



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
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JUNE-JULY 2025

GCE
BUZZ

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From Learning to Leading: Africa National Education Coalitions Step Into Global Advocacy

Over the past year, GCE has taken important strides in strengthening the leadership of National Education Coalitions (NECs) across Africa. What began as a knowledge-sharing exercise has grown into capacity-building and mentoring, enabling coalitions not just to participate in global policy processes, but to actively shape them.

At the regional Learning and Sharing Conference in Johannesburg (October 2024), NECs from Africa came together to exchange experiences with peers from Asia and beyond. The examples of Nepal, Niger and ASPBAE, which had developed “spotlight reports” to track progress on the SDGs, generated interest among coalitions that had never before engaged in Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes.

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Following this exchange, GCE extended targeted support: mentoring NECs through the drafting of spotlight reports, technical review sessions, and close follow-up. As a result, coalitions from Ethiopia, Eswatini, The Gambia, Lesotho, and Angola have produced their first spotlight reports, an achievement that goes beyond reporting, helping these coalitions enter new advocacy spaces with confidence.

This effort bore fruit during the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in April 2025, where GCE co-organised a side event with the government of Eswatini, ANCEFA (the Africa national education coalition), and Girls Not Brides on Financing gender-transformative education for inclusive growth. Nelisiwe Nhlabtsi, National Coordinator of SWANCEFA (Swaziland Network Campaign for Education For All), presented preliminary findings from Eswatini's spotlight report, demonstrating how NEC voices are reaching influential platforms.

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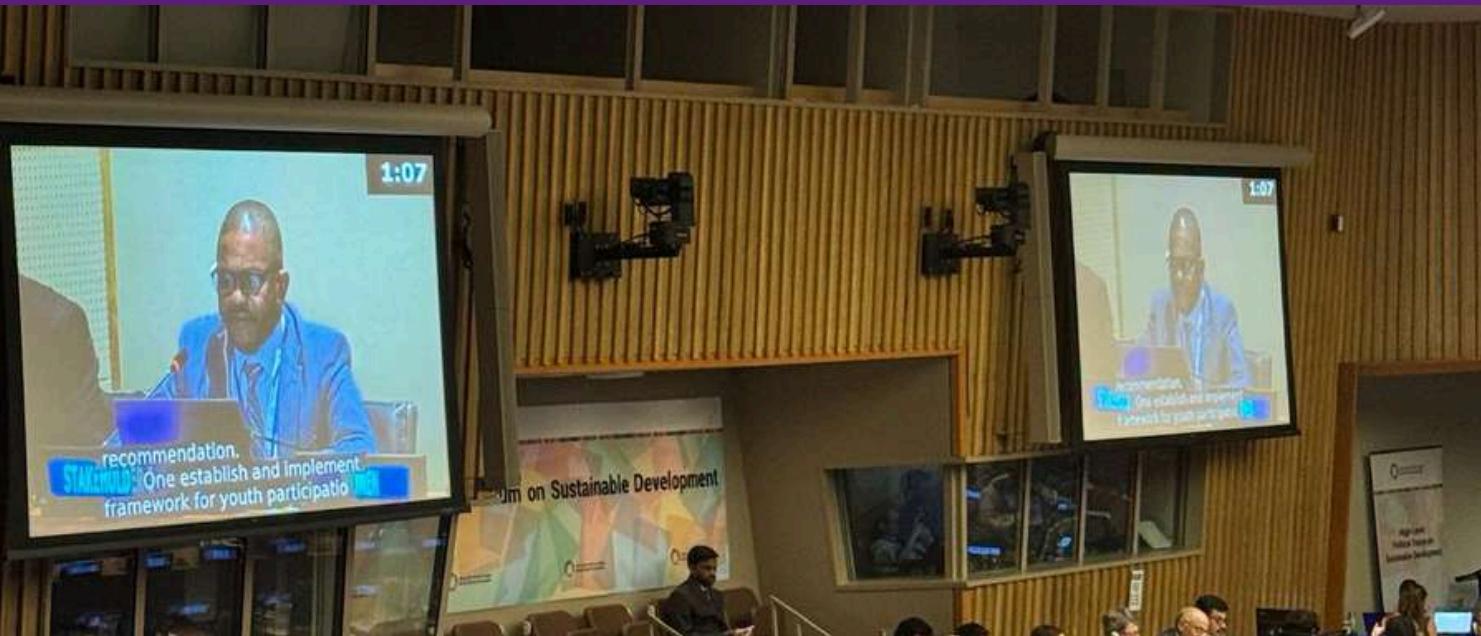


GCE also worked with NECs to access global mechanisms such as the CSO VNR Task Force, supporting them in registering, contributing to civil society statements, and joining global consultations, another important “first” for many coalitions. EFANET The Gambia even took part in drafting its country’s CSO statement, marking a milestone for Gambian civil society engagement.

This momentum is spreading. Even countries not submitting VNRs, such as Burkina Faso, South Sudan and Cameroon, are now developing spotlight reports with GCE’s support. The long-term goal is to ensure every NEC can engage in SDG processes with evidence, analysis, and advocacy messages of their own.

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The African NECs from Eswatini, Lesotho and Zambia also participated in the High-Level Political Forum 2025 from 14-23 July at the UN Headquarters in New York. Nelisiwe of SWANCEFA presented the CSO VNR Statement for Eswatini after the government's presentation in the plenary. Nelisiwe emphasised the urgency for inclusive and gender-transformative education, education financing and inclusive governance and accountability.

Sekonyela Mapetja, Executive Director of the Lesotho Council of NGOs was also in the HLPF 2025 as civil society representative of the government delegation of Lesotho. He delivered the CSO VNR Statement for Lesotho, where he cited "*persistent rural-urban disparities in access to quality public services, high youth unemployment and the lack of access of women to higher administrative positions and skills development, limited institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation.*"

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Both coalitions produced an SDG 4 Spotlight 2025, which proved useful in crafting a strong CSO intervention, centering SDG 4 in the statement along with other issues. The coalitions, with the guidance of GCE, also worked together with the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders and the Education and Academica Stakeholder Group – the broad CSO mechanisms in the HLPF.

