

February–March 2025

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GCE BUZZ

A newsletter by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE)



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EIGHTH FORUM OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Government authorities, UN officials, experts, and civil society representatives from across Latin America and the Caribbean convened in Santiago, Chile, from 31 March to 4 April for the Eighth Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

The event, hosted at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), focused on reviewing the region's progress and ongoing challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda - now just five years from its deadline. GCE participated alongside the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) and the Argentinean Campaign for the Right to Education (CADE).

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Key Highlights from the Forum -

- At the current rate, only 23% of the 2030 Agenda targets are expected to be achieved by 2030. Meanwhile, 41% of targets are advancing too slowly, and 36% are stagnant or regressing compared to 2015. Regarding SDG 4 (Quality Education), progress is particularly slow: two targets are declining, five are advancing slowly, and two lack sufficient data. Only one target is on track to be met.
- As the UN marks its 80th anniversary, participants highlighted persistent obstacles to SDG achievement, including the crisis of multilateralism, structural and gender-based violence, deepening inequalities, and the impacts of climate change. Despite these hurdles, the forum recognized the growth of local initiatives and policies advancing rights and equality.

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Key Highlights from the Forum *contd...*

- Strengthening progressive national tax systems and enhancing international tax cooperation were emphasized as urgent priorities. Daniel Titelman, Director of ECLAC's Economic Development Division, noted that “debt service payments represent 60% of education spending” - a stark reminder of the fiscal constraints facing the region.
- Delegations outlined key proposals for upcoming major global events in 2025, including the IFFD4 (Spain), the Second Summit for Social Development (Qatar), and COP30 (Brazil). Chile highlighted the need for care systems, Brazil called for the creation of SDG 18 on racism and prioritizing the fight against hunger, and Mexico advocated for aligning national budgets with the SDGs and exploring debt-for-nature swaps.

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Active Engagement of Civil Society

Civil society played a central role throughout the forum. The Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in Sustainable Development (MeSCALC) organized several side events and an opening forum, spotlighting critical issues such as geopolitical tensions, attacks on democracy, the multilateralism crisis, the rise of anti-rights movements, and the impacts of unsustainable debt and aid cuts.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) was also a key focus, especially in anticipation of the 2025 review of SDG 5 on Gender Equality.

MeSCALC, comprising over 300 organizations - including many GCE members - is co-facilitated by Marcela Browne (Fundación SES / CADE) and operates through 20 thematic groups. The regional working group on Education, Academia, Science, and Technology is led by Laura Giannechinni, representing CLADE.

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BREAKING BARRIERS IN EDUCATION: ASPBAE AT THE 12TH ASIA- PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) played a pivotal role at the 12th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), held from 25-28 February 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), this year's APFSD centered on the theme: '*Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind in Asia and the Pacific.*'

The forum brought together government representatives, UN agencies, civil society, youth, and other stakeholders to review progress and challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level.

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ASPBAE's Advocacy for Holistic and Inclusive Education

ASPBAE's delegation, which included representatives from across East and Southeast Asia, emphasized the critical interlinkages between SDG 4 (quality education) and other SDGs under review - specifically SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

During the roundtable discussions, ASPBAE highlighted the need for:

- A holistic approach to analyzing SDGs, ensuring strong connections between education, poverty, gender, and housing, all of which significantly impact health outcomes.
- Prioritizing women's economic empowerment and gender-transformative education systems.
- Investing in ongoing skills and livelihood training, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable youth, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET).
- Developing equitable, flexible learning pathways and lifelong learning opportunities.

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Spotlight on Gender and Youth Empowerment

On 28 February, ASPBAE, in cooperation with UNESCAP, UNICEF, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), ARROW, and the Baha'i International Community, hosted a Brown Bag session titled '*Rise and Thrive: Empowering the Women and Girls of Tomorrow.*' This session spotlighted the stories of five young women leaders from the region, highlighting the transformative power of education in advancing gender equality.

ASPBAE also set up an interactive display booth themed 'Breaking Barriers in Education: Gender Transformative Approaches to Achieving the SDGs.' The booth featured educational materials, videos, and opportunities for delegates to connect and collaborate, as well as ASPBAE's 2024 Spotlight Reports on education financing, gender equality, social inclusion, and climate action. Notably, the Asia Pacific Declaration on Gender-Transformative Education (GTE), produced in collaboration with feminist organizations and UNGEI, was distributed to participants.

