

**Inclusive Education and Education Reform:
Contributions to Work from OSF Proposed Strategies 2014-2017**

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INTRODUCTION

A child's right to achieve their fullest potential, to cultivate their identity and culture, and to experience a sense of belonging and participation must be realized in and through formal and informal education and development opportunities. Yet too often education systems exclude, segregate or provide inferior education opportunities to Roma children, children with disabilities, migrant children, children from ethnic or linguistic minorities and other groups that suffer discrimination.

The Early Childhood Program, Education Support Program, Human Rights Initiative, Justice Initiative, and Roma Initiatives promote the right to education as a way to enable meaningful inclusion, ensuring that social exclusion is not perpetuated through education systems. This concept explores how OSF can integrate development and rights perspectives to catalyze fundamental change in the way education is structured and delivered, offering opportunities for building more inclusive, participatory, equitable, and open societies. Over the past eight months, a range of OSF network programs have joined in ongoing conversations about how to deepen our collaboration toward advancing inclusive education in varying contexts.

Advocacy and Operational Offices

OSF- DC

From: IV. Concepts and Initiatives, Domestic Policy

School Discipline – Unacceptable numbers of youth are sent into the criminal justice system because of the overuse of expulsions and suspensions. OSF-DC has recently had some successes in our efforts to change federal law and regulations in this area, limit the role of police in schools and mandate data collection. There are opportunities for substantial change in this area but few actors work on this issue in DC. Chris Scott has relevant experience from working in the House and strong relationships at the Department of Education. OSF also has unique insights on effective policy in this area because of OSF-Baltimore's pioneering work.

From: Addendum: Preliminary OSF-DC 2014 Work Plan, Domestic Policy

School Discipline and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement – Limit the number of police in schools and reduce their role in school discipline; hold schools accountable for disproportionate discipline for minorities and the disabled; promote responsible fatherhood.

GEOGRAPHIC PROGRAMS AND FOUNDATIONS

OSF Armenia

FROM: FEALTY TO FIELDS

Concept 5: Improving the quality and relevance of high school and higher education structures through setting the reform agenda and providing a platform for civil society's engagement in the education reform process

Large donor-driven reforms in high school and higher education in Armenia are assessed by donors and the government as highly successful processes and deemed to have contributed to quality and autonomy of the education system. In reality, however, the backsliding in quality, access and independence is endemic¹.

Currently, there is an opportunity to influence the course of both reforms due to several factors: Armenia is chairing Bologna Secretariat until 2015, the country is in the process of signing an Association Agreement with the EU with components on academic mobility, and the COE is about to launch a large anti-corruption project. Regarding high school, there is acknowledgement of a need to improve the newly introduced model both by the government and the World Bank.

With this concept, the Foundation aims to engage with ongoing reform agendas and to influence the course of the reform so that the issues of access, accountability, and relevance of education are adequately and effectively researched and addressed. This will be done by producing research-based conclusions and designing policy solutions to contest the course of on-going high school and higher education reforms; by consolidating civil society, education practitioners, and students to carry on a **broad-agenda discourse on equity, access, and quality of education**; and by supporting elements within institutions proven to serve as positive models of implementation. The concept idea stems from the study commissioned by the Foundation with assistance of HESP and conducted by the CEU Center for Higher Education. The Executive Summary of this study is attached in Annex 2.

***Goal:* Set the agenda of the two large-scale systemic reform projects in a way that the high school revision addresses equity and adequacy of the system throughout the country, and the higher education reformation implements the policies on independence and anti-corruption**

Outcomes:

- **Systemic problems with university and high school governance, academic freedom, and school accessibility are identified in concrete imperatives for revision and alternative policy solutions**

¹ Transparency International's Corruption Barometer lists education in Armenia as the most corrupt of all sectors. Accessed from: <http://gcb.transparency.org/gcb201011/infographic/>

- **The proposed legislative and policy solutions become part of the reform plans; government delivers on Bologna reform and EaP obligations and enacts anti-corruption measures**
- **Participatory alternative structures are established and function in a way to extend to all segments of the academic community, and to encourage cooperation between education experts and civil society in the reform progress review process**

Assessment: policy research papers and concrete recommendations are produced; government addresses legislative changes related to governance and autonomy of universities and university accreditation; donors and decision makers reach consensus policy solutions; partnership is created among academia and civil society to strengthen the demand for policy changes and monitor reform.

SHARED FRAMEWORKS

The Foundation will engage in the *Inclusive Education, Criminal Justice, and Elections* shared frameworks once they are initiated. In the area of ***Inclusive Education*** we expect to enrich our work by both gaining access to experiences across the network and also by providing visibility for the existing problems in Armenia. Simultaneously, our work in monitoring the rights of children in special residential care institutions can be of common interest.

OSF- BH

From: 3. Foundation Concepts and Initiatives

Mobilizing the education community to advocate for change

Education is the single most powerful tool for perpetuation of inter-ethnic divisions and inequalities. This problem has largely been abandoned by major international agencies and local NGOs. The former are reluctant to deal with issues that ask for long term commitment and the latter lack the capacity to deal with quality of education provision in a comprehensive manner.

