

GCE BUZZ

DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025



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LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FUTURES OF EDUCATION



In the Forum, held from 2-4 December 2024 in Suwon, South Korea, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) presented civil society's perspectives on the use of digital technology in education within a human rights framework. The session, *Human-Centered Approaches to Technology in Education*, focused on how “societies must be vigilant about the ways digital tools are reshaping education.” It looked at how technology can be better leveraged to facilitate and strengthen human-centered education.

The UNESCO International Forum on the Futures of Education posed existential questions as the world witnesses climate crisis, conflicts and security and increased use of artificial intelligence.

The engaging and dynamic discussions and sharing across governments, academia, civil society, and other stakeholders highlighted the need to rethink education in order to address emerging challenges and establish a new social contract for learning.

Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, GCE's Campaigns and Communications Manager, presented the key recommendations from the EdTech advocacy of African national education coalitions participating in the 'Resilience to COVID-19 through Digitalization (RESICODI)' and 'Generation Digital! (GD!)' initiatives that promote inclusive and equitable digital transformation in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * The use of digital technology in education must be framed within a rights-based framework where every child, young person, and adult must have access to free, inclusive, and quality EdTech.
- * The starting point for EdTech must be the education sector and development plans of the country. Governments must provide a supportive policy environment and financing to ensure long-term impact and scalability of the appropriate use of digital technology.
- * Teachers are pivotal in realizing the potential of EdTech. Investing in teacher training is crucial to equip educators with the skills needed to effectively use digital tools in the classroom. Governments should ensure that teacher training is continuous and aligned with evolving technologies and supports teaching the curriculum.



- * Governments can promote the establishment of digital learning hubs, especially in underserved regions to cater to the learning needs of children, youth and adults.
- * Private sector involvement in EdTech should not widen the digital divide and burden learners in terms of costs, and must ensure open access to digital education. Governments must put in place and enforce regulatory frameworks to ensure that education remains a right and a public good.

The recommendations emphasize a rights-based approach to EdTech, aligning it with national plans, empowering teachers, establishing digital hubs, and regulating private sector involvement to maintain education as a public good.



MODERATORS & SPEAKERS

The session was moderated by Mark West, Education Specialist of UNESCO.

The other speakers in the session who contributed to the discussions on *'rebalancing educational relationships with technology'* were:

- **Jae-Young CHUNG**, President of Korea Education and Research Information Service, Republic of Korea
- **Armand C. DOUCET**, Senior Advisor Artificial Intelligence, New Brunswick Department of Education & Early Childhood, Canada
- **Jonghwi PARK**, Academic Programme Officer, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Japan
- **Kevin MARTIN**, Research Director, Digital Assessment Futures, Digital Education Futures Initiative, Cambridge University, UK



GCE AT THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE) BOARD MEETING

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) participated in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Board of Directors meeting in Dubai, UAE, from 4-5 December 2024. At the meeting, GCE reaffirmed the urgent need for global investment in quality, free public education as a fundamental human right and a key governmental and international obligation. Both the international human rights framework and the 2030 Education Agenda highlight the importance of securing adequate, sustainable public education systems.



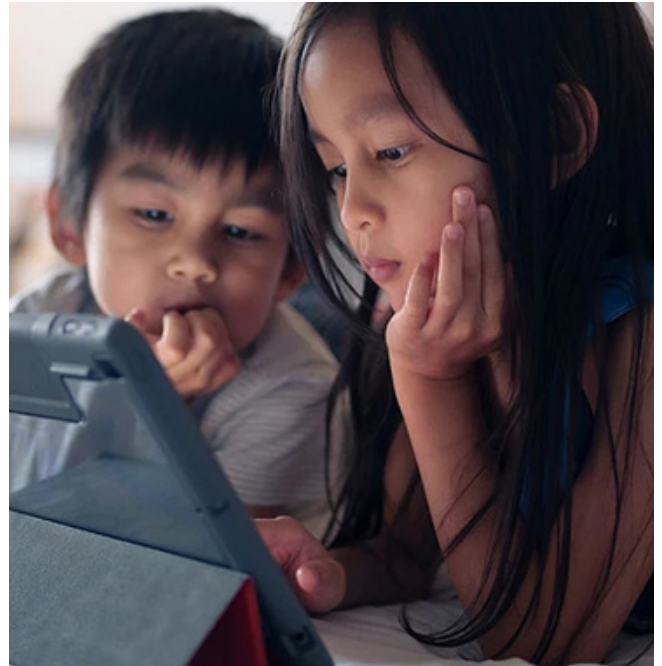
THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION FINANCING

Global education financing is at a critical juncture. Numerous challenges, such as regressive tax systems, over-indebtedness, privatization, and shrinking education budgets in low- and middle-income countries have widened the financing gap. This gap, estimated at \$148 billion annually for achieving SDG 4 in low and lower-middle-income countries, jeopardizes access to education as a basic human right. **GCE emphasizes that without significant financial intervention, millions of children risk being permanently excluded from education,** trapping families and future generations in a cycle of poverty.

ROLE OF GCE IN EDUCATION FINANCING ADVOCACY

GCE is actively advocating for global education funding and collaborating with partners like GPE to ensure accountability and inclusivity in funding mechanisms. Key recommendations include:

- * **Debt Relief:** Advocating for debt cancellation for low- and middle-income countries to free up resources for education investment.
- * **Innovative Financing:** While GPE explores innovative mechanisms, GCE warns against reliance on concessional lending or debt-financing schemes that could exacerbate debt burdens in countries.



- * **Transformative Finance:** GCE calls for a global compact to reform the finance agenda, focusing on progressive tax policies and international cooperation through frameworks like the United Nations Tax Convention.

Additionally, GCE urges GPE to mobilize donors to fulfil the 0.7% ODA (Official Development Assistance) commitment to education while promoting domestic resource mobilization through tax justice and debt relief. Dialogue between finance and education ministries is critical to aligning national budgets with education priorities.



YOUTH INCLUSION IN GPE GOVERNANCE

GCE strongly advocates for the inclusion of youth and student

voices in GPE's governance processes. This would ensure that young people are active participants in shaping education policies at national, regional, and global levels. Recommendations include:

- * Establishing clear constituency links for youth and student representation, particularly in the Global South.
- * Recognizing the unique expertise and perspectives of young people to create intergenerational engagement in education policymaking.
- * Empowering youth through elected representatives to ensure grassroots connections and meaningful participation.

A CALL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION FINANCING

GCE believes that increased education funding alone is insufficient. **Education financing must be directed toward promoting social justice**, ensuring its transformative potential is realized. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of funding on marginalized communities are essential to dismantle systemic exclusion and inequality.

GCE reaffirms its commitment to supporting GPE's efforts as a global fund that champions domestic public education investment. As the upcoming GPE replenishment approaches, GCE will continue to advocate for sustainable, equity driven financing solutions.



**INVESTING IN EDUCATION IS NOT ENOUGH; WE
MUST ENSURE IT UPLIFTS MARGINALIZED VOICES
AND DRIVES SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.**



Photo @ ASPBAE

A JOYFUL AND INSPIRING CELEBRATION OF ASPBAE'S 9TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) 9th General Assembly Regional Strategic Planning Workshop and 60th Anniversary celebration culminated on 25-28 November 2024 in Da Nang, Vietnam, bringing together more than a hundred representatives of ASPBAE members and partners, including the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), from around 30 countries.