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Civil Society Engagement and Policy Influence

ASPBAE's East Asia representative, Takafumi Miyake, spoke at a side event on 'Civil Society Engagement on Voluntary National Review (VNR) with a focus on Gender Equality,' sharing insights from Japan's VNR processes and stressing the importance of raising public awareness on the SDGs at national and local levels.

Throughout the forum, ASPBAE strengthened partnerships with key regional and global organizations, including UNESCO, GCE, GPE, and others.

The outcomes of the 12th APFSD - including the APFSD report and Chair's Summary - will be submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and inform discussions at the upcoming High-Level Political Forum in July 2025.

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Key Outcomes and Next Steps

The APFSD discussions yielded several priorities for action related to SDG 4 and its interconnections with other goals:

- Expanding sexuality education and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Accelerating just transitions by strengthening social protection for displaced workers and facilitating access to skills training.
- Promoting mutual learning in designing effective skills development programs1.

ASPBAE's active engagement extended to the APFSD Youth Forum and the Peoples' Forum (APPFSD).

Visit ASPBAE's website [HERE](#) for more details.

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GCE AT CSW69: CHAMPIONING GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE



The 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) convened leaders, advocates, and changemakers from around the world in New York from 10-21 March 2025, spotlighting urgent issues and innovative solutions for advancing gender equality.

Representing (GCE), Vicky Mogeni participated in four days of intensive dialogue, advocacy, and learning.

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Investing in Women and Girls for a Better Future

The opening day highlighted the transformative power of investing in women's health and education. Experts emphasized that women's health remains chronically underfunded, with only 0.2% of global R&D dedicated to sexual and reproductive health - despite its significance as a leading cause of mortality in developing countries. The session "Equitable by Design in Financing" called for bold, targeted investments and sustainable funding pathways, drawing lessons from countries like Finland, which dramatically improved public health outcomes through strategic investments.

The Malala Fund's "Girls' Vision for Education" launch highlighted demands for education systems that empower, respect, and equip them for 21st-century challenges. Girls called on governments to remove barriers such as financial constraints, gender-based violence, and inadequate menstrual health provisions, reaffirming the role of education in bringing independence and social change.

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Advancing Adolescent Empowerment and Ending Harmful Practices

Sessions led by the World Bank, UNICEF, and Plan International spotlighted multisectoral approaches to adolescent empowerment, with a strong focus on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). CSE was recognized as vital for equipping young people with the knowledge and values needed to realize their health and dignity, especially in contexts facing high rates of teenage pregnancy and child marriage.

Another key discussion took place on ending Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Success stories from Burkina Faso and Uganda demonstrated that strong legal frameworks, community engagement, and survivor support can drive generational change and drastically reduce FGM prevalence. Uganda's comprehensive approach, including psychosocial support for survivors and alternative livelihoods for practitioners, was highlighted as a model for the region.

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Women's Leadership and Local-Global Synergy

At a UN Democracy Fund roundtable, Vicky Mogeni shared GCE's experiences from the UNDEF youth project, showcasing how grassroots initiatives can align with and reinforce global gender equality agendas. The session reinforced the importance of amplifying women's leadership and sustaining impactful, locally-driven projects.



Navigating the Digital Era for Gender Equity

The intersection of technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and gender was a recurring theme. Panels explored both the opportunities and risks of AI for women's empowerment, emphasizing that AI systems often reflect societal biases present in their training data. The need for greater investment in STEM education for women and the development of inclusive, rights-based digital tools was made clear. Sessions also examined digital inclusion and social protection, drawing on evidence from Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Program, and discussed strategies for advancing equity in the digital era through international collaboration and innovation.

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Key Takeaways for GCE and the Education Community:

- Investing in women's health and education yields societal benefits far beyond the individual, driving progress in communities and nations.
- Comprehensive, rights-based sexuality education is essential for empowering adolescents and tackling persistent challenges like child marriage and FGM.
- Youth engagement and leadership are critical for bridging the gap between aspiration and action in gender equality.
- Digital transformation must be inclusive and equitable, with deliberate efforts to address gender biases in emerging technologies.

Vicky Mogeni's participation at CSW69 has strengthened GCE's resolve to advocate for inclusive, gender-responsive education and to amplify youth voices at every level. As we reflect on the lessons learned and the partnerships forged, GCE remains committed to driving progress for girls and women everywhere.

