to liaise with the Ministry of Education to present a clearer and evidence based paper on the benefits and costs of compulsory education.

In the same space, another engagement meeting was held to understand the state in passing the Education Act after the same was referred to the Legal Affairs Committee. At the meeting it was revealed that all issues that were raised had been addressed by the Education Committee and the Ministry of Education. Among issues were; alignment of the Education Act to draft Education Policy yet to be adopted in 2013, and alignment of the Education Bill to the recently passed Council for Higher Education Act (2012.
Commitment was given that the Bill will be passed into law once it is tabled in Parliament.

d. **2013/14 Education Budget Analysis and Dissemination**

The coalition carried out an analysis of the 2013/14 budget and later held a dissemination meeting of the 2013/14 education budget analysis report. The meeting was held at Capital Sunbird Hotel on Tuesday, 11 June, 2013. The meeting was attended by Members of Parliament from the Education Committee and the Ministry of Education which was represented by the Director of Education Planning and the Budget Section.

The purpose of the meeting was to disseminate the findings of the 2013/14 education brief budget analysis that was commissioned by CSEC in June 2013. After the presentation the Members of Parliament sought for clarifications on various issues in budget analysis to which the Director of Planning from the Ministry of Education responded. Among the issues were the low absorption capacity of funds in the Ministry, poor funding for Teaching Learning Materials inspite of the existing gap in schools.

e. **2013 Global Campaign for Education (GCE)**

The CSEC held a National Launch for the GCE Week of Action on 23 April 2013 at Mtsiliza primary School in Lilongwe with a theme *Every child needs a teacher*. The launch brought together government officials from the Ministries of Education, key stakeholders in education, development partners, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, politicians, traditional and religious leaders, teachers, pupils and the community at large. The aim of bringing these people together was to make sure that they appreciate the need for adequate trained teachers for all and
consequently make commitment to ensuring that there are adequate trained teachers and that the welfare of teachers is improved.

The key successes of the campaign were;

- The Guest of Honour, who is also the principle secretary of basic and secondary education pledged to continue advocating for reducing current pupil and teacher ratio in Malawi by training more teachers
- The campaign mobilized politicians, government officials, school children and the general public other stakeholders who made demands to improve the conditions of teachers
- ‘Most of the teachers that participated and attended the campaign launch were inspired and encouraged not to give up as the problems are everywhere in Malawi as well as the principle secretary has pledged to improve their welfare
- The national launch was aired live on Zodiak radio station reaching to millions of people in Malawi
- Through the media campaign (live radio coverage of the launch on Zodiak Broadcasting station) awareness was raised the general public on the importance and value of teachers to achieve quality of education in Malawi.
- Through the presentation of the communiqué, the pupils were able to speak out the problems they are facing in relation to teachers inadequacy and poor welfare. Interface of Education Officials with Parents and Chiefs also helped in such a way that the parents were able to speak out their views on what can be done to best deal with the problem of having inadequate teachers as well as of poor teachers welfare.

f. **Hold ECDE regional conference**
Some of the delegates at the conference graced by Vice President, Rt. Hon Khumbo Kachali (front-right)

From 16 - 17 July 2013, CSEC hosted the 2013 ECDE Regional Conference in Lilongwe, at cross roads. The ECDE Regional Conference was being held in partnership with the Malawi Government, under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MGCSW), with the financial support from the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). The theme of the conference was “Accelerating Progress in the ECDE Sector: A Call for National and Regional Duty”. The theme reflected the importance and need for stimulating critical analysis of the ECDE sector with a view to promote concerted efforts in advancing ECDE in the region. The conference brought together Ministerial departments, senior government officials and other stakeholders that have keen interest in Early Childhood Development affairs from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, DRC, Swaziland, Botswana, and Mozambique.

Some of the key issues, solutions and recommendations that were raised during the conference deliberations and the panel discussion included the need for increased financing; increased awareness & lobbying; networking and partnership-building; strengthening policy frameworks; and Training and capacity-building, just to mention but a few.