The interventions of Nelisiwe and Sekonyela representing the civil society for Eswatini and Lesotho respectively is a remarkable success for a coalition to represent the civil society voice in the global platform such as the HLPF 2025.

This journey is about far more than capacity-building. It is about building confidence, strengthening collaboration, and ensuring that NECs, from The Gambia to Lesotho, step into their rightful role as leaders in shaping the global education agenda.

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HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**HLPF
2025**



14-23 JULY 2025

**ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE,
SCIENCE- AND EVIDENCE-BASED
SOLUTIONS FOR THE 2030 AGENDA AND
ITS SDGs, LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



5 GENDER EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



14 LIFE
UNDER WATER



17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



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Eswatini at HLPF 2025: Civil Society Calls for Inclusive Progress and Accountable Governance

On 18 July 2025, the Government of Eswatini presented its Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York, sharing the stage with Bangladesh and Micronesia. The session provided an important platform to spotlight national progress, challenges, and policy commitments toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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Following the country presentations, Member States, international organizations, and key stakeholders were invited to respond and share reflections on the reports presented.

Representing Eswatini's civil society, Nelisiwe Nhlabatsi, National Coordinator of the Swaziland Network Campaign for Education for All, delivered a powerful civil society statement. She spoke on behalf of the Major Group and Other Stakeholders (MGOs) and represented the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group, highlighting the perspectives, concerns, and calls to action from education advocates across Eswatini.



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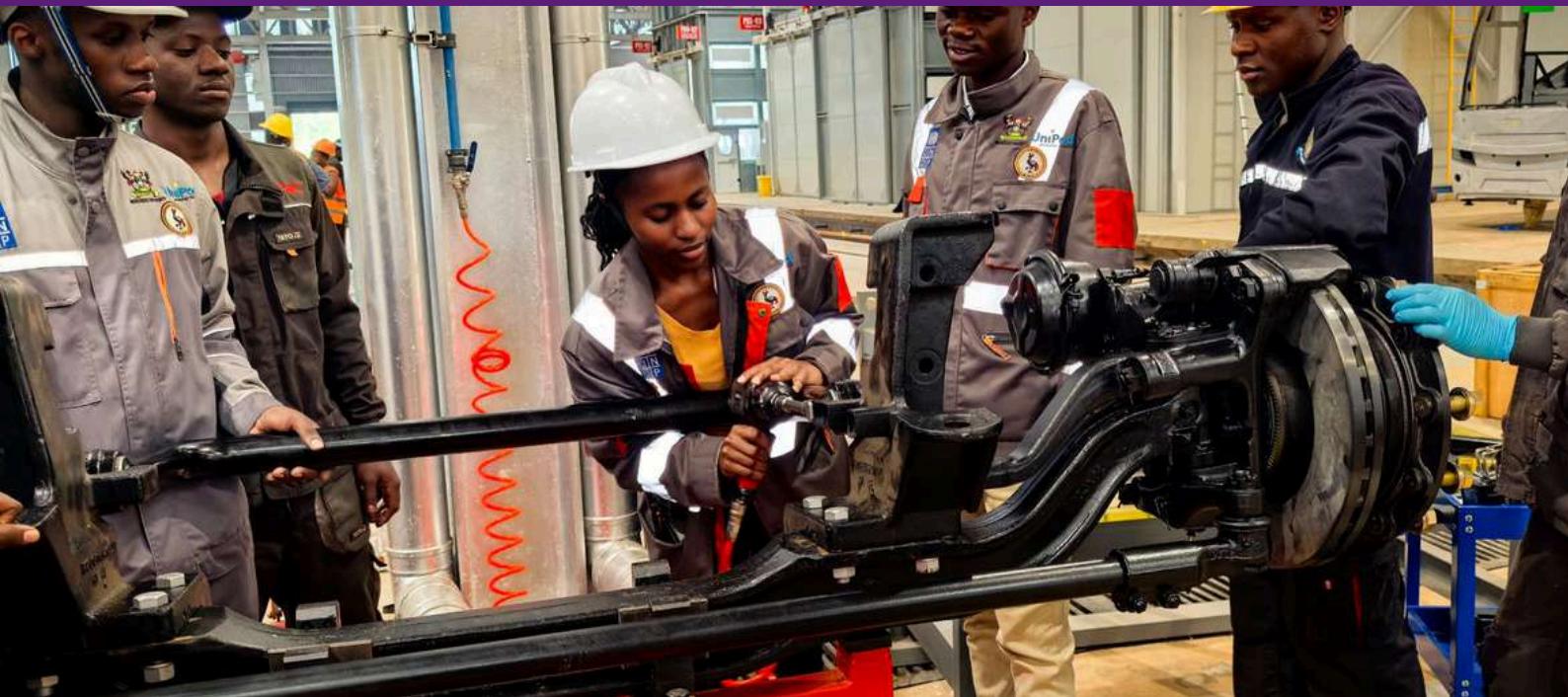
Here is the statement -

We welcome Eswatini's VNR and appreciate the progress made toward the SDGs. We recognize the country's success in reducing maternal and child deaths, as well as the decline in HIV and TB cases. At the same time, we remain concerned about the shortage of medicines and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases. These issues must be addressed to improve public health for all.

On SDG 5, it is good to see more women in Parliament and the launch of the Gender Policy in 2023. But gender-based violence is still a major problem. At the core of the gender policy should be the implementation of gender transformative education from ECCDE to higher education, including in adult learning and education.

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Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges under SDG 8. Youth unemployment is still very high, despite a small decrease. We urge the government to invest in gender-just skills training, promote small businesses, and support a job-creating economy that ensures decent work and dignity for young people and disadvantaged women.

We also note the rise in international aid under SDG 17. Yet civil society must be part of the planning and utilization of these resources. We also need access to better data, stronger cooperation across sectors and more open ways of working.