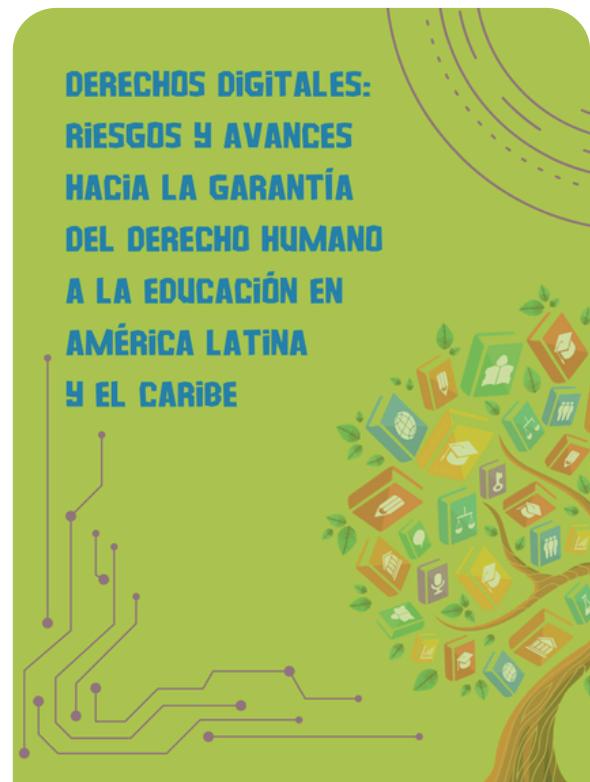
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NEW CLADE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGITAL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION ACROSS LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), with support from Derechos Digitales América Latina, has released a groundbreaking study titled 'Digital Rights: Risks and Advances Toward Guaranteeing the Human Right to Education in Latin America and the Caribbean'.



The report provides a timely analysis of how digital transformation is reshaping education across the region - spotlighting both the opportunities and the urgent challenges that must be addressed to ensure every learner's rights are protected.

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Key Risks Identified

- Widening Inequality: Vulnerable groups - including indigenous, rural, and low-income communities - continue to face barriers to internet and device access, further marginalizing them in the digital era.
- Gender Divide: Girls and women are less likely to access, remain in, or advance within STEM fields, and are more exposed to online risks such as cyberbullying and algorithmic bias.
- Privatization and Loss of Sovereignty: The growing reliance on commercial technology platforms is shifting control away from public institutions and reducing state oversight of educational data and processes.
- Lack of Transparency: Many digital education policies and partnerships with private actors are not clearly documented, making it difficult to ensure accountability and protect public interests.

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Recommendations for a Rights-Based Digital Future

The report calls for urgent action to:

- Strengthen universal connectivity policies to bridge the digital divide.
- Promote open standards and free software in education to ensure inclusion and reduce costs.
- Develop clear regulatory frameworks governing digital education and private sector participation.
- Increase transparency around digital initiatives and partnerships.
- Protect data privacy for students and educators, ensuring public control over educational information.

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Gender and Technology: A Persistent Challenge

Drawing on findings from the 2024 GEM Report on Gender and Technology in Education, the study underscores that technology alone cannot close gender gaps. Early stereotypes, lack of role models, and unequal access continue to limit girls' and women's participation in digital learning and STEM careers. The report urges policymakers to address these barriers and create safer, more inclusive digital environments for all.

Moving Forward

As education systems across Latin America and the Caribbean become increasingly digital, CLADE's study is a call to action for governments, educators, and civil society. Ensuring the human right to education in digital contexts requires bold policies focused on inclusion, transparency, digital sovereignty, and the creation of open, democratic learning spaces.

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ACEA: REGIONAL WORKSHOP ADVANCES GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN PUBLIC BUDGETS



The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) launched the second phase of its Gender-Responsive Public Budgeting Academy with a regional workshop in Balqa Governorate, Jordan, from 4-10 February 2025.

Building on the success of the first phase, this workshop focused on strengthening advocacy strategies, reviewing ACEA's strategic plan, and enhancing the effectiveness of public budgeting to be more gender-inclusive.

Participants engaged in advanced training on advocacy mechanisms, strategic goal setting, and impactful messaging, as well as conducted SWOT analyses to inform new strategic priorities.

ACEA is also expanding its capacity-building efforts to reach new audiences and deepen partnerships with universities and research centres, aiming to create a robust regional identity and sustainable impact in education advocacy.

Click [HERE](#) to read this story on ACEA's website.