Up until 2007, the Foundation sought to develop conceptual frameworks and models of systemic change (institutional and capacity building) in education, working in cooperation with MoEs. Apart from a number of individual accomplishments, this approach produced little sustained impact as the governments lacked the genuine will and commitment to reform the system; on the contrary, they effectively worked to maintain the *status quo*. That is why in 2007 we changed our strategy to build awareness about the fundamental shortcomings in education (**discrimination** and low quality of provision) and mobilize the professional and policy communities into action and change.

As a result of our efforts, a number of voices that publicly question issues in the education system have recently been raised. Our online platform for critical discussion on the right to quality education, the *(S)Collegium*, has gathered educators, experts and activists around key issues in educational reform and is recognized as a public forum for professional debate and collaboration.

Meanwhile, the Foundation has ensured funding from USAID for a multi-year project for curriculum and pedagogy development which will be implemented by our Step by Step spin-off.

It is now essential for the Foundation to secure and extend this momentum. In order to achieve this ambition the Foundation will identify, promote and further enhance innovative and progressive schools that have managed to embrace change despite the unfavorable environment. This strategy is based on the assumption that the message is most effective when delivered by the change agents themselves and from within the system.

In order to motivate schools to become a part of the process we will provide support for sustainable projects that will further improve school practice.

The progress or the lack of it can already be assessed in the second year – the change in the number of schools and practices that fulfill the criteria of quality education will clearly indicate if this strategy works. In a four year period we expect to see innovative and progressive educational practices multiplied across the country. The envisioned success may be jeopardized by the highly bureaucratic nature of the education system, which entails approval by the Ministry for each innovation and which can substantially slow down the process.

Given the common goal of pursuing right to quality education, the Foundation will continue to collaborate with ESP, participate in OSF Education Coordinators' Working Group and draw on data and resources provided by ESP.

4. Contributions to Shared Frameworks

Among shared framework ideas that are presently being discussed, we have strong interest in two:

- Jekhutno – A shared framework for Roma, and
- **Inclusive education.**

Bearing in mind that both are in a relatively early stage of development, our actual contribution will be defined as these ideas progress.

We are also considering what contribution from our experience and/or expertise might be relevant for the network. Our current ideas require more elaboration, and a proposal can be prepared later this year.

TIFA

1. CONTRIBUTION TO SHARED FRAMEWORKS

... TIFA has also been engaged in the education sector, especially for its human rights program. As noted above, one of the emphases of our human rights program will be **on educating the younger generation of the importance of human rights and constitutionalism. Therefore, we would also like to participate in the Inclusive Education shared framework.**

Related to that, TIFA would also like to initiate a shared framework on Uniformity and Diversity. We are currently in conversation with OSF Turkey and East-East Beyond Borders to initiate this framework. This initiative initially came out of sharing of experiences between OSF Turkey and TIFA, in which we identify a common thread between the two countries as the majority Muslim countries that traditionally had been seen as plural and tolerant, but more recently have been under threat from elements that wish to see uniformity in religious practices and in general issues of social development. It is understood that this phenomenon is not exclusively happening in Muslim countries, but also in varying degrees can be found in non-Muslim countries in other regions.

SFKyr

From: Foundation concepts and initiatives

We have four concepts identified as priority areas in Kyrgyzstan. All of them are leading us to the main goal – *Justice and Transparency*.

Education for social inclusion and cohesion

Kyrgyzstani society is becoming increasingly fragmented along economic, ethnic, religious, geographic and other social divisions. Different groups face different barriers to exercise their right to education as a result. The lack of space for positive interaction between communities is reflected in schools where children from different ethnic and religious groups and different ability levels study in different schools, classrooms, or in different buildings. Over half out of 23,000 registered children with disabilities never attended school. Children from religious families sometimes attend only religious schools, and many children are in schools or classrooms only with others from the same language group. This perpetuates tensions between different social groups and exacerbates the barriers to education determined by language issues, disabilities, and other special education needs. Inclusive education is one of the main priorities within National Strategy 2012-2020, backed up by the possibility of upcoming substantial donor funding from the Asian Development Bank and EU. The specific role and added value of SFK will be the preparation of replicable models of social inclusion that can be scaled up nation-wide once the significant funding is available in systemic manner. Apart from mental and physical disabilities, SFK will also target social exclusion caused by various social factors – language, ethnic, religious etc. In addition to this, SFK will build on the existing networks of schools and civil society actors working in this field to ensure that both the interests and resources of grass roots actors and schools are met and used at their best capacity. Whereas the bigger donors are often limited to their formal agreements with the government and cannot mobilize the civil society actors and schools effectively, *Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan will mobilize schools, education support services, and civil society at the local level to develop and institutionalize sustainable models of integrated and inclusive education, including early intervention and rehabilitation services, for children who face different barriers in exercising their right to education*. We expect to see several outcomes: Officially recognized and adopted learning environment standards for inclusive education institutions, teacher certification standards, and teacher training programs as well as learning materials that enable teachers to work in inclusive settings with minority language children and children with other special education needs through coordination with grassroots initiatives as well as grant-making and advocacy activities at the

national level; A network of 5-6 inclusive schools linked to early intervention and rehabilitation services with appropriate financial and administrative incentives through partnership with the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia and other relevant partners; Pilot schools are able to serve as centers for cohesion among different ethnic and social groups and are strengthened through partnership with the Foundation for Education Initiatives Support and other relevant partners in southern Kyrgyzstan. (100 educators competent in teaching, developing programs, and working in diverse cultural environments)

Our strategic partners are: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Social Development, Parliamentary Committee on Education and Social Policy, Early Childhood Program of OSF, Education Support Program of OSF, ADB, UNICEF, EU Commission “Europe Ltd project”, local and civil society and professional organizations (EFCA, FEIS, Center for Social Integration, Parents associations and existing network of partner schools in the South.

