

Global Campaign for Education

GCE ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK

Background

The Global Campaign for Education represents the voice of Civil Society in education policy spaces and processes worldwide. Our members advocate and campaign together for a free, inclusive, quality education without discrimination, promote lifelong learning, and adequately value and support the teaching profession and youth, students, and parents organisations.

Founded in 1999 during the World Education Forum in Dakar to provide a unified platform that coordinates Civil Society work on education, we are a global movement that comprises national education coalitions, networks, and unions from around the world and international and regional organizations.

Coordinated by a Global Secretariat and under the strategic oversight of a board representing all constituencies, our mission is to promote and defend free, public quality education as a basic human right and mobilize public pressure.

Why an Advocacy Framework?

This framework is a tool needed to define how advocacy actions support the realization of the GCE Strategic Plan 2023-2027. It intends to be flexible enough to adapt to different contexts and political changes, and it is based on the GCE members experience.

While the Strategic Plan is more detailed and somewhat rigid, with which the movement has defined its goals, objectives, priorities, and milestones, the Advocacy Framework and its guidelines are not designed to duplicate these contents, but instead offers a basic structure on which GCE will establish its advocacy implementation plans, whose priorities have been established.

The Advocacy Framework is fed from various sources and responds to a diversity of contexts and actors, so the actions undertaken by the GCE members respond to the International Human Rights Law and, at the same time adjust to the needs that emerge at the national, regional and global levels.

The general background of this framework is provided by the GCE Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the GCE Gender Strategy, which in turn are inspired by the right to education conceptual and normative framework, the Education 2030 Agenda, and the commitments pledged at the Transforming Education Summit.

The Advocacy Framework aims to provide our movement with the rationale needed to inspire concrete actions, without claiming to be too prescriptive and is limited to the validity of the GCE Strategic Plan. GCE believes that strengthening the advocacy work will improve coalition's

capacity building processes, expanding civil space and engagement, forge stronger solidarity across the movement and counter the multiple forms of authoritarianism and threats to democracy.

While states are the main duty bearers around the realization of the right to education, GCE understands that there is a myriad of actors, including the private sector, corporations, and their foundations, UN agencies and multilateral organizations, charity organisations, universities, unions, think-tanks, etc., which could be targets of our advocacy action.

These actions also require the establishment of strategic alliances with movements outside education – for example, those challenging illegitimate debt, advancing political rights and freedoms, tax justice, climate and gender justice.

This scheme clarifies the different layers in which the Advocacy Framework is inserted:



This Advocacy Framework is complemented by Advocacy Guidelines, and both instruments should be considered together in the definition and implementation of advocacy activities in favor of the human right to education.

What do we mean by...

Policy: Policy is the body of political principles that guide the work of the Global Campaign for Education, defined and inspired by its constitution, by-laws, resolutions and positions.

Advocacy: It is the set of coordinated actions aimed at influencing the decisions essential to advance the realization of the human right to education, including the design, implementation and follow up of public policies.

Research: GCE opt for advocacy-oriented research, understood as the systematic and participatory investigation on various factors related to the human right to education, necessary to update our policy and guide advocacy actions.

Campaign: an organized set of actions carried out over a period of time aimed at achieving concrete outcomes through advocacy processes, communication, mobilization and capacity building on the human right to education.

Communication: is the exchange and dissemination of information on topics specific to the GCE, which include data, visual content, statements, positions, queries, consultations and all other symbols and signs related to the GCE work.

Capacity building: It is the process intended to facilitate the construction of knowledge, sensitivities, and skills necessary to critically understand, defend and promote the human right to education within the organizational, community, institutional and political environments in which GCE members operate.

Purpose

The Advocacy Framework suggests the principles and approaches on which the movement is called to develop its advocacy actions at national, regional and international levels, in line with the priorities and key strategic actions stated in the GCE Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

Priority Areas

The GCE Strategic Plan 2023-2027 contemplates the following priority areas and foundational asks:

- Transforming Education (digital learning, education leadership, relevant education, quality climate change education)
- Education in Emergencies and crises
- Education Financing
- Lifelong learning (Early Childhood Education & Adult Education and Learning)
- Equality and inclusion (Gender equality and transformation, Disability Inclusion, Inclusion of excluded population and racial equality)
- Teachers and teaching
- Youth, students and their organizations/unions

These areas mark the operational context in which advocacy activities should be implemented.

Principles

The Advocacy Framework is inspired by a series of principles necessary to build an articulated and consistent global movement, capable of influencing decision-making to end exclusion in education:

Common language: The recognition of the universality of human rights is key to protect, realize and fulfill the right to education for all and in all contexts. The human rights-based approach to education is necessary to counteract the utilitarian, reductionist and colonialist visions of education, which consider it a privilege or a commodity. GCE intends to build a common language and a common understanding of the right to education, based on the standards established by international human rights law and supported by the UN treaty bodies and special procedures relevant recommendations and observations.