2.2. Media Advocacy

a. Undertake teacher welfare advocacy

The coalition in partnership with the Teachers Union of Malawi, held a live phone in Radio program on MIJ FM on Saturday the 15th of December 2012 from 1 pm. The program focused on teacher welfare and among other things it examined what efforts have been put in place to deal with the challenges that teachers meet country wide and whether these efforts have been significant or not.

Following this advocacy program in which the Principal Secretary of Education Participated indirectly via telephone, Teachers Salaries in the months of December and January were paid not later than 4 days after their pay day. The other impact is that
government has announced to promote not less than 10 teachers this year. The implication of this decision is that this will motivate teachers not only to work hard but also to value the essence of being a teacher

b. Education Budget Advocacy (Radio program)

The Coalition held a live radio panel discussion on Wednesday 21 June 2013 at Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) in Lilongwe. The program focused on Education financing in Malawi; and examined whether government is committed to promoting the welfare of children in Malawi in light of the proposed 2013/14 National Budget. The program mostly focused on ECD financing which is currently being underfunded.

c. Media advocacy on the free primary education study

CSEC organized a live radio programme on the Cost of the Hidden Cost of Free Primary Education. The programme was held at MIJ FM in Blantyre from 13:00-14:00 hr on Saturday 1st March, 2014. The aim of the radio programme was to disseminate information from the research on the Hidden cost of the free primary education which CSEC had earlier commissioned MIM to conduct.

Specifically the radio programme sought to answer the following questions;

- What contribution has the Free Primary Education brought to the development of education in Malawi?
- Whether we have FPE in Malawi. What are the bottlenecks in effectively implementing FPE?
- Government's responsiveness to provide quality education that is accessing, relevant and timely to all
- Status of EFA and MDG Goals
- Looking ahead of the new education law, how should government plan and prepare for the roll out of compulsory education.

The radio programme was successfully conducted and a number of people participated in the programme by sending text messages of issues they wanted addressed.

d. Hold live radio programs on education budget and the Education Act.

The Coalition Held 3 and 1 TV program on the radio programs on the Education Act and Compulsory Education. Two live phone-in radio programs were held MIJ Radio and one live phone-in program on Joy Radio. These radio programs generated policy debate on the need for a relevant education laws and policies as seen by the many callers including officers and Directors from the Ministry of Education who rightly indicted that they will join and participate in future programs. One recorded panel discussion was aired on
MBC TV. It featured the vice Chairperson of the Legal Affairs Committee. This panel discussion was aimed at further generating debate at national level by using the national television on the need to enact the Education Bill (2008). The media engagements have garnered support for the Education Bill and it is expected that the Bill will be tabled in Parliament in February 2013.

**e. Run media jingles in vernacular languages to sensitize and raise awareness on ECDE**

In an effort to raise community awareness nationwide around ECDE, the Coalition developed Media jingles that are being run in both English (30%) and Chichewa (70%) on Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) since June 2013. The media jingles call on all community members to send their Children (including those that are disabled) to ECDE centers. The jingle further calls on all communities to establish ECDE center where there are absent. Zodiak radio station is ranked by Malawi Communication REGULATOR Authority as number radio station with the highest listenership of 76% nationwide. To date, over 283 jingles have been run on ZBS just after the mid day news hour.

**f. Host live and recorded radio programs to popularise ECDE in Malawi**

The Coalition held 1 live program and 2 recorded panel discussions on Zodiak radio station in Lilongwe. The first radio program which was live focused on ECD policy frameworks and ECDE financing in Malawi and zeroed in on the 2013/14 budget which has very minimal resources. The live discussion was facilitated by CSEC Director, Association of Early Childhood Development director and ECD Coordinator from Action Aid Malawi.