Mongolia

3. Fealty to Fields and Places: In 2004 the foundation in Mongolia was restructured, following OSI New York’s recommendations, to move away from grantmaking and focus primarily on advancing public understanding in critical areas. Therefore, most of the Forum’s efforts has been focused on developing capacity to pursue its own initiatives (section 4), though in all of them an important priority is building the capacities of partner organizations, and so strengthening the field. There is one area in which we are primarily concerned with strengthening an emerging field rather than with achieving a specific task.

3.1. Inclusive Education

The Mongolian education system tends to overlook students who need special arrangements, such as supplementary tutoring or disability-specific support. The absence of adequate academic and social support marginalizes students in need of such services, and often leads to them dropping out. Rural children with disabilities are often completely left out of schooling, while children in urban areas are segregated into special school systems. However, parental demand for better access to education and social inclusion is increasing and support exists from individual politicians, creating opportunities to change policies and practices. Equally importantly, public funds will be growing significantly in the next few years, adequate to bringing about real reform in the sector, provided key advocates are in place and ready to lobby persistently and intelligently for specific changes.

In the next few years, the Forum will significantly strengthen the capacity of advocates for inclusive education to push for the necessary changes which will make it a public policy priority in Mongolia. Our main strategic partner in this field are *Mongolian Education Alliance*-known for its extensive networks of teacher trainers, curriculum development specialists and partner schools, and the *Association of Parents of Disabled Children*, a right-based advocacy group which runs advocacy and information campaigns for quality education and health care system for children with disabilities and provides child development services to families.

The Mongolian Education Alliance was created in 2004 as a spin-off of MFOS’s Education programs. It has a great deal of experience in teacher training, curriculum development, community and parental involvement, and maintains a large network of rural and urban partner schools and teacher trainers. Their funding has come from local fundraising, donor-funded projects (including

from UNICEF, Save the Children and World Vision), the Ministry for service provision, and project-based and institutional grants from ESP-OSF.

The Association of Parents with Disabled Children was created in 2000 and has been maintained since then by parents of children with disabilities. The Association consists of a head office located in Ulaanbaatar, and branch offices in 17 rural provinces. Their funders include UNICEF, OSF, the Embassy of the USA, Save the Children UK, Anti-Violence Center, Mongolian Women's Association and private sector companies.

Despite their great expertise and commitment, both NGOs are somewhat new to the field of Inclusive Education and both apply a narrow concept of Inclusive Education limited by Disability Education. Forum's support and collaboration with these and other education NGOs in 2014-2017 will help to open up policy and public discussion of Inclusive Education as a means of bringing social justice and equity to marginalized social groups and widen the current disability-focused narrow understanding of Inclusive Education to help bring other marginalized social groups into the discussion. As a result of this collaboration, we expect to have a better legal environment for implementing inclusive education with targeted, needs-based support mechanisms at the school level and overall positive societal attitude towards and support for inclusive schools.

Pakistan

From: [Fealty to Fields and Places](#)

a. Education Program

Right to Education

There are 7.2 million primary level children out of school of whom 58% are female. Estimates of 5-16 year olds who are out of school go up to 25 million children. OSF Pakistan believes that inclusion of Article 25-A into the Constitution provides a strategic opportunity for carrying forward the agenda for ensuring **quality education for all**.

OSF Pakistan will continue to support education partners to work on Right to Education (RTE). Our partners were able to demand making education a basic right in the Constitution. The enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2012 for Islamabad by both the Senate and the National Assembly and passing of Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act by the Sindh Provincial Assembly are major steps forward. OSF Pakistan has supported evidence-based advocacy through development of ASER Pakistan, a citizen-led household survey about learning outcomes, focusing not simply on inputs for quality or whether children are going to schools but on what they are learning. It seeks to fill a gap in educational data by providing reliable and comprehensive data at a national level on the status of education of 3 to 16 year olds. OSF Pakistan has helped create, sustain and entrench the Campaign for Quality Education. We also support advocacy, for quality education for all, undertaken by the Pakistan Coalition for Education, a national civil society network engaging more than 200 members and organizations. Our partners are represented on all important education sector commissions, task forces and other committees. Input in education policy, from OSF Pakistan and our partners, is routinely sought by government, international organizations and other stakeholders.

We have supported our partners mostly with project support in recent years but are reconsidering this approach in 2014. Their principal supporters include donor agencies (DFID, USAID, CIDA, AusAID, World Bank, Dubai Cares, Oxfam, Unicef and UNESCO). We work in coordination with all development partners to have more impact for our work.