Hosted by ASPBAE's member, the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), the consultative discussions and learning sessions within this milestone event were guided by the theme '*60 Years of Learning and Acting Together: For a Peaceful, Inclusive, Gender-Just, and Climate-Ready Future for All*'.

NURTURING ROOTS OF GRATITUDE



Photo @ ASPBAE

THE ASPBAE SECRETARY-GENERAL (SG), HELEN DABU, FRAMED THE OPENING CEREMONY TAKING INSPIRATION FROM A LOCAL VIETNAMESE PROVERB WHICH STATES, “WHEN EATING FRUIT, REMEMBER WHO PLANTED THE TREE”. FOR THE VIETNAMESE CONTEXT AND CULTURE, IT IS A CONSTANT REMINDER FOR THEM TO BE GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR LIVES.

IN THE SAME VEIN, ASPBAE’S JOURNEY OF 60 YEARS PRODUCED TRANSFORMATIVE GOOD FRUITS, AND THIS IS A MOMENT TO CELEBRATE AND APPRECIATE THOSE WHO PLANTED THE ASPBAE TREE AND THE COLLECTIVE JOURNEY OF MEMBERS, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, STAFF AND PARTNERS WHO CONTINUE TO NURTURE ASPBAE.

GCE AND ASPBAE REFLECT ON 25 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATIVE ADVOCACY AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Among others, the presence GCE Global Coordinator, Grant Kasowanjete, was also recognized by the ASPBAE SG. She also emphasized that, *“ASPBAE is a founding member of GCE and we have worked closely together since 2000 to advance a rights-based and transformative education agenda for all. GCE is preparing for the celebration of its 25th year anniversary in 2025 and rest assured ASPBAE will be with them in this milestone moment for the global movement for education.”*



Photo @ ASPBAE



Photo @ ASPBAE

In the plenary session entitled, ‘Landscape Analysis on Development Aid to Education and Civil Society Education Work: A Reflective Conversation with ASPBAE Partners’, Grant Kasowanjete presented the ‘Global CSO Movement Responses to Education Financing Challenges’, highlighting the action points and efforts of GCE together, with its members, in confronting persistent issues of low and inadequate domestic and external financing for education.



HONORING LEGACIES, BUILDING FUTURES

The last day of the programme featured the session, *'Sustaining our Movements for Education at National, Regional, and Global Levels: A commemorative reflection inspired by ASPBAE leaders who have passed on since the 50th Anniversary'*.

This included an input from Mr. Refat Sabbah, GCE President and General Secretary of the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), where he shared insights on ASPBAE's contributions as one of the founders of GCE and how the regional movement for education in the Asia Pacific can support in sustaining the global education movement through GCE amidst current contexts. He urged GCE to, *"strengthen its identity, empower its regional constituencies, ensure alignment among its members, and advance education as a transformative, values-driven tool for humanity and sustainable development."*



Photo @ ASPBAE

BRIDGING THE FUNDING GAP: TAX JUSTICE FOR EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan's education system faces a critical funding crisis, with public spending well below the global benchmark of 4-6% of the GDP, currently hovering at under 2%. This shortfall, despite the constitutional guarantee of Article 25-A, leaves over 26 million children out of school and those enrolled struggling with a learning crisis due to teacher shortages, inadequate training, and poor infrastructure. A key contributing factor is Pakistan's low tax-to-GDP ratio and reliance on regressive taxation, hindering the generation of sufficient revenue for essential social sectors, including education.

To address this, the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and the Tax and Education Alliance (TaxEd), grantees of Education Out Loud (EOL)'s Operational Component 1 (OC1) and Operational Component 3 (OC3), recently collaborated on a two-day initiative. This combined training and policy roundtable aimed to empower stakeholders - civil society members, academics, researchers, think tanks, and media - to advocate for increased and sustainable education financing through progressive and equitable tax reforms.

BEYOND BORDERS: GLOBAL INSIGHTS FOR PAKISTAN'S EDUCATION FINANCING

The training component focused on successful models from countries like Nepal and Kenya, demonstrating how tax justice can secure the right to education. Participants explored the crucial link between citizen tax contributions and education outcomes, emphasizing the need to shift from reliance on withholding taxes to more direct taxation, particularly of higher incomes.

Challenges such as tax evasion, regressive tax policies, and a narrow tax base were also addressed.



A subsequent policy roundtable highlighted the urgent need for progressive taxation measures targeting higher-income earners, eliminating corporate tax reliefs, and broadening the tax base. Participants strongly urged the government to increase education funding and advocated for debt relief linked to education investment, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the form of climate financing, as a crucial strategy for resource mobilization and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

The initiative underscores the interconnectedness of education financing and tax justice.



TAX JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Moving forward, sustained collaboration, innovative digital solutions, and further research into the realities of tax justice and education financing are crucial. This includes raising awareness among marginalized communities about their role in advocating for efficient education financing.

By engaging in collaborative efforts between policymakers, civil society, and citizens, Pakistan can strive towards an inclusive, equitable, and resilient education system for all.

#LEADINGSDG4 TOGETHER: REALIZING THE FORTALEZA DECLARATION EVENT (CLADE)



During the *#LeadingSDG4 Together: Realizing the Fortaleza Declaration* initiative, Nelsy Lizarazo, General Coordinator of CLADE (Latin America Campaign for the Right to Education), delivered an insightful presentation emphasizing the pivotal role of youth in realizing the ambitious objectives of the Fortaleza Declaration and advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

Representing civil society organizations in the Sherpa group, Nelsy highlighted the critical need for youth engagement and the adoption of robust, democratic, and inclusive processes to ensure progress toward the universal guarantee of the human right to education.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE FORTALEZA DECLARATION

Nelsy framed her discussion around three central pillars that are essential for successful youth involvement and meaningful contributions toward the transformative goals of the Fortaleza Declaration:

DEMOCRATIC CONSTRUCTION

Youth participation must be rooted in democratic principles. Nelsy emphasized the importance of establishing mechanisms that allow for broad and diverse representation of young people across all regions, religions, races, and socioeconomic conditions.

To ensure that youth engagement is both inclusive and impactful, it is crucial to strengthen dialogue at the grassroots level and connect these voices to decision-making processes at local, national, and global scales.



Nelsy acknowledged that, historically, democratic practices have often been fragile. However, fostering deeply democratic practices among youth can serve as a foundation for robust and reliable processes. Youth-driven democracy, therefore, becomes a guarantee for achieving the objectives outlined in the Fortaleza Declaration.



CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

In a world overwhelmed by information, cultivating a critical perspective among young people is essential to distinguish between what is essential and what is secondary.