The first recorded radio programs focused on the “the importance of ECDE in education” and was facilitated by the Director of Basic Education the Director of Child Affairs in the Ministry of Gender and Child Development. The second recorded program was facilitated by officials from Feed the Children and Action Aid Malawi. Through the program parents have been given knowledge on o know the significance of ECD in education and how they can access ECDE services or how they can approach government to assist them to set up ECD centers in their communities.

**2.3. RESEARCH**

**a. Research on the hidden cost of the Free Primary School Education, validation and dissemination**
CSEC commissioned the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) to conduct a research into the hidden cost of free primary education in order to assess the extent to which free primary education is in real terms free and accessible to all. This involved unpacking all forms of costs that pupils are currently subjected to. Following the completion of the study, CSEC sought to validate and disseminate the results of the study to its member organizations and other concerned bodies.

Following the completion of the study, CSEC organized a dissemination and validation workshop for the research on the hidden cost of the free primary education on 12th December, 2013 at Pacific hotel. A total of 17 people attended the meeting. Participants contributed to the development of the report by raising issues that had not been adequately analyzed, had been overlooked and over emphasized. Most of the suggestions made have been incorporated into the study by the consultant.

b. Baseline survey
The Coalition with guidance from Trocaire Malawi, from January to 18 February designed and undertook a baseline survey for the project. The survey was done in 3 Districts from all the three regions of the country. The survey helped CSEC to implement its project which is funded by Trocaire.

c. Conduct education annual budget review (Public Expenditure Tracking Survey)
With contributory support from ANCEFA the coalition commission and conducted a public expenditure tracking survey in 5 districts. The survey focused on construction of school blocks, teacher houses and capital grants. The Survey was completed in December but the final report is yet to be finalized by an independent consultant with funding from Trócaire. However, the survey findings revealed that government was unable to meet the annual set targets for construction of additional school blocks and teachers houses. In addition, it was evident from the survey that disbursement and effective utilisation of the capital grants is a serious issue worth review.

The final PETS report was shared on Monday 9th April.

2.4. CAPACITY BUILDING

a) Capacity Building Workshop for CSEC members and DENs.

20 Officers from the Coalition membership benefitted from a two day training workshop that was held from 20 to 21
December 2012 at Pacific Hotel in Lilongwe. The Training was facilitated by two independent consultants who are experts in Proposal Development, Policy Advocacy and Project Management. The Training equipped the participants in the above mentioned areas and is expected to improve the quality of their participation in the Coalition policy advocacy initiatives.

b) Training of CSEC Members in PETS and Budget Advocacy

The Secretariat held a training workshop for 12 Officers from the Coalition membership and the DENs at Bridge View Hotel. The Training was facilitated by Secretariat staff and was largely meant to orient participating officers on the focus of the survey and the data collection tools. The Training equipped the participants in the above mentioned areas as evidenced by the successful collection of the required budget expenditures.

2.5. COALITION BUILDING

a) Annual General Meeting for the Coalition on 26 June 2012 at Pacific Hotel in Lilongwe.

The Coalition’s Members received, reviewed and approved the Coalition’s Annual report both Financial and Narrative. The Outgoing Executive Board Also presented the Recently concluded AUDIT report by Price Waterhouse Coopers for the Period July 2010 to December 2011.

From a governance perspective the Council at the AGM elected a new Executive Board following the expiry of the last Board in December 2011. The New Board includes the following:

In accordance with the revised Constitution of the Coalition the Board comprises 50% Men and 50% Women. The AGM gave mandate to the New Executive Board oversee the implementation of the Coalition’s objectives. One of the key issues that were discussed at the AGM was the need to improve and institute two-way reporting between the Secretariat and the membership to ensure that that there is synergy building and coordination among education partners. This signifies and promotes the continued existence of an education movement that is well coordinated in advancing quality access education for all.