Over the next four years we will i) extend the scope of ASER and use ASER Pakistan to campaign for building a culture of evidence based policy and action led by citizens, ii) instigate public debates on RTE to apprise policy-makers, parents and strategic stakeholders of their role in ensuring effective and timely implementation of Article 25-A, and stress on the need for finalizing/passing legislation by all provinces for comprehensively addressing issues of access, quality and equity, iii) develop models/frameworks to determine the possibilities through which RTE parameters can be addressed, iv) build capacity and mobilize networks of teacher and student unions, through active collaborations and trainings, for a better understanding of the issues relating to Right to Education, and v) support citizenship education to inculcate values supporting plural, tolerant and more open societies. Our advocacy activity will connect with not only national partners but regional and international movements as well.

Serbia

From: 3. FIELDS

Inclusive education

Among problems of concern for the further advancing of open society values in and through the education system, two urge for intensified actions. One is the poor implementation of the recently introduced concept of inclusive education which is aimed at improving access to quality education to children with disabilities and from other vulnerable groups. The other is weak results in providing students with civic skills to facilitate their social interactions in a society which is multiethnic but overburdened with a lack of mutual confidence among various ethnicities and requires well-developed capacities of inter-cultural exchange.

According to the actors in the field, actions should target stakeholders in order to facilitate the reconciliation of their interests, offer a diversified range of instruments for elimination of prejudices, and target national and local authorities bound to improve the capacities of the system to respond to unaddressed needs such as improved teacher skills or greater openness towards participation. The solving of the problems requires also intensified cooperation with other societal actors able to assist in preventing any further compromising of two desired features of education: inclusiveness and multiculturalism. To this end the Foundation will support its partners to intensify their actions, strengthen their advocating argumentation and skills and help in building and diversifying networks working toward the same goals.

The first type of partners are exemplified through the Center for Interactive Pedagogy, an OSFS spin-off which has established itself as the leading CSO dealing with social justice and position of vulnerable groups in education, subscribed innovative methodologies and approaches which are not expensive for mainstreaming into the system and which are recognized as examples of good practice. It has generated confidence among teachers and expert circles and has experience of working with parents. It collaborates with protagonists such as the World Bank or UNICEF. Often, it

collaborates with the Center for Education Policies, a leading education think-tank in the WB, known for the quality of its policy papers, well established among local expert community and academia. It is a UNESCO Chair for Education in the WB region.

Association of Teachers of Civic Education is an example of a professional organization active in advocating for actions and measures facilitating democratization in education, at the same time offering quality services to its members to improve their professional skills. It needs support to better shape its advocacy argumentation and closer links with other CSO actors to strengthen its negotiating position with authorities. Cooperation with an NGO such as the Civic Initiatives, which has a strong standing among decision makers and experience in dealing with officials exactly for its bold actions related to the democratization of education, will contribute to the solution of the current problems.

These organizations successfully generate support of the very few donors which at all deal with education (Norway, UK, Balkan Trust for Democracy, German “stiftungs”) for their individual projects. OSFS’ support will allow them to embark on their mid-term strategic activities, which is the only meaningful approach in the field.

Through partnering with these organizations, OSFS will gain insight and collect information necessary for planning its future interventions, which might ask for refocusing or reassessment of expectations.

In 2014 the terms of reference for grant giving will be determined; the best strategies identified and grants awarded. The partners will be helped to establish partnerships with other CS actors. As a CS actor OSFS will continue to support and demand the improving of conditions for the implementation of inclusive education.

As previously, this field will be realized in close cooperation with ECP and ESP.

OSISA

From: 3. FEALTY TO FIELDS AND PLACES

C. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

GOAL: To promote equitable access to quality basic services, promote rights-based approaches to environment and natural resource governance and expand the space for public participation in economic development policy formulation.

KEY AREAS OF WORK FOR 2014 – 2017

Promoting equitable access to quality education: Good quality education is the surest route from the margins of society, yet the region is characterized by poor quality education and large numbers of children (particularly from marginalized groups) out of school. OSISA has adopted a three-pronged strategy of “access, equity and quality” to realize the right to meaningful education. Great importance is placed on early childhood development and education (ECDE) which is separately described as an “own initiative”.

By 2017, success will be measured by: the adoption by the SADC Ministers of Education of a policy framework for special needs education, and a youth and education strategy for Southern Africa; an increased number of out of school children and youth (especially females) integrated into expanded “second chance” learning opportunities; improved educational opportunities for disabled children and those from minority ethnic groups; the piloting of one innovative education financing mechanism, and developed position on privatization and role of the private sector in education.

In 2014, OSISA will work at a policy level with SADC on regional policies on education and youth, including policies for education for children with disabilities and out of school youth. In Mozambique, OSISA will, in collaboration with the Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law cluster, support the development of an inclusive education model through support to Power Mozambique. Policy is best when based on practice. In Zimbabwe, OSISA will support the re-integration of out of school children and youth. Organisations creating educational opportunities for minority ethnic groups in Botswana and Namibia will be supported. In addition, OSISA will support professional development, materials development, and curriculum reform in Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Malawi. In collaboration with the OSF Education Support Programme, OSISA will support research on the effects of privatization of education on those at the margins of society.