ACEA CONCLUDES STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP IN JORDAN



On 9 February 2025, ACEA concluded a two-day Strategic Planning Workshop at the Dead Sea, Jordan, bringing together representatives from education coalitions across the Arab region, including Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Tunisia, and Somalia.

The workshop focused on strategies to strengthen education, particularly in crisis-affected countries, and reaffirmed ACEA's commitment to education as a fundamental right.

Highlights included honouring Dr. Zahi Azar, ACEA President, for his leadership and extending the Executive Committee's term to ensure institutional continuity. Dr. Azar emphasized the importance of regional collaboration to advance ACEA's vision and uphold the right to education.

Click [HERE](#) to read this story on ACEA's website.

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ACEA: ADVANCING ADULT EDUCATION - AHAED'S MARRAKECH FRAMEWORK MEETING



The Arab House for Adult Learning and Development (AHAED) convened experts in Amman, Jordan, on 12 February 2025, to discuss the application of the Marrakech Framework in adult education.

The meeting featured presentations on the framework's goals for lifelong learning, the importance of renewing educational programs to keep pace with change, and strategies for integrating adult education into national policies.

Refaat Sabbah, President of the Arab House for Adult Learning and Development (AHED) and GCE President, and Barbara Hust, Regional Director, Middle East, German Adult Education Association (DVVI), highlighted the need for regional cooperation and policy support, while Zahi Azar, ACEA President, advocated for curriculum updates and transformative education. The event concluded with discussions on implementing the Marrakech Framework across the Arab region.

Click [HERE](#) to read this story on ACEA's website.

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PALESTINIAN EDUCATION COALITION PROMOTES LEARNING COOPERATIVES AND ADULT EDUCATION



The Palestinian Education Coalition wrapped up a two-day workshop in Ramallah on 22 February 2025, focusing on learning cooperatives and adult education.

The event brought together 24 members to explore participatory models that foster collective engagement and sustainable learning.

Day one addressed the foundations and sustainability of learning cooperatives, while day two delved into strategies for enhancing adult education quality and integrating it into national frameworks.

The workshop highlighted the importance of transformative education in empowering individuals and meeting diverse learning needs.

Click [HERE](#) to read this story on ACEA's website.

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ACEA: NEW REPORT - “THE DUALITY OF HOPE AND AMBITION” EXAMINES TEACHER WELL-BEING

ACEA has published a report on, *'The Duality of Hope and Ambition: Psychological and Social Pressures and Traumas to Overcome for Advancing Teacher Well-being and Enhancing the Quality of Education'*.

Featuring 31 research papers by 42 researchers from across the Arab region, the report documents key findings and initiatives that were presented at ACEA's Third Regional Conference.

The event was organized in collaboration with the Teacher Creativity Centre Association, the Palestinian Education Coalition, and several ministries and universities, focusing on supporting teacher well-being to improve education quality.

Click [HERE](#) to read this story on ACEA's website.



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PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR GLOBAL ACTION WEEK FOR EDUCATION (GAWE) 2025



The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) announces preparations for the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE 2025), scheduled for 28 April to 5 May 2025, under the theme '*Education Saves Lives, Protect Education in Emergencies*'.

The campaign aims to highlight the critical need to protect education during crises, conflicts, and disasters. ACEA will advocate for mechanisms to protect teachers, sustainable funding for education in emergencies, and comprehensive plans to ensure equal opportunities for girls, women, and persons with disabilities.

The campaign calls for international accountability for attacks on educational institutions and stresses the importance of resilient education systems to uphold the right to education for all.

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SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHT TO LEARN: EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN FROM ARTSAKH



The forced displacement of the entire population of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) in late 2023 has left deep scars on thousands of children and youth. As the world's attention shifts, the crisis for these families continues—nowhere more urgently than in the realm of education.

The Scale of Displacement and Education Loss

Following Azerbaijan's occupation of Artsakh, more than 200 schools and 15 universities were abandoned or destroyed, leaving a generation suddenly without classrooms or teachers. Over 30,000 children and adolescents were uprooted, joining host communities across Armenia, where schools are now overwhelmed by overcrowding and resource shortages.

Many displaced students recall the trauma of blockade and flight - first losing access to basic supplies, then their homes, and now facing uncertainty about their educational future. While the Armenian government has enrolled approximately 17,000 displaced children into public schools, thousands more remain outside the system or struggle to adapt to new environments.