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Our key questions:

1. The allocation of funds for debt servicing raises grave concerns given the country's limited fiscal space. How can Eswatini support efforts towards convening the UN Convention on Sovereign Debt that will establish a fairer and democratic debt restructuring where debtor countries will have a stronger voice?
2. How will Eswatini create institutionalised mechanisms and open ways for civil society to help shape and track progress on its SDGs?

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Civil Society Reflections and Recommendations on Lesotho's 2025 Voluntary National Review at the UN HLPF

Statement by Sekonyela Mapetja, Executive Director of the Lesotho Council of NGOs. Sekonyela spoke on behalf of the Major Group and Other Stakeholders (MGOs) and presented the CSO Voluntary National Review (VNR) Statement on Lesotho during the HLPF 2025 plenary session where the government of Lesotho presented its VNR.

We would like to commend the government of Lesotho for demonstrating political commitment towards achieving the SDGs. We also acknowledge the recommendation in the VNR for “*Civil Society and NGOs to intensify public engagement and accountability through shadow reporting, civic education, and community mobilization.*”

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We note that structural challenges continue to undermine the progress of SDGs in the country. These include persistent rural-urban disparities in access to quality public services, high youth unemployment and the lack of access of women to higher administrative positions and skills development, limited institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation.

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Recommendations



CSO policy for
civil society



Gender-responsive
budgeting



Improved and
inclusive education



Enhanced
disaggregated
data systems



Gender-
transformative
education



Sustainable
financing for
public services

Therefore, we would like to put forward these recommendations:

- Establish and implement a CSO policy, a formal, inclusive framework for civil society and youth participation in SDG planning, monitoring, and reporting.
- Strengthen education for decent work for marginalised groups. Review and update the TVET and non-formal education policies to address high dropout rates and skills gaps, aligning education with labor market demands and ensure women's access to decent work and a life of dignity.
- Invest in gender- transformative education that challenges harmful gender norms, such as child marriage and gender-based violence and ensure girls can complete quality education.

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Recommendations



CSO policy for
civil society



Gender-responsive
budgeting



Improved and
inclusive education



Enhanced
disaggregated
data systems



Gender-
transformative
education



Sustainable
financing for
public services

- Expand and accelerate Gender-Responsive Budgeting to address barriers faced by girls, boys, women and marginalized communities.
- Enhance Data Systems and collect disaggregated data collection (by gender, disability, geography) and integrate civil society monitoring tools in the information systems.
- Generate sustainable financing for quality public education and public services by implementing progressive taxation and supporting efforts towards convening the UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt.

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Defending the Future of Education: A Call for Investment, Gender Equality, and Civil Society Participation at HLPF 2025

Grace Rector of GCE-US spoke on behalf of the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) and GCE during the High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the HLPF 2025.

Here is her statement:

As a teacher, student, and representative of the Education and Academia Stakeholder group, and Global Campaign for Education, I stand here today because the future of education is fragile. Education is fragile because education development assistance is projected to decline by 22% from 2023 to 2025 (OECD), fragile because 251 million children are OUT of school (UNESCO), and fragile because 60 million girls are sexually assaulted on their way to or at school every year (World Bank).



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But imagine if instead, governments invest in quality public education, every learner attends school, and girls feel safe walking to school. Take Helena, a 15-year-old American student who suffered from unequipped schools that failed to support her disability. When she finally found a school with inclusive support and funding from civil society organizations, she became an advocate. Last week, I watched her enter her senator's office confidently - wearing a black suit slightly too large, carrying demands for education funding, and wearing a smile of hope. Helena's story shows what investment and inclusive systems can achieve.

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To multiply this reality, we need you to commit to three actions:

1. Increase financing for education, reverse recent cuts in ODA, and reaffirm education as a priority sector. International aid must be safeguarded as a matter of global justice to ensure that every child, youth, and adult can exercise their right to education.

2. Develop gender-transformative education systems that address gender discrimination, promote gender equality, and integrate comprehensive sexuality education into the curricula.

3. Create permanent mechanisms for civil society and youth participation in SDGs at country, regional, and global levels.



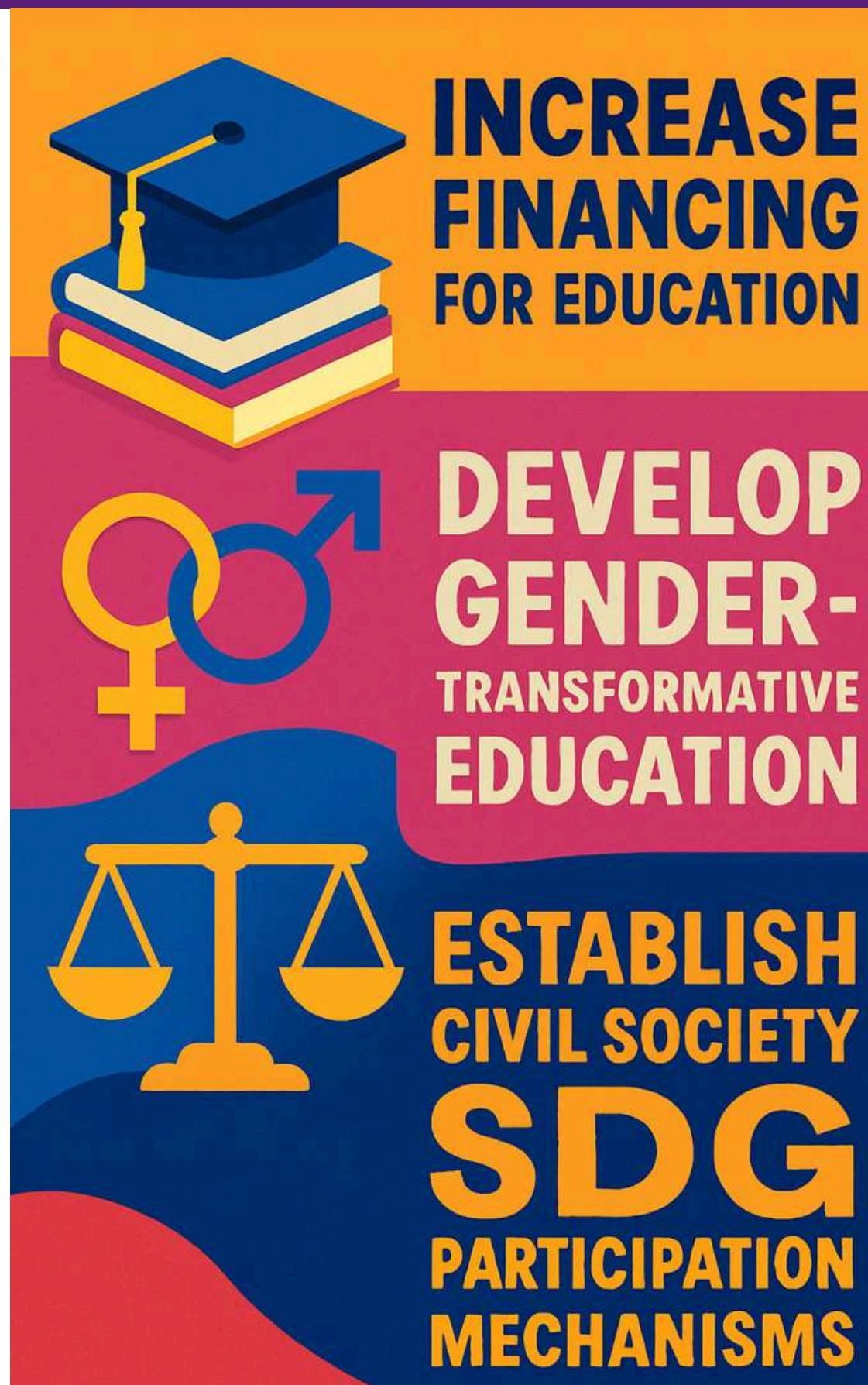
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If we choose to strengthen education, we choose economic growth, gender justice, and lasting peace.