Nelsy highlighted the importance of a rights-based approach to education, which prioritizes the defense of public education systems as a means to guarantee the human right to education. Two key areas were emphasized within this pillar –

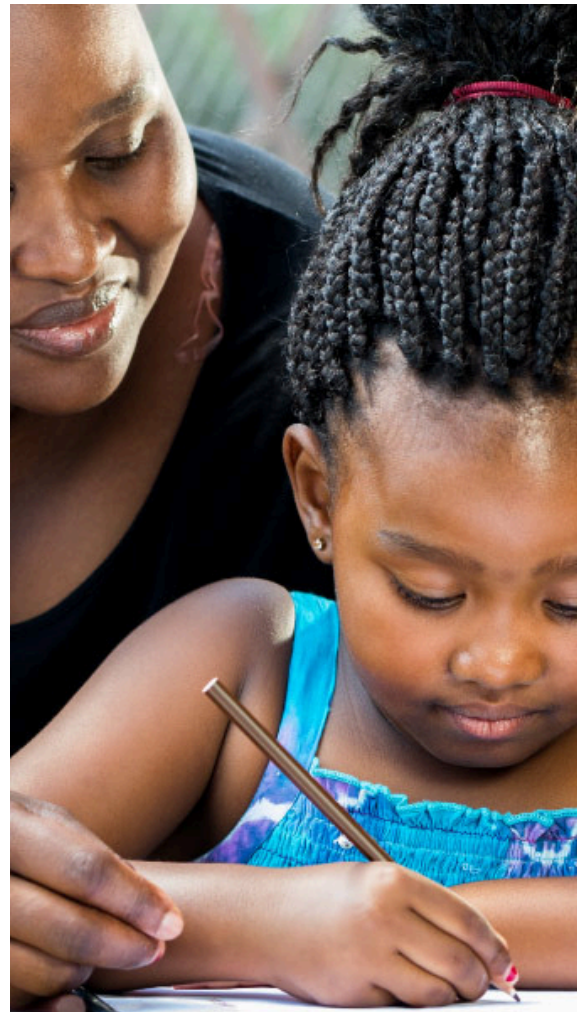
*** Digitalization:** Nelsy called for a transformative and rights-oriented approach to digital technologies in education. She posed thought-provoking questions about the role of technology: Does it reduce inequalities or exacerbate them? Does it strengthen public education systems? How can digital tools promote digital sovereignty, gender equity, and environmental sustainability while ensuring critically engaged digital citizens instead of mere consumers? These considerations are vital to ensuring that technology aligns with the principles of equity and human rights.

*** Climate and Environment:** Nelsy linked climate justice to education, urging young people to critically analyse the root causes of climate change and seek sustainable solutions that do not compromise individual or collective rights, including the right to education.

She highlighted the sensitivity of youth and children toward environmental issues and called for their active contribution to real and transformative alternatives.

INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Nelsy underscored the importance of fostering intergenerational dialogue to address critical issues such as education financing. She warned of the dangers of repeating past mistakes, where ineffective mechanisms are often reintroduced as "innovations." Instead, she advocated for genuinely innovative approaches to education financing that prioritize fiscal justice, progressive taxation policies, the prevention of tax evasion, and the curbing of illicit financial flows. These resources, she stressed, must be effectively invested in public budgets to guarantee the human right to education alongside other fundamental rights such as health, nutrition, and access to water.



Additionally, Nelsy stressed that young people must be active participants in shaping policies that transform gender roles and promote gender equality. Education systems must adopt transformative practices that challenge entrenched gender inequities, ensuring that the voices of girls and women are heard and their rights are upheld.



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: THE ROLE OF YOUTH

Nelsy concluded her presentation by acknowledging the challenges ahead, while emphasizing that the task is not impossible. She called on young people to continuously learn, engage in dialogue, propose ideas, and participate actively in shaping the future. The transformative power of education, she argued, lies not only in its ability to impart knowledge, but also in its capacity to equip young people with the tools to address the pressing challenges of today and tomorrow.

Through democratic participation, critical engagement, and intergenerational collaboration, young people can drive the realization of the Fortaleza Declaration and contribute to a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: A LEARNING EXCHANGE BETWEEN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA



This initiative brought together National Education Coalitions (NECs) from across Africa to strengthen their advocacy for gender-responsive education policies and practices.

With the participation of 50 representatives from 30 African countries, the workshops served as a knowledge exchange and cross-regional learning platform between Africa and Latin America.

CROSS-REGIONAL WORKSHOP SERIES ON GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), in collaboration with the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), hosted a four-part capacity building webinar series focused on gender mainstreaming and gender-transformative education.

**The sessions
were organized
and facilitated
by CLADE and
the GCE
Secretariat.**

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Gender and Education

21 November 2024

The inaugural session introduced participants to fundamental concepts of gender and education and explored the intersection of gender dynamics with access to education. Key topics included:

- * The historical role of feminist movements in shaping gender equality in education.
- * The influence of gender on access to education and teaching quality.
- * Gender stereotypes and obstacles faced by girls and boys, with shared experiences from Africa and Latin America.



Participants engaged in group discussions to develop strategies for creating inclusive education environments, deconstructing traditional gender roles, and creating gender-equitable curricula.

Nelsy Lizarazo, GCE Vice-President and CLADE General Coordinator, concluded the session by emphasizing the importance of adopting a gender perspective to advance gender equality in education.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Gender-Sensitive Budgets

3 December 2024

The second session focused on the critical role of gender-responsive budgeting in advancing the right to education. Topics included:

- * Integrating gender considerations into budget planning to address inequalities.

- * Tools and methodologies for practical application of gender-based financial analysis.

- * Strategies for aligning resource allocations with specific needs of women, men, girls, and boys.



The session strengthened capacities of the participants to advocate for fair and equitable budgetary decisions that promote inclusivity. It concluded with a call to prioritize gender equality in financial planning, ensuring that budgets reflect a commitment to eliminating discrimination.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Gender Institutional Policies

11 December 2024

This session introduced participants to CLADE's Institutional Gender Policy, developed by its Gender Working Group. Key elements included:

- * The process of creating policies aligned with gender equality principles.
- * Internal policy areas such as recruitment, pay equity, and work-life balance.



- * External considerations such as community engagement and partnerships.



Participants discussed ways to strengthen institutional policies to ensure gender mainstreaming.

The session concluded by emphasizing the importance of linking policy frameworks to actionable outcomes that promote gender equality.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Masculinities

28 January 2025

The final session, co-presented by Jesús Juárez (NEC, Mexico), Gustavo Coutinho (ILGALAC, Brazil), Hugo Barbosa (GENDES, Mexico), and Walter Vengesai (Padare Association, Zimbabwe), explored the concept of masculinities. Key themes included:

- * Understanding masculinity stereotypes in different cultural contexts.
- * Examining how traditional male roles perpetuate violence and gender inequality.



- * Encouraging reflection on alternative masculinities that promote non-violence, equality, and shared caregiving responsibilities.



Speakers emphasized the importance of integrating a masculinities approach in educational spaces to create safe, inclusive environments. Mr. Juárez highlighted the role of men in dismantling patriarchal norms, stating, ***“We, men, have the responsibility to work on our masculinity to actively contribute to building equality, eradicating violence, and participating fully in caregiving tasks.”***



KEY OUTCOMES AND INSIGHTS

This cross-regional learning exchange was both insightful and transformative, equipping participants with the tools and knowledge to address gender inequality in education. Highlights included:

ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER CONCEPTS

- * Participants explored how gender dynamics influence education access, quality, and outcomes while identifying actionable strategies to combat stereotypes and discrimination.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE BUDGETING

- * Participants gained expertise in integrating gender perspectives into financial planning and resource allocation to promote inclusivity.



KEY OUTCOMES AND INSIGHTS

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL GENDER POLICIES

- * The sessions provided actionable insights for NECs to develop or improve internal and external policies that promote gender equality.

ADDRESSING INCLUSIVE MASCULINITIES

- * By addressing cultural constructions of masculinity, participants were empowered to challenge harmful norms and advocate for equality in education spaces.

CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- * The workshops brought about a spirit of collaboration between African and Latin American NECs, encouraging the exchange of experiences, strategies, and advocacy approaches.

BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION



The capacity building series reinforced the importance of mainstreaming gender across education policies, practices, and advocacy efforts. By addressing gender stereotypes, promoting gender-responsive budgeting, and implementing inclusive institutional policies, participants were equipped to champion transformative education systems in their respective countries.

This initiative also highlighted the value of cross-regional collaboration, where participants exchanged thematic expertise and advocacy strategies to collectively advance gender equality.

Moving forward, GCE and CLADE remain committed to supporting NECs in their pursuit of inclusive, equitable education systems that leave no one behind.



ARAB CAMPAIGN (ACEA) AT UNESCO FORUM: RENEWING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR EDUCATION

Refat Sabbah, GCE President and General Secretary of the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), played a pivotal role as a session facilitator at the UNESCO International Forum on the Future of Education: Renewing the Social Contract for Education. Held in Suwon, South Korea, from 2-4 December 2024, the forum brought together global leaders, educators, and civil society representatives to reimagine education as a shared social good.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AND A VISION FOR 2050

On 3 December, Mr. Sabbah facilitated the session titled '*Renewing Education as a Common Good: Who? And How?*' The session delved into collaborative governance in education, inclusive decision-making, and visions for a renewed social contract for education by 2050. Drawing on global examples, such as participatory education movements in Catalonia, innovations in Southeast Asia, and reforms in the Arab world, Mr. Sabbah emphasized the need for cross-sector collaboration to ensure justice and quality in education as a fundamental human right.



In the forum's closing session on 4 December 4, '*Catalyzing a Global Movement to Renew the Social Contract for Education*', Mr. Sabbah highlighted the critical role of civil society and grassroots organizations in driving this transformation. He called for empowering civil society groups to align their aspirations with UNESCO's proposed Global Observatory for the Future of Education.

CALL FOR A RENEWED GLOBAL EDUCATION AGENDA



MR. SABBAAH ALSO ADDRESSED CHALLENGES SUCH AS SHRINKING CIVIC SPACES, AS NOTED IN THE CIVICUS MONITOR 2023 REPORT, AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING THE EDUCATION AGENDA TO INCLUDE CLIMATE CHANGE, EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES, AND PEACE EDUCATION.

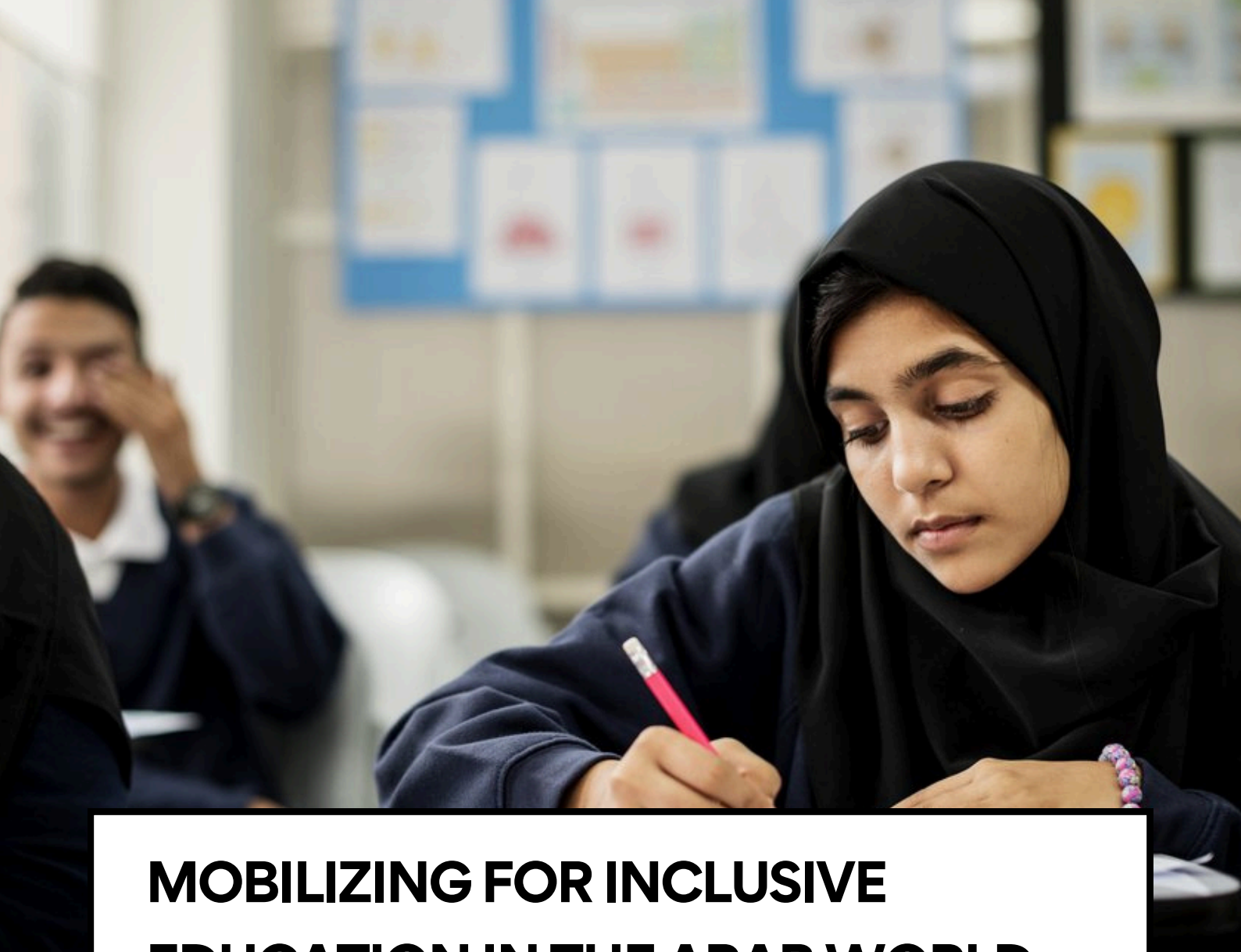
THE FORUM CONCLUDED WITH A CALL FOR A RENEWED GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AS A CORNERSTONE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS, WITH INSIGHTS EXPECTED TO SHAPE UNESCO'S TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES WORLDWIDE.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE PUBLIC BUDGETING ACADEMY: FIRST PHASE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDES



The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), in partnership with the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), concluded the first phase of the Gender-Responsive Public Budgeting Academy on 5 December. This initiative, launched under the Education Out Loud program by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), aims to empower civil society to influence education policies that address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities.

The academy focuses on building participant capacities to analyze public budgets, assess their efficiency, and integrate gender equality into financial policies. It also highlights the connection between tax justice and sustainable education financing, with an emphasis on the United Nations Tax Convention as a tool to achieve equitable revenue generation.



MOBILIZING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

Over 30 activists from six Arab countries – Palestine, Sudan, Yemen, Tunisia, Egypt, and Somalia – participated in seven intensive training sessions led by experts such as Professor Adib Nemeh, Professor Manar Zaiter, and Dr. Hassan Shari, in collaboration with the Basel Fleihan Institute. Topics covered included development and human rights, economic and financial policies, tax justice, feminist challenges, and public budgeting from a gender perspective.

The first phase will be followed by in-depth, in-person training sessions aimed at aligning regional and national advocacy plans to address education challenges in the region. This initiative reflects ACEA's commitment to achieving SDG 4 by promoting inclusivity, justice, and quality financing in education.