Following the election of the new committee, a board meeting was held where the old committee handed over tasks to the new committee. This was a very important meeting that has seen a smooth transition between the old and new Executive Committees. In addition, the board meetings help the Secretariat to brief the board on project implemented. More so, board meetings help to mobilize the necessary political will of the board towards the project.

b) Review and update Coalition Website

The Coalition developed a new website and logo in line with the name change from CSCQBE to CSEC that was effected in 2011. The new website was finalized and is fully
The Coalition developed a new Strategic Plan for the period 2013 to 2017. The new strategic plan, developed through community and coalition membership consultations is going to provide the Coalition with clear guidance on areas that the Coalition needs to address as an institution but also continues to provide information on the education budget and other education issues, in this case, the need and advantages of enacting the revised Education Bill.

d) Institutional governance meetings

CSEC held one institutional governance meeting on 19th November, 2013. The meeting was attended by five people (2 females and 3 males) of which 3 were board members and 2 were members of staff.

e) Participate in Education SWAp technical working group meetings

The Coalition seats on the Local Education Technical Working Group of the Education SWAp. These meetings are attended by donors, and high level policy makers in the sector. Throughout the project implementation period the Coalition through its membership and the Secretariat attended quarterly Technical Working Group Meetings for Basic Education, Higher Education, Teacher Education and Quality and standards. These meetings help the Coalition to influence policy change from within in addition to using the platform to share information on what projects it is working on.

At the sector and technical working groups, ministry of education and other stakeholders update each other on what they are doing. The sector working group is also a policy forum for collective decision making as it embraces the participation of development partners and is the decision making platform on all major policy recommendations to government.

2.6. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

a) Support district Education Networks (DENs) to conduct campaign on the right to education/Hold district level interface meetings at district level on education policies

The secretariat with support from Members of the Programs Subcommittee of the Executive Committee visited 7 District Education Networks across the three regions of the country to mobilize issues for advocacy and give technical support to the DENs role in their respective districts. Through the process the Coalition identified three DENs which were supported to conduct district based advocacy campaigns. The three Districts are Salima, Mchinji and Mzuzu. The Districts conducted research and advocacy
around the right education. The advocacy efforts were very successful and stimulated policy debated even at national level. In Salima for example the DEN's research showed that school in Nsalura Zone were sending learners back to school for failing to pay Development Funds and that standard 8 learners were required to pay K700 (US$ 2.5) which some learners from disadvantaged households cannot afford. Through the campaign the District Education Office informed all head teachers that these extra lessons should be free for all learners. The Office further directed that the no pupil should be sent back from school because they have failed honor payment of Development Funds. The District Education Manager is reported to have directed that communities have to devise other means of collecting the development funds without denying learners their right to education

b) Capacity building in school governance and advocacy for participating DEN’s

On 13th December, 2013 CSEC organized a capacity building workshop on school governance and advocacy for all participating DEN’s from the six target districts; Thyolo, Blantyre, Lilongwe, Dowa, Mzimba and Mzuzu. The aim of the workshop was to equip participating DENs with skills in advocacy and school governance so that they can be able to advocate for education issues and train target SMC’s in their districts. Two DEN members were selected from each district such that the workshop brought together 12 DEN members. All selected topics were facilitated by government officials as they involved technical aspects that have been developed government. Among the topics presented in the workshop were;

- Community participation
- Resource mobilization
- Orientation of the PSIP program
- Presentation of school assessment charts
- Monitoring teacher and pupil absenteeism
- Teacher salary tracking

In the final session, participants were compelled to develop an action plan stating what they would do following the workshop. All participants suggested that they would train SMC’s in target schools in their districts on school governance and advocacy.

a. Training of SMC’s on SIG planning, resource mobilization, monitoring of pupil and teacher absenteeism (Baseline survey and mobilization of school management committees)

The Secretariat undertook project roll out activities and data collection in Lilongwe, Mzimba and Mzuzu. The aim of the exercise was to develop baseline values for the school governance project and to mobilize communities to take an active role in procurement monitoring and teacher absenteeism monitoring. As part of the process, SMC’s were given data booklets that will guide them on how to discharge their roles.
One zone and 5 schools were targeted in each of the 3 districts (except in Mzimba where the orientation had already been done). About 117 SMC’s, 13 head teachers and 22 DEN members were trained on how to use the data collection booklet. However, the funds used for this activity were drawn from Training of SMC’s on SIG planning, resource mobilization, monitoring of pupil and teacher absenteeism as DEN’s had already identified school governance and all these issues as part of their advocacy and would be using funds from their sub grants to train the SMC’s.