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Overcrowding, Trauma, and the Need for Psychosocial Support

Host schools, especially in border regions, are stretched to capacity. Classrooms are overcrowded, and teachers face the dual challenge of meeting academic needs while supporting children coping with acute trauma and persistent insecurity. Many students and teachers themselves are survivors of violence and displacement.

Recognizing the psychological toll, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank have partnered with Armenian authorities to provide specialized training for over 1,800 teachers and 600 psychologists, aiming to build trauma-informed, supportive school environments. These programs focus on mental health, social-emotional learning, and peer support, but the scale of need remains daunting.

“Long periods of uncertainty and repeated military escalations have taken a toll on the mental well-being of refugee children and their families, and across host communities.” — UNICEF Armenia

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Systemic Barriers and Unmet Needs

Despite emergency measures, displaced families face ongoing barriers:

- Uncertainty over tuition and educational continuity: Many are unsure if government support for tuition fees will continue, making it difficult to plan for their children's education.
- Lack of documentation: Missing or destroyed documents hinder access to schools and social services.
- Housing instability: Temporary housing and the threat of losing rent support increase the risk of further displacement and school dropout.
- Limited access for children with special needs: Over 200 children with special educational needs have been identified and enrolled, but many more require inclusive support.

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Advocacy and Community Response

Throughout February and March 2025, Armenian and Artsakh coalitions have documented these challenges and are preparing advocacy campaigns for Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2025. Their message is clear: education must be protected as a fundamental right, even in times of crisis.

Local and international organizations are stepping up the following:

- Teach For Armenia has launched summer camps and trauma-informed teaching initiatives to help displaced children catch up academically and emotionally.
- People in Need and partners have established child-friendly spaces and vocational training for youth and families, supporting both education and economic integration.
- Student and youth groups are mobilizing research and advocacy efforts to defend the right of return and the right to education for Artsakh Armenians.

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Looking Forward: The Call to Action

The crisis is far from over. As Armenia's border communities continue to face military threats, and as displaced families struggle with trauma and uncertainty, the right to education is both a lifeline and a promise for the future.

Sustained investment, international solidarity, and systemic reforms are urgently needed to:

- Ensure every displaced child is enrolled in school and receives psychosocial support.
- Provide stable housing and social protection to prevent further disruption.
- Equip teachers and schools to handle the complex needs of traumatized students.
- Uphold the right to education for all, even amid ongoing emergencies.

The resilience of Armenia's children and educators is remarkable - but they cannot do it alone. The world must not look away.

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EDUCATION FINANCING IN CRISIS: GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND PATHWAYS FORWARD



Education systems worldwide are at a crossroads in 2025, facing mounting financial pressures and a decline in international support. This was the central theme of the recent “Education Champions” seminar, which brought together more than 90 experts and stakeholders to analyze the latest trends and propose solutions for sustainable education financing.

A Global Funding Shortfall

Martin Péricard of the French Development Agency (AFD) opened the session by highlighting a worrying trend: significant budget cuts and a retreat from international commitments. France alone has reduced its development aid for education by 2.1 billion euros, while the United States, United Kingdom, and several European countries have abandoned the long-standing goal of allocating 0.7% of GDP to official development assistance. These cuts threaten progress toward universal access to quality education and undermine the efforts of civil society organizations working on the ground.

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Funding Gaps and Missed Commitments

Vanessa Martin of Action Éducation presented findings from the Education Coalition's annual Observatory, revealing that basic education now accounts for just 2.2% of France's bilateral international solidarity budget. Alarmingly, 42% of this funding is spent on scholarships or grants to French institutions, rather than directly supporting partner countries' education systems.

Delays in fulfilling financial commitments to global initiatives like the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Cannot Wait fund further jeopardize education in the poorest countries.

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Debt and Tax Justice: Hidden Barriers

El Hadji Mame Moussa Sarr of ActionAid Senegal emphasized that debt repayment is siphoning resources away from education and health in the Global South. More than 75% of low-income countries now spend more on debt than on healthcare, and some allocate twice as much to debt as to education.

Climate finance remains insufficient, often delivered as loans rather than grants, deepening financial dependency. Meanwhile, illicit financial flows and tax evasion by multinationals drain \$1.13 trillion annually from developing countries, further limiting their ability to fund essential public services.