REFAT SABBAAH ADVOCATES FOR PALESTINIAN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AT DUBLIN CONFERENCE



Mr. Refat Sabbah, GCE President and General Secretary of the [Arab Campaign for Education for All](#) (ACEA), participated in a [conference on The Rights of Palestinian Children](#) at Liberty Hall, Dublin, on 18 January 2025. Organized by the [Irish National Teachers' Organisation](#) (INTO) and supported by [Trade Union Friends of Palestine](#), the event brought together over 400 delegates to address the plight of Palestinian children under occupation.

Speakers included Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, who highlighted the trauma faced by Palestinian children after 15 months of war. INTO President, Carmel Browne, stressed the urgent need to rebuild Gaza's education system, describing schools as "sites of destruction and despair." Palestinian Ambassador, Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid, emphasized the importance of mental and psychological support for children, while UN expert, Mary Lawlor, called for swift reconstruction of schools to restore hope for the future.

The conference concluded with a strong call for international solidarity to safeguard Palestinian children's rights, rebuild their education system, and ensure their safety.

FORTALEZA DECLARATION: ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

Mr. Refat Sabbah, GCE President and General Secretary of the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), delivered a powerful speech during a virtual seminar titled '*Fortaleza Declaration: From Commitment to Implementation – The Role of the Global Campaign and Civil Society Organizations in Supporting Education Systems*'.

Organized by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States in collaboration with UNESCO's Multisectoral Regional Office in Beirut, the event brought together education leaders and representatives from the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



UNITING VOICES, TRANSFORMING EDUCATION - FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO LOCAL ACTION



CALLING FOR INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Mr. Sabbah emphasized the need to translate the Fortaleza Declaration into actionable steps to ensure inclusive and equitable education systems. He called for democratic governance, evidence-based policymaking, and shared responsibility in education, urging the active participation of youth, students, teachers, and communities in shaping education policies.

He also addressed the challenges posed by privatization, noting that over 60% of primary schools in some African countries rely on private funding, with similar trends in Arab nations. While acknowledging the role of private actors, Mr. Sabbah stressed that education must remain a public good and a fundamental human right, not a commodity.

In conclusion, Mr. Sabbah reaffirmed GCE's commitment to education as a universal human right, grounded in democratic principles and social justice, and called on civil society organizations to lead efforts in shaping equitable education policies.

ACEA AND THE ARAB NGO NETWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT (ANND) HOST WEBINAR ON TAX JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT



The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) and the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) organized a webinar titled '*Tax Justice as a Prerequisite for Development: Between Reality and Prospects*'. Presented by Dr. Hassan Sherry, Assistant Professor of Economics at the Lebanese American University and Advisor to ANND, the session explored the critical link between taxation as a sustainable revenue source for education financing and the United Nations Tax Convention.

The online webinar aimed to deepen participants' understanding of how equitable tax systems can support sustainable development and promote the right to education.

The event featured engaging discussions and provided valuable insights into addressing challenges in achieving tax justice.

Equitable tax systems are essential for sustainable development and education financing.

Demystifying Education Public-Private Partnerships: What Every Policymaker Should Know



Thursday, January 30th
**Position Paper and
Policy Brief Launch**

Webinar

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
www.campaignforeducation.org

A CRITICAL LOOK AT EDUCATION PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: INSIGHTS FROM THE NEW POLICY BRIEF BY PEHRC

The Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC) has published a new policy brief titled 'Demystifying Education Public-Private Partnerships: What Every Policymaker Should Know.'

This collaboratively developed document, endorsed by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and its members, provides compelling evidence on why education Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) fall short as a solution to the challenges facing education systems worldwide.

ADVOCATING FOR EQUITY: A CALL FOR FREE AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION FOR ALL

Demystifying Education Public-Private Partnerships

What Every Policymaker
Should Know



LAUNCH

of Policy Brief



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Participants



ONLINE

Event

**THE POLICY BRIEF SERVES AS A VITAL
ADVOCACY TOOL FOR PROMOTING PUBLIC,
FREE, AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION FOR
ALL, ALIGNING WITH GCE'S COMMITMENT
TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION.**



WHY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

GCE and its members have long raised concerns about the increasing privatization of education. The GCE Strategic Plan (2023-2027) emphasizes that:

“Education is increasingly being privatized with detrimental effects on education equity and equality. Lines between public and private education are increasingly blurred, and monitoring of privatization, private education providers’ services, and their impact is weak. Public investments in public education are needed more than ever to address setbacks.” The new policy brief reinforces these concerns by demystifying the

misconceptions around PPPs. It highlights the significant challenges and risks associated with such partnerships, including:

*** Exacerbation of Education Inequity:**

PPPs often widen gaps in access to quality education, particularly for marginalized groups.

*** Hidden Costs and Financial Risks:**

These partnerships frequently incur unforeseen expenses, undermining long-term financial sustainability.

*** Conflict of Interest:** The profit motives of private entities can conflict with the public good, prioritizing short-term gains over holistic education outcomes.

THE DOCUMENT ARGUES THAT PUBLIC PROVISION OF EDUCATION OFFERS GREATER CONTROL, FLEXIBILITY, AND EFFECTIVENESS IN ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL, QUALITY EDUCATION AND FULFILLING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR ALL.

A CALL FOR ACTION: INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The policy brief urges policymakers to:

- * **Increase Investment in Public Education:**

Strengthening public education systems is essential to achieving equitable and sustainable outcomes.

- * **Critically Assess PPPs:**

Policymakers are encouraged to evaluate PPP implementations rigorously, ensuring accountability, equitable access, and sustainable financial models.

- * **Avoid Market-Oriented PPP Models:** International donors and development finance institutions are called upon to prioritize support for public education systems rather than commercialized PPP frameworks.



THE BRIEF EMPHASIZES THAT PUBLICLY-FUNDED EDUCATION SYSTEMS REMAIN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO DELIVER EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO ALL. WITH EVIDENCE FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES, IT DEMONSTRATES THAT PPPS OFTEN LEAD TO COMPROMISED QUALITY, REDUCED EQUITY, AND UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.

PEHRC AND GCE: ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC, RIGHTS- BASED EDUCATION