Tajikistan

4. FOUNDATION CONCEPTS & INITIATIVES

Over the strategy period, the foundation proposes to develop two major initiatives.

4.1 Integrity in the Education

Tajikistan is one of the most corrupt states globally, ranked 157th out of 174 on Transparency International’s Index. Education is one area in which public disgust with corruption is high and where few deeply entrenched powerful interests have a direct stake: it is the area we believe is ripest for reform. In recent years, OSI Tajikistan has actively supported two major national reforms in the education system: **the introduction of a policy on inclusive education**, and the establishment of the National Testing Centre (www.ntc.tj), together with the associated single university entrance examination and common admissions process. Both these initiatives have been widely praised by concerned educators and education reform advocates, and have been carried out with active government and international donor participation. In agreeing to establish the NTC, the government tacitly admitted that education sector corruption was an issue, that parents had a right to expect reform and that nongovernment organizations had a role to play in effecting change. We see a clear opportunity to use this opening to drive a significant wedge into the problem of corruption, and by doing so successfully in education we hope to demonstrate that it can be done in other sectors.

Big Idea. OSI Tajikistan will assemble and lead a coalition of reform-minded institutions and individuals which either significantly reduces corruption in education or significantly increases the costs – in public exposure, shaming, active protests and legal action – to those engaged in corrupt practices.

Specific Outcomes:

- The National Testing Center will have received rigorous technical support, intensive capacity building and support for the management and policy issues, particularly in relation to the new

- University Entrance Examination system. Mechanisms (such as a hotline) will be in place to expose fraud or tampering during the preparation, distribution, and administration of the test;
- NTC's activities, effectiveness and integrity will be being monitored continuously by one or more independent NGOs, with the skills and capacities to do so;
 - A nation-wide network of Parent-Student-Teacher associations will have been created to monitor the extent to which reforms are implemented and to continuously advocate for improvements to the quality of education;
 - A sustained public awareness campaign will have been conducted, exposing the most egregious failings in education, the most damning examples of corruption and any attempts to undermine the effectiveness of the NTC or other reform initiatives;
 - At least one strong independent NGO will be providing sustained professional analysis and advocacy for education reform and will be actively engaged with local, regional and national authorities in championing reform and quality improvements; and,
 - At least one strong independent NGO will be regularly advocating for, monitoring and reporting on efforts to include marginalized children in the formal education system.

Each of these outcomes should be clearly assessable, as framed.

Partners, beneficiaries and tools. Implementation partners will include the existing parent-teacher-student organizations and NGOs such as the Education Reform Support Unit "PULSE", which focuses on education policy recommendations and innovations, the Tajik Association of Critical Thinking, which focuses on introducing innovative courses promoting critical thinking, and the Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities which focus on inclusion of children with different disabilities in mainstream education. Our funding will allow them to develop important analytical, advocacy and monitoring capacities, and to seek and manage third party funding in support of their work.

Where critical institutional actors do not yet exist – for example in combating corruption and promoting accountability and quality in the sector – we will support their establishment or work with existing NGOs to take on these responsibilities. We have allies in the Ministry of Education, schools and universities and in local authorities who share our commitment these reforms, and who will work with us in this monitoring process. We will seek the active engagement of the World Bank, already a partner in NTC, PULSE, and the Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities. Over the course of the implementation period we expect the foundation, generally through its NGO partners, to take the lead in activities which expose specific corruption and specific failures and build constructively on citizen outrage. We will seek co-funding from less bold funders for support of analytic work and technical assistance; however, should this co-funding not be available, the foundation believes it can marshal the resources for these activities as well.

Risks:

- We are relying on nongovernmental organizations and associations to provide quite sophisticated monitoring of quality improvement and corruption. It will be challenging to develop the necessary technical capacity and keep talented individuals engaged long enough to build up real third sector capacity. We believe a four-year time frame allows us to do both;
- Exposing corruption, and systemic inefficiency will lead to opposition from elements who stand to lose in reform. The coalition members needs to prepare from the outset for how they will respond to attacks;

Given the degree to which corruption is entrenched, and the desperation of parents to obtain advantage for their own children, even a four-year effort may not be sufficient. However, we believe global experience in combating corruption in education, from OECD's efforts in Serbia to the forthcoming Transparency International "*Global Corruption Report: Education*" provides examples of how we can achieve significant results in our timeframe.

5. SHARED FRAMEWORKS

We do not have enough information so far on the status of shared frameworks to make any informed decisions on participation. The foundation is interested in being part of shared frameworks on **Inclusive Education**, Migration, Torture, and Transparency and Accountability.

US Programs

From: A. Core Efforts: Democracy, Equality & Justice, A2. Rights and Access of Racial Minorities and Marginalized Groups

Finally, we are pursuing work that combines both foundation-led concepts and field building/refinement. Over the past several years, U.S. Programs has identified the issue of **school push-out -- public school use of suspension and exclusion to disproportionately penalize minority youth** – as a matter which had not been widely recognized, but where significant reform was both possible and of significant importance. U.S. Programs has invested both at the national level (successfully getting the federal government to significantly expand data collection) and at the local level where several jurisdictions, including Baltimore, have significantly reduced the inappropriate use of suspensions. In a number of cases, we have partnered with OSI-DC and its federal advocacy capacity to achieve important results. As we examined our work, however, we realized that multiple components of U.S. Programs were engaged in the issue, but were not closely coordinated. We have developed a coordinated strategy with concrete goals to increase our impact over the next three years.