Now that's a world I want to live in. That's the world that civil society is working towards.

Will you join us?



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**HEALTH
AND
WELL-BEING**



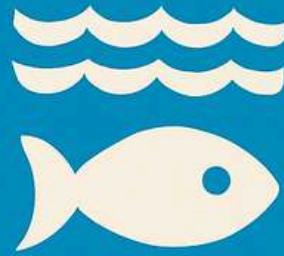
**GENDER
EQUALITY**



**DECENT WORK
AND
ECONOMIC
GROWTH**



**LIFE
BELOW
WATER**



Wrapping up GCE's powerful engagements at HLPF 2025

The High-Level Political Forum 2025 was a great opportunity for the Global Campaign for Education to monitor the progress of SDG 4 across countries and call on governments to act urgently on their commitment to “leave no one behind” in education. It was also a political moment for GCE to reiterate the foundational role of SDG4 in achieving the SDGs, particularly the intersection of SDG 4 with the focus SDGs – SDG 3: Health and Well-being, SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth, SDG 14: Life below water. As with every year, GCE called on governments to deliver on their obligation to finance quality public education for all children, youth and adults in SDG 17: Partnerships.

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GCE is an Organising Partner of the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG). It co-created and advocated the demands of the EASG during the HLPF 2025.

Key Recommendations -

- **Increase and Protect Public Education Financing:** Close the \$97 billion annual gap for low- and lower-middle-income countries and meet international benchmarks for domestic and donor funding.
- **Advance Gender-Transformative Education:** Implement inclusive curricula, comprehensive sexuality education, and gender-responsive planning across education systems.
- **Promote Education for Decent Work:** Prioritise lifelong learning, vocational training, and equitable access to employment for youth, women, and marginalised communities.
- **Integrate Climate and Ocean Literacy:** Make environmental education core to curricula to empower communities as stewards of the planet.
- **Safeguard Civic Space and Youth Participation:** Institutionalise civil society and youth engagement in SDG implementation, especially in national review processes.

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SDG Spotlight Reports for the HLPF 2025



*Evidence building and active engagement in the
Voluntary National Review (VNR)*

GCE supported the national education coalitions (NECs) in VNR countries in Africa in their SDG 4 Country Spotlight Report 2025. The coalitions are:

1. Rede Angolana da Sociedade Civil de Educação Para Todos (REDEPT)/Angola National Education Coalition
2. Swaziland Network Campaign for Education For All (SWANCEFA) – Eswatini
3. Education for All Network (EFANet) – The Gambia
4. Basic Education Network in Ethiopia (BEN-E)
5. Ghana National Education Coalition
6. Lesotho Council of NGOs
7. Civil Society Action Coalition for Education for All
8. Sudanese Coalition for Education for All

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GCE's mentoring of coalitions was informed by lessons and experiences of ASPBAE, NCE-Nepal, and CLADE in working with coalitions in the production of the Spotlight Report. The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) mentored the coalition in Sudan in their SDG 4 Spotlight Report.

For the past years, GCE has focused on producing the Global SDG 4 Spotlight reports. GCE continues this initiative of synthesising evidence on the progress of SDG 4 from diverse regions and voices.

SDG SPOTLIGHT REPORTS FOR THE HLPF 2025

EFA Net Gambia & SWANCEFA Eswatini

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
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www.campaignforeducation.org

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A QUALITY EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING. NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND.

GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS. END HARMFUL PRACTICES, KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL, SUPPORT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ALL FIELDS.

INVEST IN EDUCATION. ENFORCE THE RIGHTS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN, AND BUILD A FUTURE WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES.

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Collaborating with regional coalitions and NECs in the regional SDG Forums

The regional SDG Forums are important venues for centering SDG 4 in the regional HLPF 2025 agenda as well as for building linkages with different civil society sectors advocating for SDGs within the framework of development and gender justice.