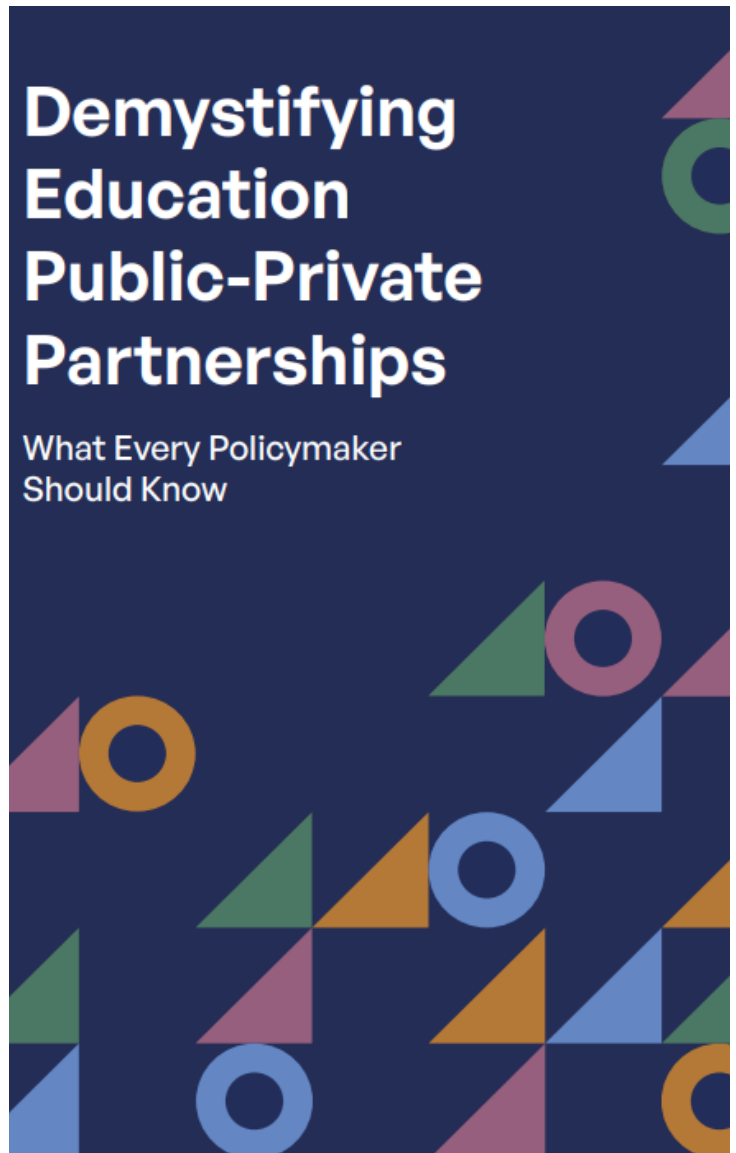


The Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC) is a global network of organizations and individuals working to analyze and respond to the challenges posed by the rapid growth of private actors in education from a human rights perspective. Through campaigns like Reclaiming Public Education for All, PEHRC actively promotes the strengthening of public education systems.

As an active member and part of PEHRC's Facilitation Group, GCE supports this advocacy and continues to champion the need for public, free, and accessible education for all learners.

ACCESS THE POLICY BRIEF AND EVENT RECORDING

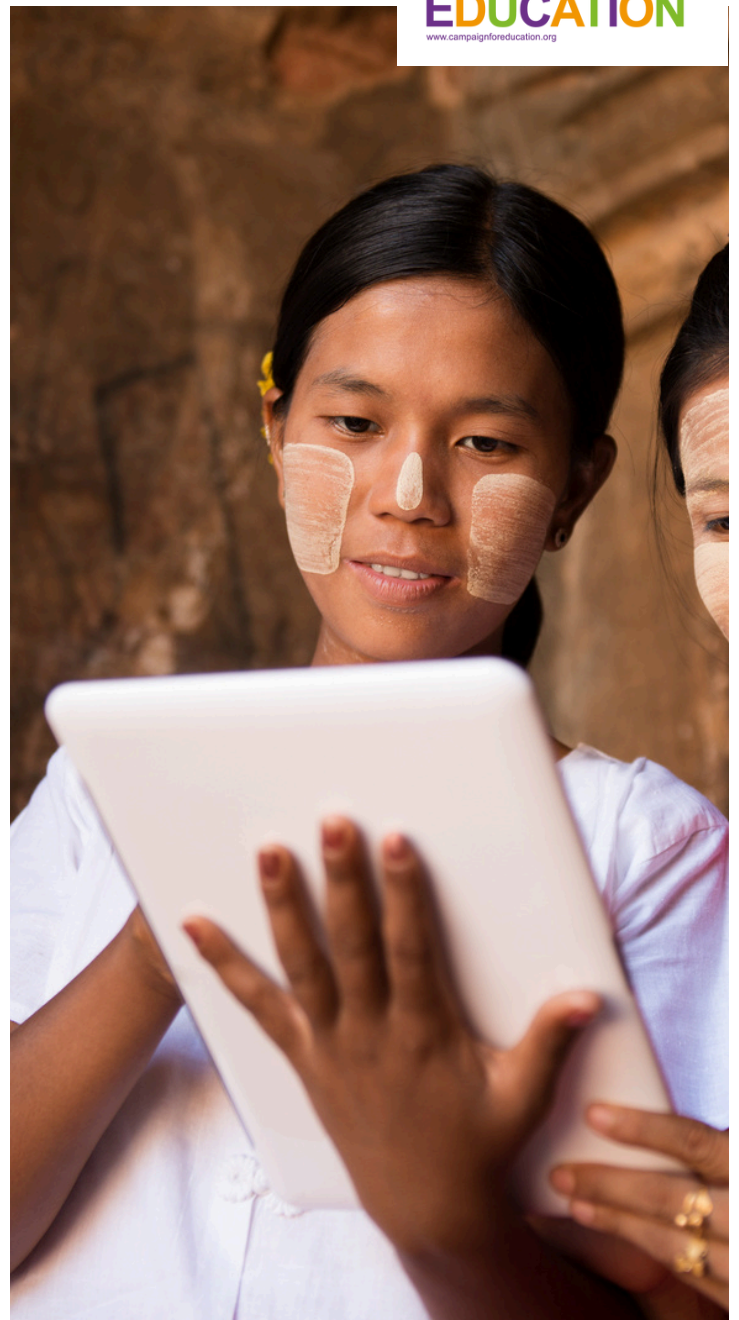
Demystifying Education Public-Private Partnerships is a significant milestone in the global advocacy for public education. It provides policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders with evidence-based arguments and practical insights to defend public education systems against privatization pressures. By prioritizing public investment and rejecting market-driven PPP models, governments and stakeholders can ensure that education remains a fundamental human right - accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status.



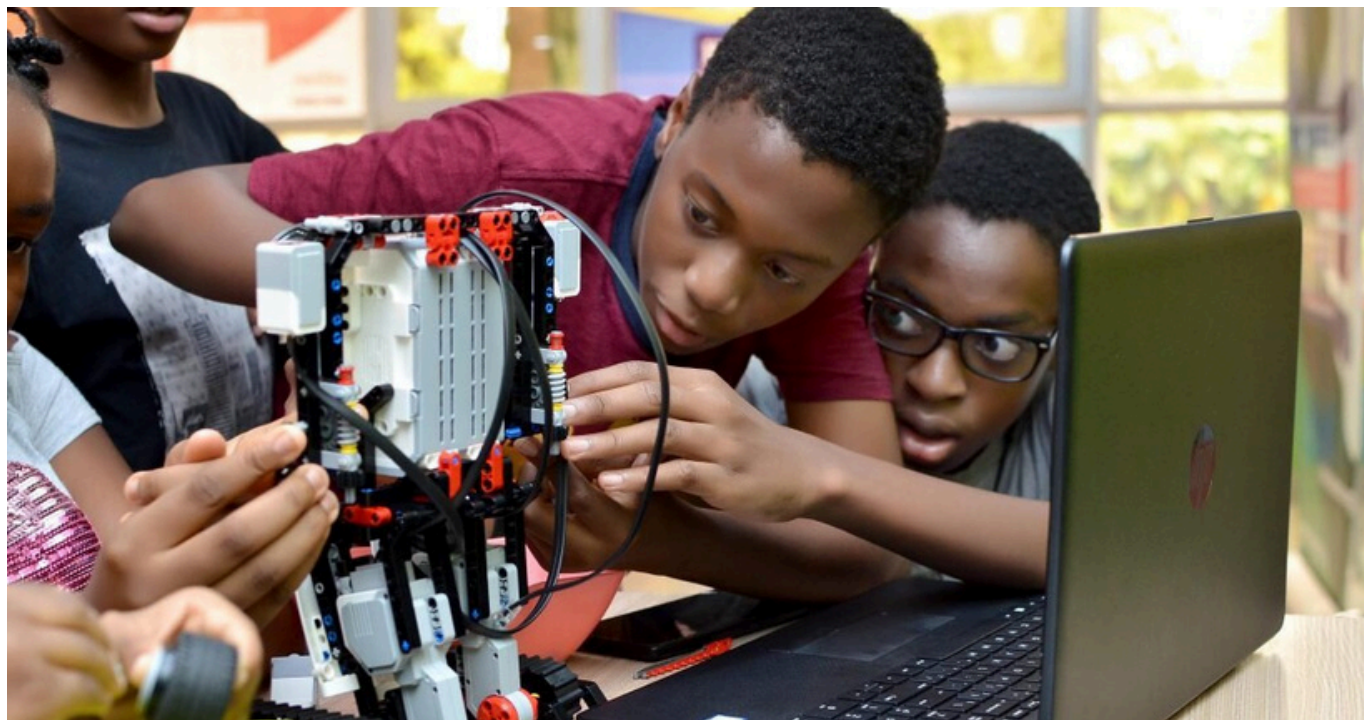
GCE AND ITS PARTNERS REMAIN STEADFAST IN THEIR COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION, WORKING COLLECTIVELY TO UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND RIGHTS-BASED LEARNING FOR EVERY LEARNER WORLDWIDE.