...

In its efforts to promote black male achievement, U.S. Programs has adopted an alternative approach. Recognizing that a contributing factor to the multi-faceted challenges faced by the black community involved the perception of young men and boys of color, U.S. Programs launched the Campaign for Black Male Achievement in 2008 as a foundation-led concept to challenge negative perceptions of black males, identify effective policy interventions to support them, and build momentum in philanthropy and elsewhere for targeted investments to this end. Among the most significant components of this effort has been a \$30 million partnership with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg featuring, among other elements, **a public education reform initiative in 40 city schools focused on overcoming the lack of college readiness for low-income black and Latino males**. The initial three year commitment was extended in 2010, and now CBMA strategy is being refined to increase focus on getting the support of other funders and key actors, building a record of success in educational programs in four areas around the country, addressing family dynamics that contribute to the marginalization of black males, and growing the capacity of organizations that focus on improving the life outcomes of black men and boys.

From: V. Appendix

Open Society Institute-Baltimore

Education and Youth Development

Purpose

- End inequitable policies and practices that marginalize and keep too many Baltimore and Maryland children out of school,
- Ensure that Baltimore's public schools and youth programs engage and prepare students for success in adulthood.

Faalty to Fields/Places

1. Increase the quality and number of learning opportunities outside of school to help City students prepare for adulthood.
2. Double City funding for out-of-school time programs to \$10 million.
3. Increase public funding for education so schools can fulfill their state constitutional mandate to educate the city's children.

Key Partners: Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore Education Coalition; Maryland State Department of Education; **Key Grantees:** Family League; Safe and Sound Campaign; Md. Out-of-School Time; The After School Corp.

Foundation-Led Concepts

1. Reform attendance and discipline policies/practices that cause disparate education outcomes, reducing Baltimore's suspensions by 20% and racial disparities by 50%
2. Encourage adoption of regulations holding districts accountable for high and disparate suspensions, supporting at least three Maryland districts to revise their discipline codes.
3. Begin to "rebrand" high school by launching two new "high value" schools that provide the flexibility and support needed for students to succeed in jobs and further education.

Key Partners: Baltimore City Public Schools; State Department of Education; Baltimore Departments of Social Services and Health; **Key Grantees:** Advancement Project; ACLU; Baltimore Education Research Consortium; Baltimore Urban Debate League

Risks/ Challenges

- Cuts in public funding
- Leadership change at City Schools and other agencies and partners may derail progress, adopt other priorities

THEMATIC PROGRAMS

ECP- Early Childhood Program

From: 3. Fealty to Fields and Places: Building and Mobilizing the Early Childhood Field in Priority Geographies

Building Societies for All: Using Early Childhood to Promote Equity and Social Cohesion

The ECP aims to eliminate gaps in development and promote socially cohesive values among young Roma, children with disabilities, other minorities, migrants and marginalized groups and their majority peers and to build the capability of children living in poverty, thus enabling their lifelong, equal and active participation in and benefit from open societies.

The 4 initiatives outlined below will work with governments, professionals, families and communities to achieve this by:

- **Establishing inclusive policies and programs** that promote social cohesion, eliminate social exclusion and ensure priority access to quality, family and community-focused, culturally relevant services for the most disadvantaged;
- **Developing the professional knowledge-base, expertise, attitudes and workforce** to enable innovative programming needed to build society for all;
- **Empowering and supporting parents and communities** to take a leading role in fostering their children's development and to shape the public laws and services that support them.

Initiatives fall into two clusters, one focusing on Roma and children with disabilities in CEE, populations of high priority to OSF, and the second focusing on geographies where OSF has been asked to work by regional foundations (OSISA, OSIWA, Latin America Program). All are systems-focused and pilot services and generate an evidence base that can be used to advocate for better policies and legislative changes, and to attract funding needed to scale-up programming. The programs in Peru and Liberia involve direct support to governments. All of the initiatives, except in Peru, build capacity of modest NGOs that are at the front lines of service delivery and advocacy. Success requires a wide array of tools including: grant-making, piloting, monitoring, evaluation and research, advocacy, convening, community empowerment, mentoring and capacity building, organization of study visits, development of new materials, and dissemination of courses and materials online. Programming also leverages expertise from the Step by Step network (ISSA and the Step by Step NGOs).