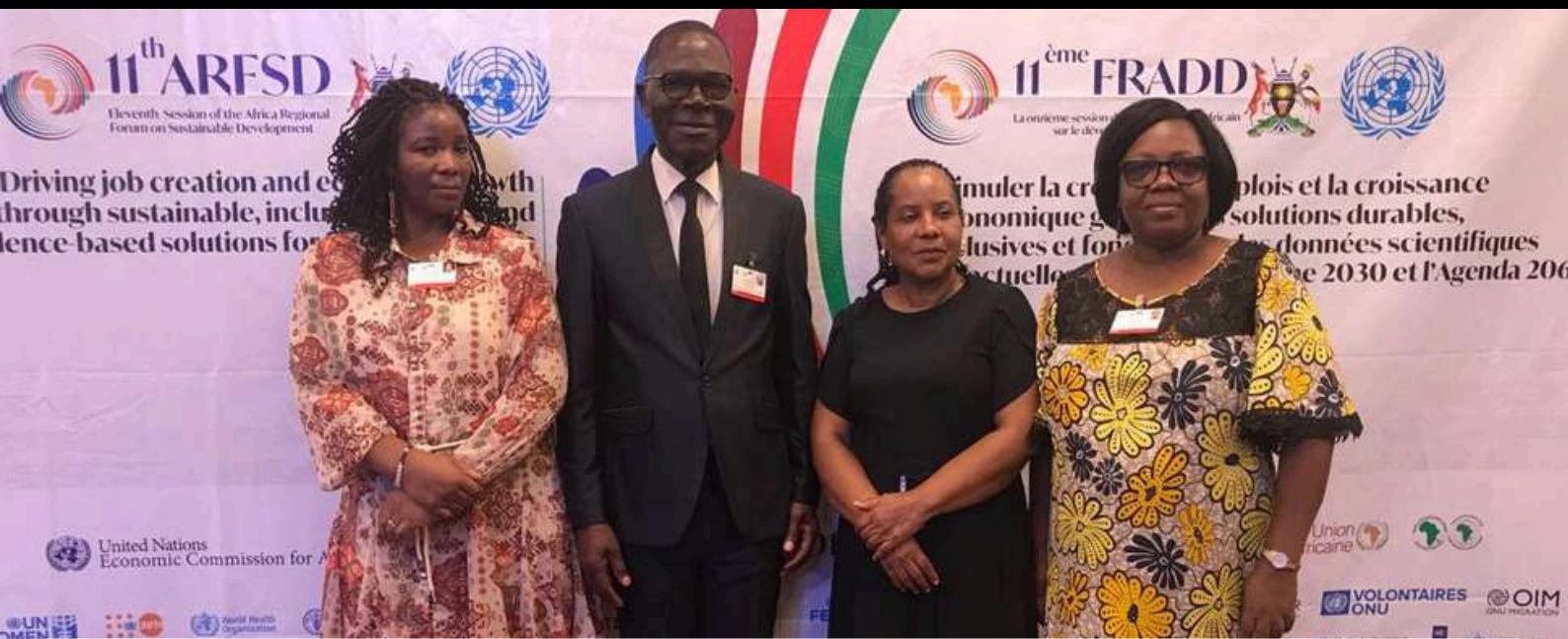
At the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), ASPBAE steered the education movement's advocacy for SDG 4 and worked with the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCEM). GCE collaborated with ASPBAE in the Asia Pacific advocacy, connected with other GCE members/partners such as VSO International and GCAP. It was also an opportune moment for GCE to build connections with Elisa Morgera, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of Human Rights in the context of climate change.

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In Latin America and the Caribbean, GCE worked with CLADE in advancing the SDG 4 agenda in the regional discussions in preparation for HLPF 2025.



At the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Kampala, Uganda, there was a strong contingent from the African NECs, ANCEFA and GCE. GCE's Julie Juma presented on financing gender-transformative education during the Transparency International side event.

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HLPF 2025

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#SDG4

LOCAL SOLUTIONS,
GLOBAL IMPACT

Empower people. Drive progress on the
SDGs. Shape a sustainable future for all!

HLPF 2025 was a key moment for GCE and its members!

After more than a year of preparation, working with the national education coalition as well as the EASG at the global level, GCE maximised the opportunities at HLPF 2025 to amplify the education demands of its members and the collective global agenda.

The GCE side event and the EASG side events were key moments for advocacy and mobilising members to support the calls.

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Interventions during HLPF2025 at the UN

The national education coalition representatives from Eswatini and Lesotho took the floor to speak on behalf of the broad civil society and presented the CSO VNR Statement for Eswatini and Lesotho respectively. These were moments to highlight SDG 4, education's intersections with the focus SDGs and calls for civil society participation. Please read Eswatini's full statement [HERE](#) and Lesotho's statement [HERE](#).

At the High-Level ECOSOC meeting during HLPF 2025, Grace Rector of GCE-US intervened in the plenary on behalf of the EASG. You may read her full intervention in Grace's blog [HERE](#).

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Sekonyela Mapetja, Executive Director of the Lesotho Council of NGOs, stressed the need to “*Establish and implement a CSO policy, a formal, inclusive framework for civil society and youth participation in SDG planning, monitoring, and reporting*” in Lesotho.

He also called on the government to “*Invest in gender-transformative education that challenges harmful gender norms, such as child marriage and gender-based violence and ensure girls can complete quality education.*”

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At the High-Level ECOSOC meeting during HLPF 2025, Grace Rector of GCE-US intervened in the plenary on behalf of the EASG: Here are her three demands:

1. Increase financing for education, reverse recent cuts in ODA, and reaffirm education as a priority sector. International aid must be safeguarded as a matter of global justice to ensure that every child, youth, and adult can exercise their right to education.
2. Develop gender-transformative education systems that address gender discrimination, promote gender equality, and integrate comprehensive sexuality education into the curricula.
3. Create permanent mechanisms for civil society and youth participation in SDGs at country, regional, and global levels.

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GCE remains steadfast in engaging the HLPF as a mechanism for the annual review of the progress of SDG 4 and affirms the crucial role of education in the realisation of the SDGs. It will continue to strengthen its work with the national education coalitions and regional coalitions, linking the HLPF processes at the country and regional levels to the global levels. Amidst the challenges of shrinking spaces at the UN, it will work in solidarity with the EASG in urgent calls to governments to deliver on SDG 4 and the right to education at HLPF.