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH EDTECH ADVOCACY: GCE AND GIZ LAUNCH EDTECH 101 ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

In an age where technology has the potential to redefine education systems globally, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), in collaboration with GIZ, has launched an ambitious and impactful initiative - the EdTech 101 online learning program. This capacity building series, part of the 'Bridging Barriers to EdTech through Youth-Led Advocacy and Digital Upskilling' project, aims to empower youth and student-led organizations to advocate for equitable and sustainable integration of technology in education. Click [HERE](#) for presentations.



**FOCUSSING ON CAPACITY BUILDING TO EMPOWER
YOUTH AND STUDENT-LED ORGANIZATIONS IN
ADVOCATING FOR THE EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE
INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION.**



BREAKING BARRIERS WITH YOUTH-DRIVEN ADVOCACY

The EdTech 101 program is designed specifically for youth, students, and their organizations at national and regional levels. Up to 50 participants, including five representatives from each implementing partner, will engage in this virtual capacity building course. The program highlights the importance of youth voices in shaping EdTech policies and practices, recognizing young people not only as beneficiaries but also as equal partners in the decision-making process.

At its core, the program acknowledges the growing role of technology in transforming education systems while addressing the persistent barriers that hinder equitable access. These barriers include low digital literacy, the urban-rural digital divide, wealth disparities, gender inequalities, and lack of teacher training in EdTech integration. Teachers, in particular, often lack the confidence and preparation needed to effectively use technology in their classrooms, with few teacher training programs comprehensively covering EdTech.

EDUCATION

TECHNOLOGY

LEARNING SERIES



The program shines a light on the gendered digital divide, where access to education technology remains unequal. This gap disproportionately affects young women and girls, exacerbating existing inequities. By focusing on youth-led advocacy, the program seeks to bridge these divides, empowering young activists to bring fresh perspectives to a field that directly impacts their futures.

PROGRAM GOALS: BUILDING CAPACITY AND DRIVING CHANGE

The EdTech 101 online series has three main objectives:

- * **Enhancing Advocacy Skills:** The program seeks to increase youth capacity to coordinate advocacy efforts for education technology policies and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). This includes fostering active youth representation in national coalitions and policy dialogues.
- * **Developing Technical and Political Expertise:** Participants will gain the tools to define and articulate EdTech policies more effectively, equipping them with both technical and political knowledge to advocate for meaningful change.
- * **Expanding Global Knowledge of EdTech:** The course will provide insights into the existing gaps and innovations in EdTech globally, helping participants understand the challenges and opportunities in this rapidly evolving field.





A FLEXIBLE AND IMPACTFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Delivered virtually, the program consists of two comprehensive modules covering critical topics in EdTech advocacy. The flexibility of the online format allows participants to engage with the material at their own pace while still benefiting from an interactive and collaborative learning environment. Participants who complete the course will receive a certificate of participation, marking their commitment to advancing education technology.

WHY YOUTH VOICES MATTER IN EDTECH

The inclusion of youth in EdTech policy planning is a key focus of the program. Traditionally, young people have been viewed as passive recipients of education policies rather than active contributors. The EdTech 101 program challenges this narrative by positioning youth as critical stakeholders in the development of equitable and sustainable education systems.

By showcasing youth voices and perspectives, the program aligns with the broader mission of achieving SDG4 - ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The innovative approach of engaging youth-led organizations in policy advocacy ensures that their unique insights and lived experiences inform the future of education technology.



EDTECH 101 EMPHASIZES THE INCLUSION OF YOUTH AS ACTIVE CONTRIBUTORS IN EDTECH POLICY PLANNING, CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF THEM AS PASSIVE RECIPIENTS.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL FUTURE IN EDUCATION



As the world continues to grapple with the challenges and opportunities presented by technology in education, the ‘EdTech 101’ program by GCE and GIZ offers a timely and necessary intervention. By empowering youth to lead advocacy efforts and shape the future of EdTech, the program not only addresses existing barriers but also paves the way for a more inclusive and equitable education system. With its focus on building capacity, fostering innovation, and amplifying youth voices, ‘EdTech 101’ is a significant step toward bridging the digital divide and ensuring that technology becomes a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion.



GCE LAUNCHES TOOLKIT FOR MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION ADVOCACY

As part of its 25th anniversary celebrations, GCE launched the 'Youth and Students Meaningful Engagement in Education Advocacy Toolkit' on 19 December 2024. The occasion marked a critical step in addressing the long-standing issue of tokenistic youth involvement in education policymaking and amplifying the voices of young advocates worldwide.

Click [HERE](#) for the toolkit in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