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Public-Private Partnerships: Promise and Pitfalls

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are often promoted as a solution to funding gaps, but Delphine Dorsi of Right to Education cautioned that they can introduce higher hidden costs and widen inequalities. PPPs may favour high-performing students, exclude those with special needs, and reduce transparency due to opaque contracts.

Assiba Djemaoun and Rohen D'aiglepiere of the French Development Agency (AFD) noted that few PPP projects are actually implemented in education, largely due to governments' lack of technical capacity to negotiate balanced agreements. They stressed the need to strengthen public sector capacity and enforce strict regulation to ensure PPPs serve the public interest.

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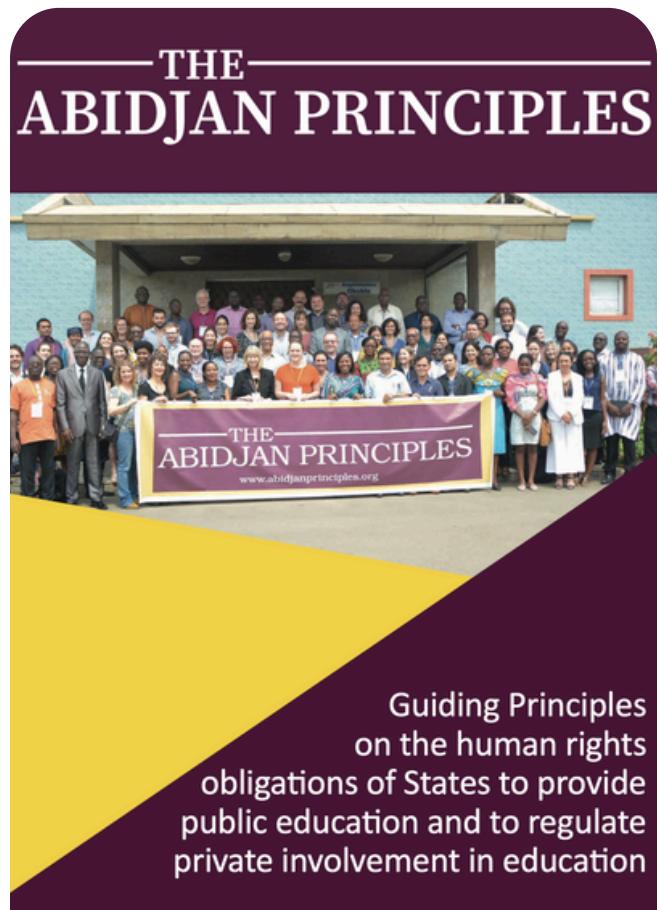
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The Abidjan Principles: A Rights-Based Framework
Aya Douabou of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) introduced the Abidjan Principles, a legal framework adopted in 2019 to guide the financing and governance of education in line with human rights.

These principles urge states to prioritize public education funding, mobilize resources through fair taxation, and regulate private providers to ensure quality and accessibility.

A case study from Kenya highlighted the challenges of regulating informal schools and the need for clear standards to guarantee inclusion and uphold the right to education.



www.abidjanprinciples.org
AbidjanPrinciples

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A Call for Collective Action

Sarah Nardone, Education Advisor at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, closed the session by emphasizing the urgency of collective action. She praised the advocacy efforts of civil society and called for greater intersectoral collaboration to address the challenges identified, particularly around PPPs. Nardone reaffirmed France's commitment to defending the right to education in partnership with bilateral and multilateral stakeholders.

The French Education Coalition, uniting 22 civil society organizations, continues to advocate for quality, inclusive education for all and underscores the necessity of international solidarity to meet this global challenge.

This article is part of the "Education Champions" 2025 series, highlighting critical debates and solutions for the future of education worldwide.

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JAPAN STEPS UP FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: A MILESTONE IN GLOBAL ADVOCACY



In a world where millions of children are deprived of quality education due to conflicts, poverty, and disabilities, Japan is stepping up its efforts to respond to these urgent needs. The Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE) is at the forefront of this initiative, advocating for increased contributions to education in emergencies and protracted crises (EiEPC) in collaboration with Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

Despite Japan adopting an international educational cooperation policy in 2015 that emphasizes support for marginalized populations, the reality reflects a significant gap. As of 2021-2023, a mere 2.7% of Japan's humanitarian assistance is directed towards the education sector.