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In FfD4: Education exposes the failures of the global financial architecture

The 4th International Conference on Financing Development (FFD4), was convened in Seville, Spain, from 30 June to 3 July, amidst global challenges in financing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the decrease in Official Development Assistance (ODA), increasing debt servicing that depletes budgets for essential services and the exponential increase in defense spending. The FfD4 itself was beset with tensions; the United States withdrew from the Conference, and fewer than the expected number of prime ministers and presidents attended.



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Despite these realities, the FfD4 was a watershed intergovernmental meeting where GCE reiterated its calls for decolonizing education financing. GCE's preparations for and engagements in the FfD4 processes started in the last quarter of 2024. Working in solidarity with the Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism (CS FfD Mechanism), it contributed to the statements of the different workstreams, positioning GCE's calls in relevant sections of the FfD4 outcome document.



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GCE participated in regional and global intergovernmental processes, ensuring that education financing is on the agenda, not only for sectoral reasons but also to expose systemic barriers in financing development. Citing the realities in education as the starting point, GCE called for structural changes in the financial architecture to tackle inequalities between and within countries, ensure the States' obligation to finance human rights obligations, challenge the private sector capture of essential services and institute global systems of transparency and accountability.

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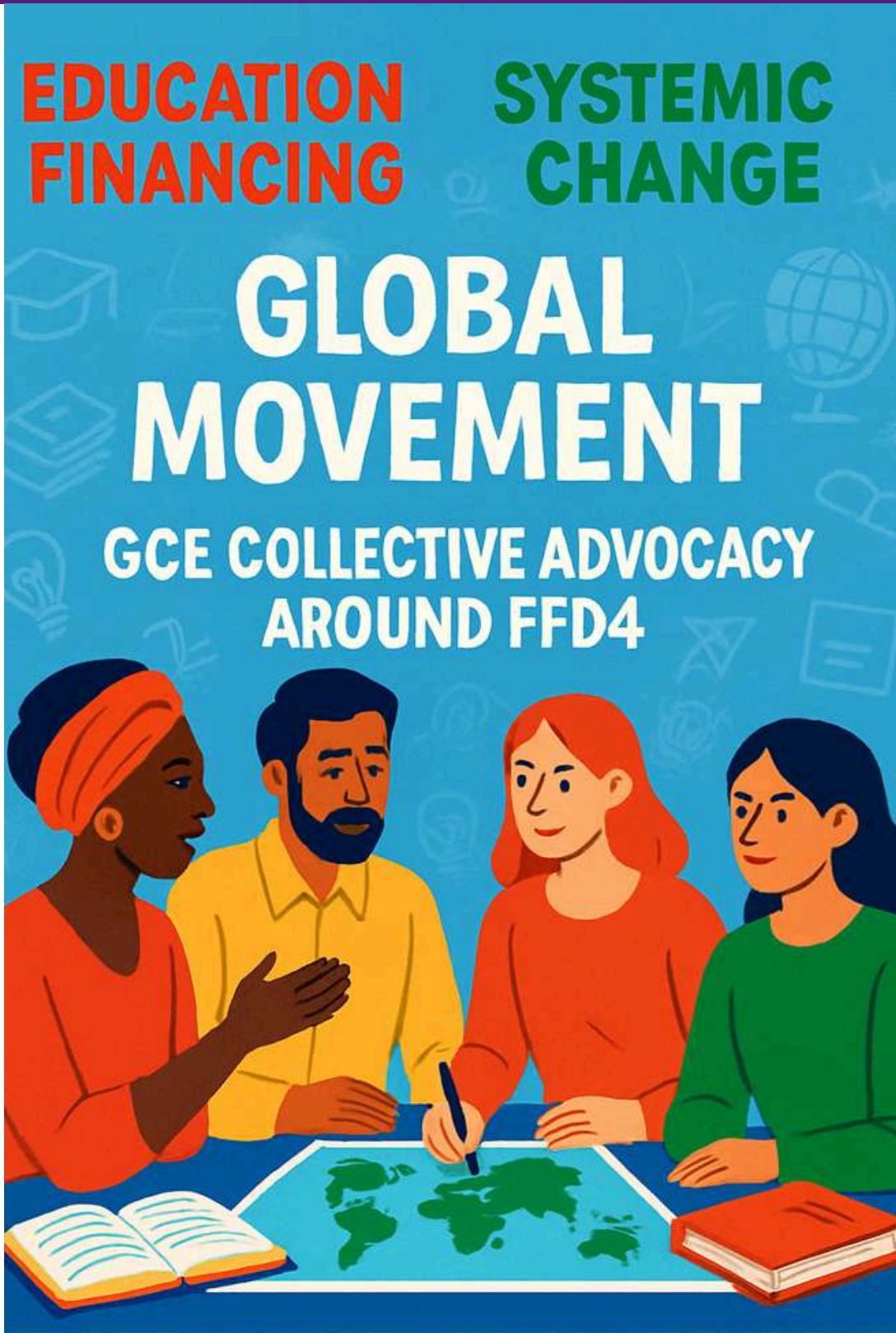
GCE actively participated in the Asia-Pacific High-Level Consultation on Financing for Development held in Thailand in December 2024 and contributed inputs to the APRCEM Collective Statement.

GCE was present in the 4th Session of the Preparatory Committee for FfD4 in the UN, held on 30 April-1 May. It was represented by Giulia McPherson, Executive Director of GCE US, who shared her reflections and lessons for GCE's further engagement in FfD4 in this REPORT.

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To coordinate its collective advocacy around FfD4, a GCE Campaigns and Advisory Group (CAG) was convened to strategize on the education movement's engagements in FFD4. This CAG began working in January 2025, with the active engagements of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) and GCE Spain. Through the CAG, GCE informed members of the important updates in the run-up to FfD4 and how education was being addressed in the negotiations of the outcome document and what GCE was doing to keep education financing on the FfD4 agenda and its calls for systemic changes.