MAKING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT A REALITY

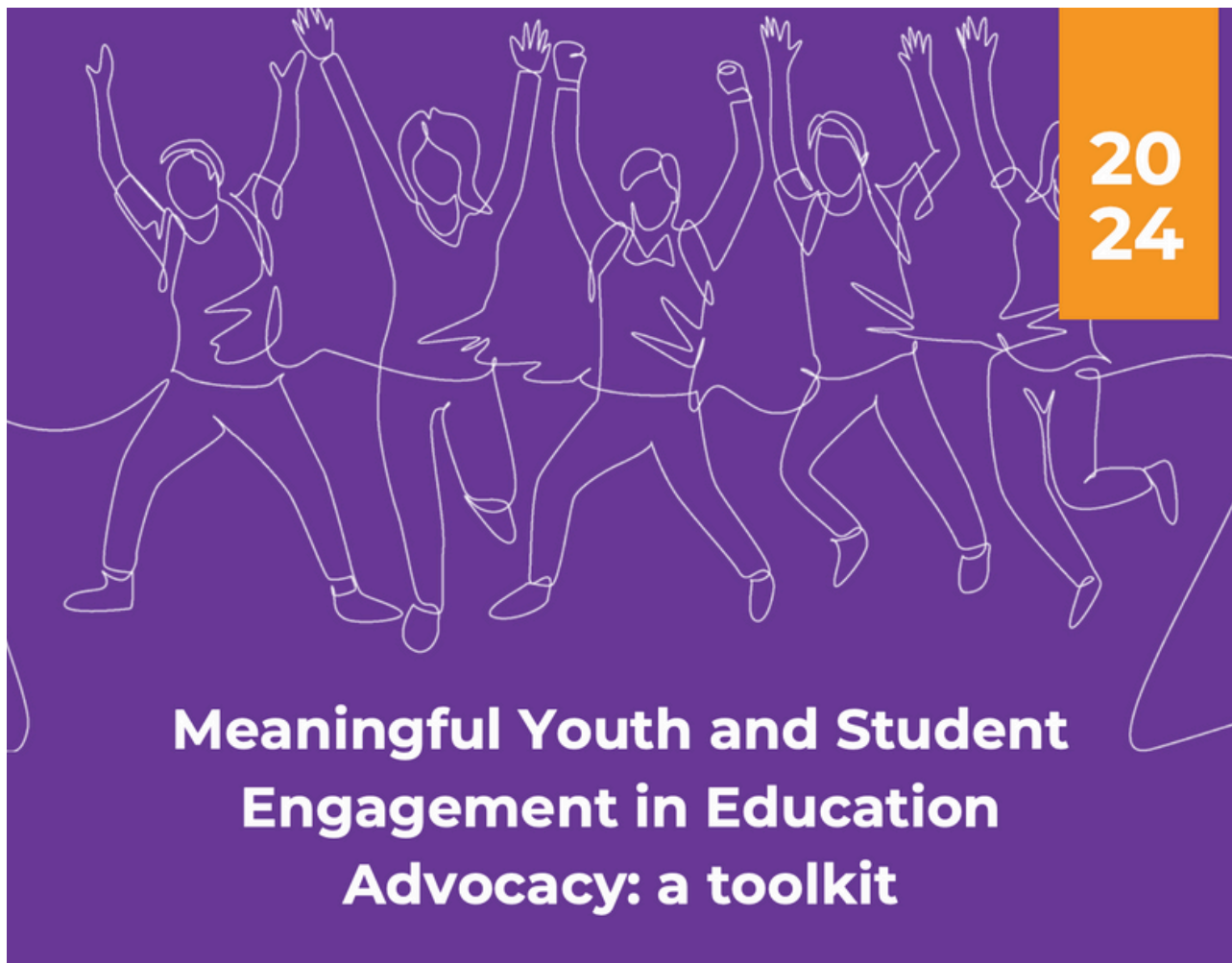
The toolkit emphasizes that impactful youth engagement involves:

- * Including youth in advisory councils, focus groups, and decision-making processes.
- * Involving youth at every stage of a project – from planning to evaluation.
- * Investing in capacity building programs and creative outlets tailored to diverse youth groups.
- * Recognizing youth leadership through roles in steering committees and national consultations.



**BY SHOWCASING
YOUTH VOICES AND
ADVOCATING
INCLUSION, THIS
TOOLKIT EMPOWERS
YOUNG PEOPLE TO
SHAPE EDUCATION
POLICIES AND
INITIATIVES THAT
AFFECT THEIR
FUTURES.**

CONFRONTING TOKENISM IN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Despite increasing commitments from governments and organizations to involve youth and students in education policymaking, GCE's research highlighted a persistent issue: many young activists felt disillusioned with superficial engagements that offered them little to no influence over critical policy decisions.



A GLOBAL COLLABORATION FOR A YOUTH EDUCATION ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

In response, GCE collaborated with the Goldsmiths Educational Studies Department, under the leadership of Dr. Millora, to develop the *Policy and Practice Toolkit on Meaningful Youth and Student Engagement in Education Advocacy*. This Toolkit stood out for its participatory and inclusive design, created in consultation with over 60 youth and student representatives through a global survey and regional online workshops in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Latin America. The collaborative approach ensured that the Toolkit reflected the lived experiences, perspectives, and aspirations of youth worldwide.

KEY FEATURES OF THE TOOLKIT

The Toolkit provided a comprehensive resource for addressing tokenism and advancing meaningful youth engagement in education advocacy. It included:

* **Principles of Engagement:** A framework for ensuring youth involvement in advocacy efforts was impactful and not superficial.

* **Practical Guidance:** Steps to co-design youth engagement strategies and build the capacity of young advocates to influence education policies.

* **Multilingual Accessibility:** The Toolkit was made available in English, Arabic, French, and Spanish, enabling localization while maintaining global relevance.



* **Widespread Dissemination:** The Toolkit was disseminated through GCE's extensive network of 127 member organizations and various state and non-state partners. It reached youth institutions, civil society organizations, state actors, academic institutions, private companies, youth-led groups, and student unions.



THE TOOLKIT WAS ALSO INTRODUCED AS A KEY PART OF GCE'S BROADER 2024 CAMPAIGN ON EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (EDTECH), WITH YOUTH AND STUDENTS LEADING AND IMPLEMENTING MANY OF THE CAMPAIGN'S INITIATIVES. THIS INTEGRATION ENSURED THAT YOUNG VOICES WERE CENTRAL TO SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY AND ADVOCACY.

A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR YOUTH ADVOCACY



The launch of the Toolkit symbolized a significant advancement in bridging the gap between youth aspirations and policymaking realities. By promoting meaningful engagement, it empowered young activists to become active partners in shaping education systems that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to their needs.

The event, moderated by GCE's Vicky Mogeni, was attended by education stakeholders and youth representatives from across the globe. The Toolkit, made available as an open-access resource, was widely celebrated as a tool that would inspire collaboration, amplify youth voices, and drive tangible action in education advocacy.

As GCE commemorated 25 years of advocating for quality education for all, the launch of the Toolkit reinforced the organization's commitment to ensuring young people were not just heard but meaningfully involved in shaping the future of education.

YOUTH PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOIN THE GCE YOUTH ACTION GROUP (YAG) 2025-2027!

Are you part of a youth-led organization passionate about advocacy, campaigns, and creating meaningful change? The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) invites you to join the Youth Action Group (YAG) cohort for 2025-2027.

The Youth Action Group provides a dynamic platform for young people aged 15-35 years to actively engage in advocacy, shape decision-making, and promote youth empowerment. Through collaboration with GCE and its partners, YAG members will have opportunities to amplify their voices and create a measurable impact in their communities.

Key details -

- Each organization can nominate 1-2 representatives to join YAG.
- Membership is determined by the group's leadership, and approved members will receive a confirmation letter.
- Learn more about YAG's goals and structure in the Terms of Reference [HERE](#) and register to join [HERE](#).



**BE PART OF THIS
GLOBAL MOVEMENT
AND HELP DRIVE
CHANGE THROUGH
YOUTH-LED ACTION!**



CALL FOR INTERVIEWEES: SHARE YOUR VOICE ON CLIMATE AND EDUCATION!

Are you a passionate youth leader or organizer working at the intersection of climate change and education? Here's your chance to contribute to a global report on how education can address the climate crisis!

We are looking for youth and student leaders aged 18–35 who are:

- Actively involved in a youth-led organization focused on climate and education issues.
- Ready to share their experiences and ideas about how young people can address the education impacts of the climate crisis.
- Willing to participate in an online interview (30–60 minutes).

Click [HERE](#) to know more about the project.

This is an opportunity to influence policy-making and programming by sharing your perspectives and solutions. Interested? Email Chris Millora at C.Millora@gold.ac.uk. Let us know why you are interested and what makes you a great fit for this initiative.