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Since 2021, JNNE has launched an advocacy project funded by ECW, aiming to enhance Japan's contributions to education in emergencies. This project employs a multi-faceted approach, focusing on:

1. Advocacy with Government Officials and MPs: Engaging with lawmakers to raise awareness about the critical importance of education in crises.
2. Public Awareness Campaigns: Mobilizing youth and communities through the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) education campaign to foster a collective commitment to educational equity.
3. Capacity Development: Equipping Japanese aid workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide effective support in crisis situations, adhering to established standards like the INEE Minimum Standards for Education.

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One of the standout initiatives of this advocacy project has been the organization of overseas missions for Japanese Members of Parliament (MPs) to visit ECW project sites. Since January 2023, five missions have taken place in countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda, Bangladesh, Moldova/Romania, and Kenya. These missions have proven instrumental in transforming lawmakers' perspectives on international cooperation in education.

By experiencing firsthand the challenges and successes of educational initiatives on the ground, MPs are better equipped to advocate for increased support within Japan's political landscape. The results of these missions have been palpable; upon returning, participating MPs have actively raised questions in Diet Sessions and reported back to key political committees, significantly elevating the visibility of EiEPC and ECW initiatives.

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The advocacy efforts have yielded remarkable outcomes, including Japan's inaugural funding contribution to ECW in 2023, followed by continued support in 2024. JNNE's successful mobilization of support marks a significant milestone in Japan's approach to education in emergencies. As we reflect on these developments, it is evident that sustained advocacy, education, and engagement can lead to transformative change. With continued efforts, Japan can strengthen its role as a leader in global education initiatives, ensuring that every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to quality education.



For more information about the ongoing efforts and to support this vital cause, please visit the JNNE website [HERE](#) and learn more about Education Cannot Wait [HERE](#).

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VSO
INTERNATIONAL -
UNLOCKING LIFE
CHANCES: HOW
ACTIVE
CITIZENSHIP IS
TRANSFORMING
EDUCATION FOR
GIRLS AND
VULNERABLE
CHILDREN



Globally, one in six children are out of school due to social, economic, and cultural barriers, with girls in conflict-affected areas 2.5 times more likely to be excluded than boys. This deprivation has lasting impacts on their learning, well-being, and future opportunities.

VSO is tackling these challenges head-on with innovative, community-driven projects that are accelerating learning and empowerment for the most marginalized children.

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Breaking Barriers in Mozambique: The EAGLE Project

In Mozambique, the Empowering Adolescent Girls to Learn and Earn (EAGLE) project is improving the lives of 5,000 girls by increasing access to education, particularly for those affected by disability, HIV/AIDS, or child marriage.

The project strengthens local learning centres, provides essential materials, and raises awareness about gender equality through radio, theatre, and community clubs.

More than 1,000 previously out-of-school girls have passed literacy tests, and nearly half a million people have engaged in positive debates about girls' and women's rights.

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Supporting Inclusion in Conflict-Affected Myanmar

In Myanmar's Mon state, the ACTIVE project has mobilized over 310 community volunteers to support more than 2,800 vulnerable children, including those with disabilities or trauma.