EDUCATION FINANCING **SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

GLOBAL MOVEMENT

GCE COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY AROUND FFD4

CLADE **GCE Spain**

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June-July 2025

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**COMMITTED TO CLOSING GAPS
IN EDUCATION FINANCING**

WHY FFD4 MATTERS FOR EDUCATION: STRENGTHENING CALLS FOR FINANCING HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE IN SEVILLE AND BEYOND

10 June 2025
14:00 - 15:45 PM SAST

SCAN TO
REGISTER



GCE organised the webinar “Why FfD4 Matters for Education” on 10 June, weeks before the conference in Sevilla, to enrich the awareness of members on FfD4 and guide them in their country advocacy. While the debates on the FfD4 were intense at the global level, it was noted that the FfD4 process is not transparent at the country level. Country deliberations on its positions for the “ambitious goal to finance the SDGs and the future” were nowhere to be found. The webinar was also a platform for consensus building on the GCE calls for FfD4, the position paper that was presented, opened for feedback and finalized could be found here: [GCE Policy Position for FfD4: Advancing Education Financing and Global Justice](#) – an important guide to the engagements during the FfD4 in Seville.

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Education within the broader CSO agenda

More than 1,000 civil society representatives marched and made their voices heard at the FfD4 in Seville, challenging efforts to silence the CSOs and restrict their participation. Within the CSOs is a huge education delegation, mostly GCE members, from different regions and a big contingent of youth and advocates from Spain, thanks to GCE-Spain.

What helped GCE advance its advocacy effectively to a wider audience were the partnerships it built and the broadening of the framework for its calls. It took months of brainstorming, intense debates and logistical discussions to forge the collaborations where GCE played an active role:

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DRIVING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE IN FINANCING ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES: THE CASE OF EDUCATION

July 1, 2025
14:30-16:00 CET



Bridging financing to fiscal space: The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) organised the one-day workshop Financing Public Services: Fulfilling human rights and building a care society that was held on 27 June, days before FfD4. GCE was one of the co-organisers of the workshop that discussed the intersections of finance, public services, care and human rights. The workshop challenged the private capture of public services and made the case for rights-based and accountable systems that prioritise universal access, equality and public purpose for services over market logics.

Solutions for resource mobilisation in education: The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and UNESCO hosted the side event Driving Transformational Change in Financing Essential Public Services: The Case of Education on July 1 during FfD4. The webinar aimed to “*showcase scalable and self-sustaining financial pathways in education, integrating domestic resource mobilisation, ODA and private sector investments with tangible examples.*” In this event, the two speakers from the CSOs were Refat Sabbah, President of GCE and Ellen Dixon, the Youth Representative. However, neither was given the opportunity to share their respective presentations due to a lack of time. Instead, Refat’s intervention was circulated as a blog on the [GPE Website](#) and [UNESCO website](#) post FfD4.

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HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) 2025 VIRTUAL SIDE EVENT

EDUCATION AS A DRIVER FOR GENDER-JUST TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Fostering our collective advocacy on
gender-transformative education
in HLPF 2025

17 July 2025, 2:00-3:15PM SAST



Gender transformative financing: The side event on Gender transformative financing for free, inclusive quality public education organised by the Malala Fund, FEMNET, Fe y Alegría International and GCE, tackled gender barriers to financing education and advocated for the centrality of gender-transformative financing in education. Aside from the side event, GCE disseminated the call for gender transformative education financing that supports gender-just curricula, teacher training, safe learning environments and targeted investments that advance gender equality at all levels of education and in society. Financing the peace-development-humanitarian nexus is absent in the FfD4 discussions.

The Sevilla Commitment or Compromiso de Sevilla called attention to the “time of profound transformation, serious geopolitical tensions, conflicts and increasing macroeconomic challenges and growing systemic risks.” In paragraph 14, delegates also “reaffirm our determination to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.” Yet, the Action Areas failed to forge political actions to mobilise resources to solve the humanitarian crises in Gaza, Sudan and other conflict areas, as well as how resources can be mobilised towards addressing the root causes of poverty, conflicts, gender inequalities and climate crises.

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Ways Forward...

FfD4 is one landmark event in GCE's mission towards decolonising education financing. The advocacy continues post Sevilla. GCE will be guided by its strategic plan and the voices from different regions and constituencies – teachers, youth and INGOs. But it will be worth taking note of a few reflections of members and the GCE secretariat in moving forward with the education financing advocacy:

- Work against the backsliding on gender equality in global spaces and deepen partnerships for gender transformative financing.
- Anchor education and health in debt justice – It was often repeated in FfD4 that debt distress has tremendous impacts on education and health. It is high time to strengthen the advocacy on debt justice by working in solidarity with CSOs in the health sector. ActionAid's 2025 report, [The Human Costs of Public Cuts in Africa](#), will be an important resource for collaboration and advocacy.

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- Collaborate with other CSOs on the advocacy pushing for the convening of the UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt.
- Continue the work on “the future is public” and strengthen the intersection of education financing with financing quality public services, and counter the privatisation of public services.
- Expand the work on tax justice and education, and link global advocacy on the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation with in-country advocacy for tax justice and domestic resource mobilisation with national education coalitions.