Holistic approach: GCE works with all stakeholders involved in the defense and promotion of the human right to education and develops interconnected advocacy actions at national, regional and global levels. We recognize social and cultural diversity as a precious value that allows people and communities to unite and find viable solutions to their problems. Beyond education, we are engaged in the fight for decolonization, as a way to build a more inclusive and equal world in which people are valued for their intrinsic dignity, regardless of who they are and where they live.

Participation, coordination and mobilization: As a democratic and critical movement, the Global Campaign for Education thrives on the participation of its members and remains in force with the constant social mobilization that they promote. Organising and movement building is essential for advocacy work and it requires coordination and support, so stakeholder's engagement and experience knowledge sharing is a precondition for learning from good practices in furtherance of collective advocacy. While GCE participates in the global education architecture, it ensures that its agenda and recommendations are based on ground realities confronted by national movements and CSOs. Therefore, it works with its members in ensuring the local-national-regional-global linkages of its advocacy and ensuring that global commitments to education are translated into policy actions in countries.

Public awareness: Building a common language, as well as participation and mobilization, is only possible when keeping information systems that involve all GCE members and partners. Public awareness building is the key to the dissemination of timely and grounded calls and statements, which should always be consulted within the movement.

Strategic planning: Good intentions and political commitments are not enough. It is necessary to get down to work in a realistic, coordinated and also pragmatic way. This can only be achieved by analyzing the contexts and implementing methodical approaches that are part of a strategic planning, duly based on the movement policy. Strategic planning is also the way to measure and monitor advocacy outcomes and identify gaps and needs.

Accountability: GCE believes in solidarity as a founding element of our work. This principle motivates us to share our achievements and also our needs, especially when we have benefited from the support of others: donors, partners or people who have placed their trust in us. Just like

we demand it from governments, GCE assumes accountability as an obligation. Accountability includes institutionalized monitoring-learning mechanisms, gender-responsive governance and transparency. It is the mechanism to preserve trusted environments and critical insights.

Strategic approaches

GCE is called upon to participate in all relevant advocacy spaces at the national, regional and global levels. Each member must determine the merit of their participation and the Global Secretariat is called upon to maintain engagement at the international level. It is desirable that participation in advocacy spaces is connected to the strategic plan objectives and allows for a flow of information on challenges, achievements, and lessons learned. This will allow the movement to draw on the good practices harvested and improve its operations on the ground.

For each priority area, the GCE Global Secretariat should establish learning communities or working groups, inviting GCE members to coordinate their experiences in all advocacy spaces.

At the same time, the international events led by the Global Secretariat should promote members' engagement, especially when their work offers critical inputs to the objectives pursued by those international events. Engagement must be promoted both in working groups and in direct contact with members.

Policy engagement and analysis

The definition of policies and political positions is the cement that holds the movement together. It is the mechanism that reflects consensus building on political positions, collective learning and the one that guides the movement to achieve its strategic objectives. The analysis of national, regional and international political realities leads to constantly updating institutional policies, with which the movement benefits and strengthens.

Policy engagement and analysis should be a substantial part of the working groups and learning community's agenda and any other ad-hoc advisory body that the Global Secretariat integrates for operational work on its campaigns and advocacy plans.

Assessment of political environment in which GCE operates in

Policy engagement is not an academic exercise, much less an abstract one. It must be based on continuous political assessment of the environment in which GCE members work. The fight for the right to education is essentially a political process and therefore requires analysis of the context that facilitates the forces in conflict, the institutional and community actors, the opportunities to influence and the associated risks of doing so.

This work requires developing capacities in our members, including action-research processes and specific guidelines for political assessment.

The leadership of these processes should not be centralized, since those who best know the national and regional political situations are national and regional members. The role of the Global Secretariat is to facilitate the critical analysis, exchange and dissemination of information.

Policy influencing and lobbying

The political assessment should not be an end in itself and should ideally involve a diversity of partners and stakeholders, within and outside governments, with whom critical views can be shared. All critical actors should be identified. Obviously, independent analysis must be secured, so that state actors benefit from civil society autonomous perspectives and at the same time build a critical mass for the necessary changes in public policy.

To this end, whenever possible, the constructive relationship with state actors, especially decision-makers, should be valued in the right to education, political and policy assessment. Building cooperative relationships is usually difficult in the case of blatantly authoritarian governments, in the face of which it is necessary to articulate actions that on the one hand protect civil society activists and on the other hand influence the construction of democratic conditions. The planning of these actions is casuistic.

Discussion on policy briefs, research reports and other documents should reach various institutional levels, from higher authorities to institutional operators, including teachers, principals, students, and mid-level officials.

The memories, notes, reports derived from these activities, allows the Global Secretariat to conduct international lobbying directly related to political action at the local and national levels.

All these experiences must be collected and systematized by the Global Secretariat through its publications and Learning Hub, remaining available to all members for their continuous benefit.