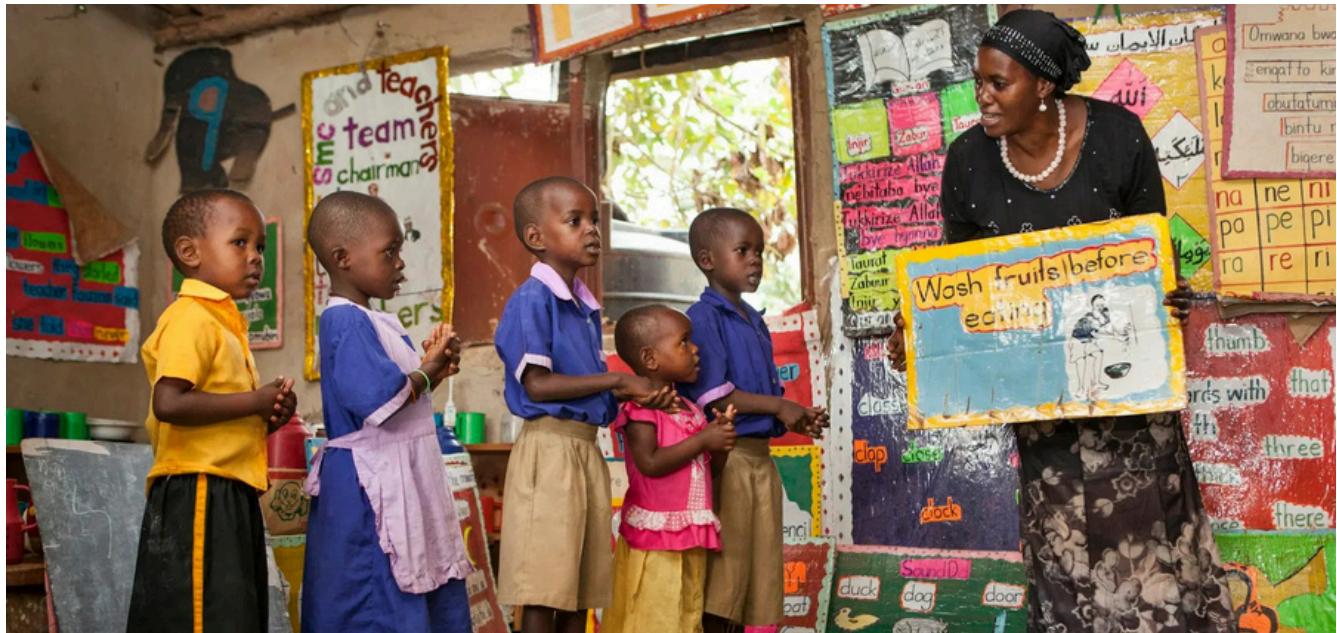
Volunteers are trained in leadership, inclusive education, and conflict sensitivity, helping to create safe learning spaces and inspire new community initiatives like libraries and environmental projects.

The project is building a network of local leaders committed to positive change - 60% of volunteers continue their work even after the project ends.

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Building Community in Uganda's Refugee Settlements

In Uganda's Bidibidi refugee settlement, the ECCE-ACTIVE project is uniting parents, teachers, and community leaders to ensure every child has access to early childhood education. Nearly 100 caregivers and teachers have received training, and community-led feeding programs are keeping children nourished and motivated. The project's inclusive approach, including disability-friendly infrastructure and active engagement of fathers, is helping more children enrol, stay in school, and thrive.

The Power of Active Citizenship

These projects, supported by the UK government's £27 million ACTIVE programme, demonstrate the transformative power of active citizenship. By mobilizing and training local volunteers, VSO is ensuring that marginalized communities can lead their own development, claim their rights, and build a foundation for lasting change.

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BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: INSIGHTS FROM THE GCE SUPPORT VISIT TO ZAMBIA



GCE, in partnership with GIZ, recently concluded a support visit to the Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) in Lusaka, shining a spotlight on the transformative potential - and persistent challenges - of digital education in Zambia.

ZANEC, a coalition of NGOs, teacher unions, and student organizations, is driving the Digital Skills Education Enhancement Project (DEEP), which aims to boost digital literacy among teachers and learners. GCE's visit focused on assessing project progress, ensuring financial compliance, and providing technical assistance, while also facilitating dialogue with key education stakeholders.

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The team visited Kabwe district in Central Province, where the DEEP program has been piloted in 20 primary and 20 secondary schools. Here, the Radio Listening Club approach is making a tangible impact. Teachers use a solar-powered loudspeaker device - capable of playing thousands of pre-recorded lessons stored on flash drives or accessed via Bluetooth - to deliver lessons and maintain learning continuity when teachers are absent.

Teachers and learners alike praised the initiative. Teachers reported that the radio listening groups enabled them to provide richer teaching input and supplement classroom learning. Some teachers have even begun producing their own digital lessons, further localizing and personalizing content. The enthusiasm for the program is palpable, with teachers expressing a desire for more inter-school exchanges to share best practices.

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Advocacy for Equity and Inclusion

Despite these successes, the visit highlighted ongoing challenges. ZANEC's advocacy centres on the need for stronger domestic financing and equitable access to digital tools, especially for girls, rural communities, and learners with disabilities. The coalition is calling for transparent budgeting, comprehensive teacher ICT training, and policies that prioritize connectivity for the most marginalized.

EdTech: A Catalyst, Not a Cure-All

The GCE's engagement in Zambia highlighted a key lesson: while education technology can be a powerful enabler, it is not a standalone solution. Real progress depends on political will, robust policy frameworks, and sustained investment. Civil society in Zambia is ready to lead the charge, but governments and donors must step up to ensure no learner is left behind.

As the GenerationDigital programme concludes in April 2025, the momentum for education justice in Zambia is stronger than ever - driven by innovation, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to equity.