Initiative 2: Enabling Childhoods (Disabilities): Enabling Childhoods consists of two subprograms, one focusing on early childhood intervention and the second on inclusive education. In the area of disabilities, the leading protagonist is UNICEF, which is supporting general home visiting services for children under 3, as well as inclusive education. The adoption by many countries of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is motivating policy changes across the region. Yet the legacy of the 'defectology,' the name of the field that has largely promoted segregating children into separate institutions and classrooms², is difficult to shift. The ECP's **Inclusive Education** programming seeks to turn this liability into an asset by using capacities in the special schools as resource centres to promote inclusion in mainstream schools. The initiative also conducts research and generates an evidence-base to support needed policy changes. From 2015 onwards the ECP is proposing to focus intensely on stimulating policy reform in one or two countries, as a collaboration, or hopefully, through a shared strategy with like-minded network

² It is estimated that 626,000 children live in institutions in 22 countries in CEE/CIS. (UNICEF, 'The Right of Children with Disabilities to Education: A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education'. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office CEE/CIS, 2012.)

programs (HRI, ESP, RIO). For the youngest children the potential gains of investing in **early childhood intervention** (ECI) systems are enormous. More than a third of children under 3 who receive ECI avoid special education.³ The field of ECI is relatively new and there is almost no donor engagement, though UNICEF and OSF's MHI program have funded some pilot initiatives in the region. The ECP seeks to develop the ECI field in the region, not only by strengthening practice and changing policy in Bulgaria, Georgia and Ukraine, but also by supporting a regional hub, new tools and advocacy to stimulate a broader movement that can perpetuate across Eastern Europe. The risks are that defectologists will impede efforts to implement inclusive education systems and that different sectors involved in ECI will not collaborate to create cohesive services. There is also a risk that ECI programming will revert to a medical model, rather than a strengths-based model. Linking grantees with international networks and resources that promote family-focused approaches will help mitigate this risk.

Indicators of success by 2017: 1) increased capacity of grantees to implement and expand inclusive education programs; 2) inclusive education sustained at project sites, and evidence consolidated for advocacy purposes; 3) in at least 2 countries a large evidence-based program initiative leads to systemic changes; 4) ECI pilot projects sustained and policy reforms to support ECI systems implemented in three initial countries (Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine) and underway in addition two countries (Serbia, Tajikistan); 5) regional ECI hub in ECI active and linked to national and international ECI networks.

2. Contributions to Shared Frameworks:

The ECP is currently developing options to co-lead one shared-strategy (Inclusive Education) and to participate in a second (Jekhutno – A Shared Framework on Roma).

Inclusive Education: The proposed framework will integrate rights and development perspectives to consolidate OSF around a common definition of inclusive education and test out the power of acting collectively to promote inclusive education. The initiative is co-led by HRI, ECP and ESP with involvement of RIO, Youth and OSJI. The ECP can contribute expertise in ECI, inclusive education and Roma ECD; networks of partners accumulated over 17 years in this field; and intellectual property. The latter include teacher guidebooks and trainings on inclusion, whole school improvement, and *Education for Social Justice*, which focuses on second language learning, developing diversity in classrooms and anti-bias training. If this shared framework is approved, the ECP would integrate into it further work on inclusive education.

ESP- Education Support Program

From: 4. Program Concepts and Initiatives

ESP's initiatives respond to the core challenges in education – access, quality and governance to advance equity. If inclusion is to be meaningful, education must do more than put children into

³Hebbeler, K. et al, cited in Jones, L. 2009. 'Making Hope a Reality'. Zero to Three Policy Center.

classrooms and teach a narrow range of cognitive skills. Instead, it must develop the capabilities of all individuals to flourish as active citizens in an open society; to build a common commitment to a shared future on a finite planet. This inevitably involves a more just distribution of society's resources to ensure greater equity and a definition of education quality rooted in open society values. Our core mission, therefore, involves three concepts to further and uphold open society through the right to education:

- **Advance meaningful education access for the most marginalized groups**
- Advance an idea of quality in education that strengthens open society
- Advance democratic accountability for social equity through a just distribution of resources.

ESP will employ a range of tools to advance these concepts, including: advocacy, convening stakeholders, documentation and dissemination, exchange visits, demonstration projects, grants, incubating pilot initiatives, technical assistance and expert consultation, program evaluation, and research and analysis. For the 2014-17 period we will continue to provide thought leadership, drawing on outcomes and opportunities created by previous initiatives, the support and endorsement of existing allies, and strengthened partnerships across OSF network programs and national and regional foundations. We plan to strengthen our communications strategy to shift public opinion to shape the discourse around education and open society.

4.1) Advance education access for the most marginalized groups

This concept is shaped by the opportunities created through existing initiatives. A pilot initiative to promote education cooperation for inclusion of vulnerable children across the **Caucasus** has grown into the **Caucasus Network for Children (CNC)**, an independent regional platform for advocacy and good practice in inclusive education that will strengthen exchange and links with the global inclusive education community. The policy advocacy and civil society mobilization by ESP and national foundations in **Central Asia** to challenge the pronounced stigma associated with disability and to help parents get their children included in mainstream schools has achieved the following outcomes: a coalition of 20 parent organizations in Tajikistan working to enroll children with disabilities into mainstream schools (over 200 so far); increased government support for inclusive education, including specific targets in Kazakhstan's education development plan, parliamentary approval for inclusive education in Tajikistan, and signing of the CRPD in Kyrgyzstan. These initiatives have been largely operational programs and they are making the transition to becoming grant-managed programs that intrinsically support the education field.

ESP will build on the outcomes of a jointly funded initiative with the EU in **Europe** that created a network of 150 education and social inclusion-related grassroots organizations and was recognized as a model EU project. These organizations, which are based in 8 countries (Albania, Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Romania) advocate for access to and support in education for minority and marginalized communities. ESP will establish an EU-level advocacy platform by linking national partners on the edge of activism, transformational pedagogy and evidence-based research in order to create a more inclusive constituency pushing for policy change.