b. **Support district based community mobilization and advocacy**

DEN members picked school governance as an advocacy issue and drew an action plan on how they would train SMC’s in governance. Among the activities included in the action plan were:
Briefing of DEN members, DEM

- Training of SMC's on SIG planning
- resource mobilization, monitoring
- Stakeholders meeting
- of pupil and teacher absenteeism Monitoring

Following this development, CSEC gave out sub grants, to participating DENs, of up to MK250,000.00 each, to conduct the activities they had outlined in the action plan.

c. Support selected DEN’s to engage district councils and conduct community dialogues with Members of Parliament

The Coalition supported 10 District Education Networks (DENs) to conduct community dialogue sessions with members of parliament in their respective communities to raise awareness among community members about ECD services and consequently mobilize the communities to work towards establishing and improving ECD centers in their villages. In the picture a community dialogue session in progress at kasiya zone, Lilongwe District.

The DENs that were supported are Nsanje, and Blantyre in the Southern region, Chitipa and Mzimba in the Northern region, Mchinji, Lilongwe, Salima, Ntcheu and Dedza in the central region and Machinga in the eastern region.

The district activities ranged from Sensitization meetings with community members, orientation meetings with Traditional leaders and Government Officials. Other activities included poems, debates and displays by CBCC children.

2.7. NETWORKING AND COORDINATION
The Coalition participated in regional and international meeting within its mandate such as the;

- Pre-2015 and post 2015 development agenda which was held in France
- COMDAF meeting in Yaunde Cameroon
- GPE pledging conference in Brussels
- EFA CSO policy engagement meeting in Ghana
- CSO policy forum for southern Africa in Mombasa

At national level, CSEC has been participated in CSO review meetings organized by CONGOMA, sister networks, members and partners.

The advantage of these meetings is that they provide an opportunity for knowledge, learning and sharing, for informed understanding of development discourses as they relate to education.

3.0. KEY SUCCESSES

- Conducted the 2012/13 and 2013/14 Education Budget analysis
- Successfully advocated for the passing of the new Education act through petitions and radio programmes
- Conducted research on the “hidden cost of the free primary education”
- Produced policy brief on compulsory education
- Held policy advocacy meeting with Members of Parliament
- Held budget lobby meetings with members of Parliament
- Held radio programs on education budget, free primary education ECD and the Education Act.
- Commitment by journalist of intensifying advocacy campaign through their media houses so as to promote ECD activities in Malawi

4.0. CHALLENGES

- Late disbursement of funds by donors led to the delay in the start and progress of a number of projects i.e. ANCEFA
- Low staffing delayed implementation of activities
- Lack of financial support to engage DEN’s that are not participating in projects have led to inactiveness of such DEN’s

5.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recruitment and capacity building of staff in programs and finance
- Capacity building of DEN’s should target all DEN members to ensure that quality
is achieved in the implementation of activities

- Consider fundraising options to support DEN's activities and DEN meetings (quarterly)

6.0. CURRENT AND UPCOMING PROJECTS

<table>
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<th>Project</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<td>Enhancing Civil Society Participation in Influencing Government Decision Making in the Education Sector</td>
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<td>Improving girls education and teacher welfare</td>
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7.0. CONCLUSION

This report has summarized some of the major policy and program activities from January to December 2013 and January to June 2014. Activities have been grouped in key thematic areas including education budget analysis and policy advocacy, media advocacy, research, coalition building, networking and coordination and community mobilization. In the report, key successes and challenges have also been noted and recommendations made. The report has also made a brief description of the current and upcoming projects at CSEC.