In 2014, we will work closely with national foundations in **South Asia** to strengthen the focus on the right to education for marginalized children (girls, rural poor, and lower castes) in Pakistan and Nepal. These initiatives overlap with similar efforts in India, suggesting scope for building

collaboration across these regional efforts. In **Sub Saharan Africa**, the most marginalized children include those whose vulnerability is multiple including conflict, climate change, and HIV/AIDS. The DRC, particularly, has seen more deaths than any other since the Second World War in a decade-and-a-half of conflict. We will work closely with OSISA to reinforce education efforts in the DRC to respond to this challenge.

We will **assess progress** towards meeting our objectives in this area based on 1) the strength and viability of partnerships we are able to establish in 2014, focusing attention on the most vulnerable children and youth in specific locations in South Asia and Africa, and 2) the extent to which the policy environment for this work improves in Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Our **assessment of the risks** in this work include an over reliance on OSF for financial support and technical advice; political risk that may fracture the collaboration and solidarity that has been painstakingly built up; or state inertia and incompetence that could dishearten this work and cause it to lose momentum. **Additional support** from other donors includes Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in the Caucasus, the EU which provides most of the budget for Grassroots Europe, and the Asian Development Bank. We have strong supportive partnerships with national foundations in South Asia and Africa, as well as the regional civil society coalitions, ASPBAE in Asia Pacific, which is a strong partner, and; ANCEFA in Africa which is a crucial, if weak, partner.

5. Contributions to Shared Frameworks

Inclusive education: (Proposed by ESP, ECP and HRI): ESP will work with HRI and ECP to lead the development of a shared framework that will define an organization-wide position statement on inclusive education. A mapping of network-wide activities to support inclusive education has been completed. The nature and level of contribution from each program will depend on context. A large part of this work will entail convening grantees to link their work more effectively at the national or regional level and creating forums for the exchange of successful practice to make them more effective advocates and service providers in support of inclusive education. Finally, we hope to engage OSJI to link the human rights community to this work more closely through a framework of disability rights and the right to education (Article 24 of the CRPD).

HESP- Higher Education Support Program

5. HESP's Contribution to OSF's Shared Frameworks

HESP will explore the ways in which it can contribute to the emerging shared frameworks such as **Inclusive Education**, JEKHUTNO, and others as relevant.

HRI- Human Rights Initiative

V. Shared Frameworks

Human rights issues will likely be central to many of the Open Society Foundations' shared frameworks. In evaluating our participation in shared frameworks, we will consider our staff

capacity to contribute substantively, the extent to which the framework builds on our existing efforts, and opportunities to connect the framework with our grantees' initiatives.

Inclusive education

A child's right to equality and participation should be realized in and through education. Too often, education relegates children with disabilities and children from ethnic or linguistic minorities, such as Roma, to inferior schools and classrooms, or excludes them all together. The Human Rights Initiative is spearheading an effort to maximize the potential for education to foster inclusive societies by instilling the value of respect for difference, while preparing young people for civic engagement and economic empowerment. This will require changes throughout the education system from early childhood interventions to transition from secondary school. Together, the Human Rights Initiative, Early Childhood Program, Education Support Program, Roma Initiatives, and Justice Initiative seek to capitalize on our investments in the field to eliminate discriminatory education structures and support inclusion in a select number of countries. As a part of this effort, we will leverage expertise and resources from additional network and foundation colleagues, as well as external partners. The Human Rights Initiative will contribute its experience working to ensure children with disabilities have an equal right to inclusive education. As we undertake these collaborative endeavors, our grant making in this area will expand, as will staff resources dedicated to this work.

OSYI- Youth Initiative

From: Fealty to Fields, Youth and Public Policy

The OSYI is also supporting the expansion of the field to make it **more inclusive**. **Two priorities for the OSYI in 2014 will be to ensure that Roma and youth with disabilities (YWD) are represented within the field.** For the past two years, the OSYI has been supporting the active participation of Roma youth platforms in the development of the European Roma Youth Action Plan and has been exploring prospects for its members to become formally represented throughout the European youth sector, including the European Youth Forum. In Africa, the OSYI has worked with the Human Rights Initiative to support youth-driven DPOs in establishing the African Youth with Disabilities Network (AYWDN). The OSYI has provided technical and general support to the AYWDN with the hope that it will become a representative body for YWD in Africa. The OSYI will continue to support the AYWDN and attempt to establish similar networks in Latin America and Asia.

Contributions to Shared Frameworks

Shared frameworks offer the OSYI an important new means to convince other parts of OSF to engage youth. Shared frameworks also benefit the OSYI by allowing it to engage in work it might not have the mandate or opportunity to do otherwise....The OSYI is ...interested in contributing to the potential **inclusive education** and Jekhutno shared frameworks. Shared frameworks will also help the OSYI advance causes that, working alone, it could not hope to advance. For instance, the OSYI will seek to advance a proposed shared framework on youth employment to try to get OSF to think about and act upon what the *Economist* recently termed "Generation Jobless."