FfD4 was a political juncture for GCE to link its demands for sustainable revenues for education with the call for equitable and gender-transformative education expenditures. GCE as a movement must continue to act together to bring the realities of education financing to broader financing debates and ensure that governments deliver on financing the right to education and human rights for all.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Futures of Education in South and Southeast Asia Youth Workshop

Youth leaders from across South and Southeast Asia came together in Manila, Philippines, from 28-30 July 2025 for a transformative workshop organised by GCE, ASPBAE, E-Net Philippines, and Goldsmiths, University of London. The event offered an important platform for dialogue and collaboration, with participants from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. The goal: to spotlight youth voices in shaping the future of education, especially in contexts challenged by conflict, climate disasters, forced displacement, poverty, and persistent inequalities.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Workshops explored how emergencies, including less recognised crises such as poverty, mental health, and community violence, impact the ability of students to access and thrive in education. Participants moved beyond traditional definitions of “Education in Emergencies,” sharing stories and insights that challenged policy frameworks to be more inclusive of lived realities. Through hands-on activities such as a Gallery Walk, youth organisations presented innovative grassroots responses, ranging from informal learning centres to advocacy for curriculum reform. A creative prototyping session saw small groups design models for future learning environments - modular classrooms, mobile hubs powered by renewable energy, spaces promoting intergenerational learning, and support for psychosocial well-being.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Learning visits to the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) provided deeper institutional perspectives. Youth participants gained exposure to the importance of decentralised literacy models and local partnerships, and learned how national agencies such the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TEDA) – a government agency in the Philippines responsible for managing, supervising, and providing direction for technical education and skills development (TVET). TESDA adapted during the pandemic to maintain learning continuity. Discussions highlighted inclusive training for women, indigenous youth, persons with disabilities, and out-of-school learners, as well as ongoing challenges including funding and digital access.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

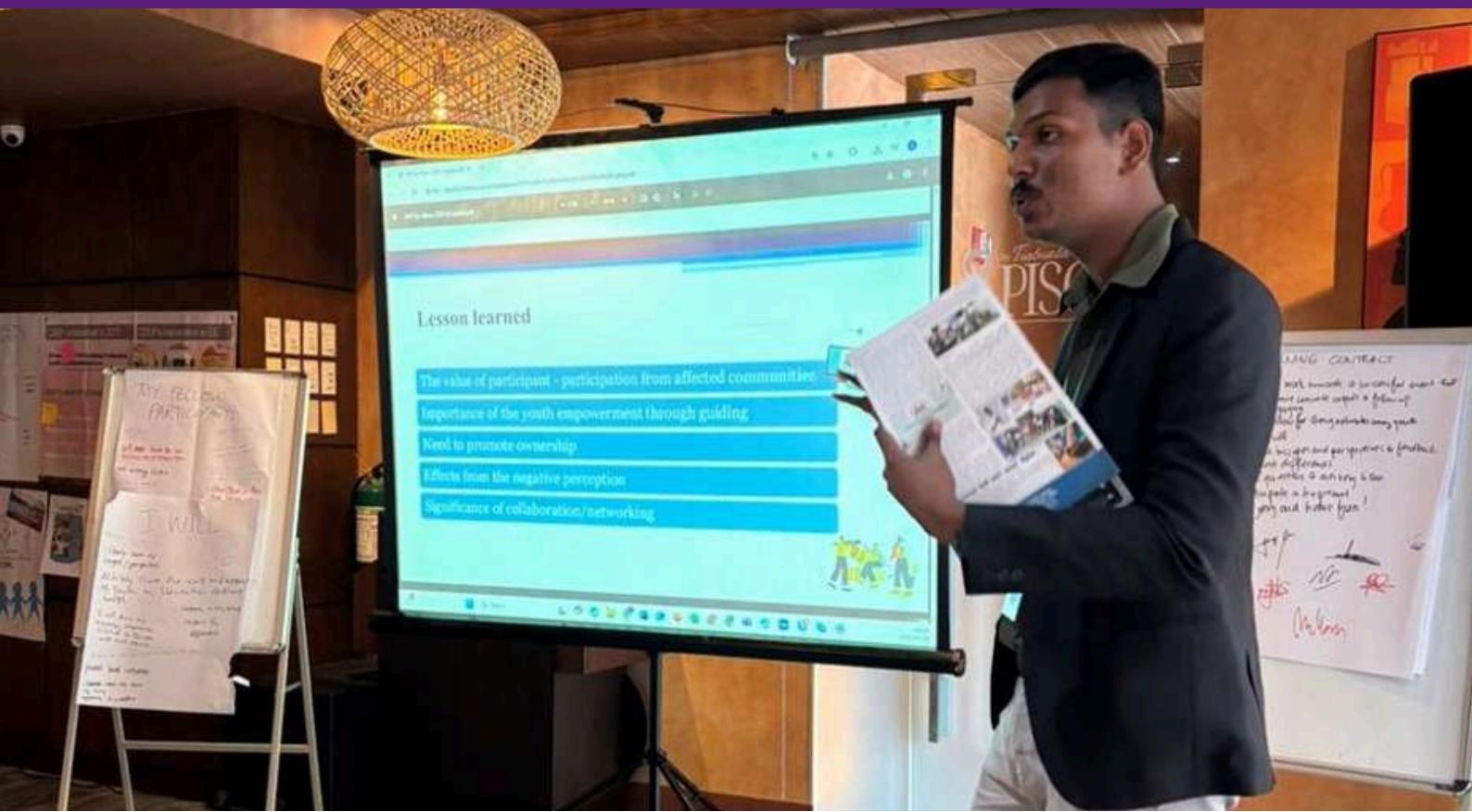


The workshop also featured a panel on coalition building and a documentary on Filipino indigenous youth activism, making connections between environmental justice, cultural identity, and education access. The importance of participatory spaces and arts-based advocacy was emphasised, showing how youth-led storytelling shapes the broader education narrative.

The main outcome was the collaborative development of a Youth-Led Call to Action, urging governments, donors, and civil society to guarantee the right to inclusive, quality education, invest in youth-driven solutions, bridge the digital divide, integrate climate and mental health education, and ensure sustained youth leadership in policymaking.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



This workshop inspired cross-border solidarity and long-term advocacy. As the Call to Action moves to regional and international policy platforms, youth voices from South and Southeast Asia are ensuring that future education systems will be more just, resilient, and inclusive. Young people are leading the way forward, and it is time for institutions to partner with them as co-creators of tomorrow's learning environments.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

Youth Empowerment for Education in Emergencies – Sri Lanka

The Coalition for Educational Development (CED), Sri Lanka, has been actively working to strengthen youth voices and capacities around Education in Emergencies (EiE) in the country. With communities across Ratnapura often facing school closures due to floods and landslides, young people are stepping forward as critical advocates for ensuring that learning does not stop in times of crisis.



GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

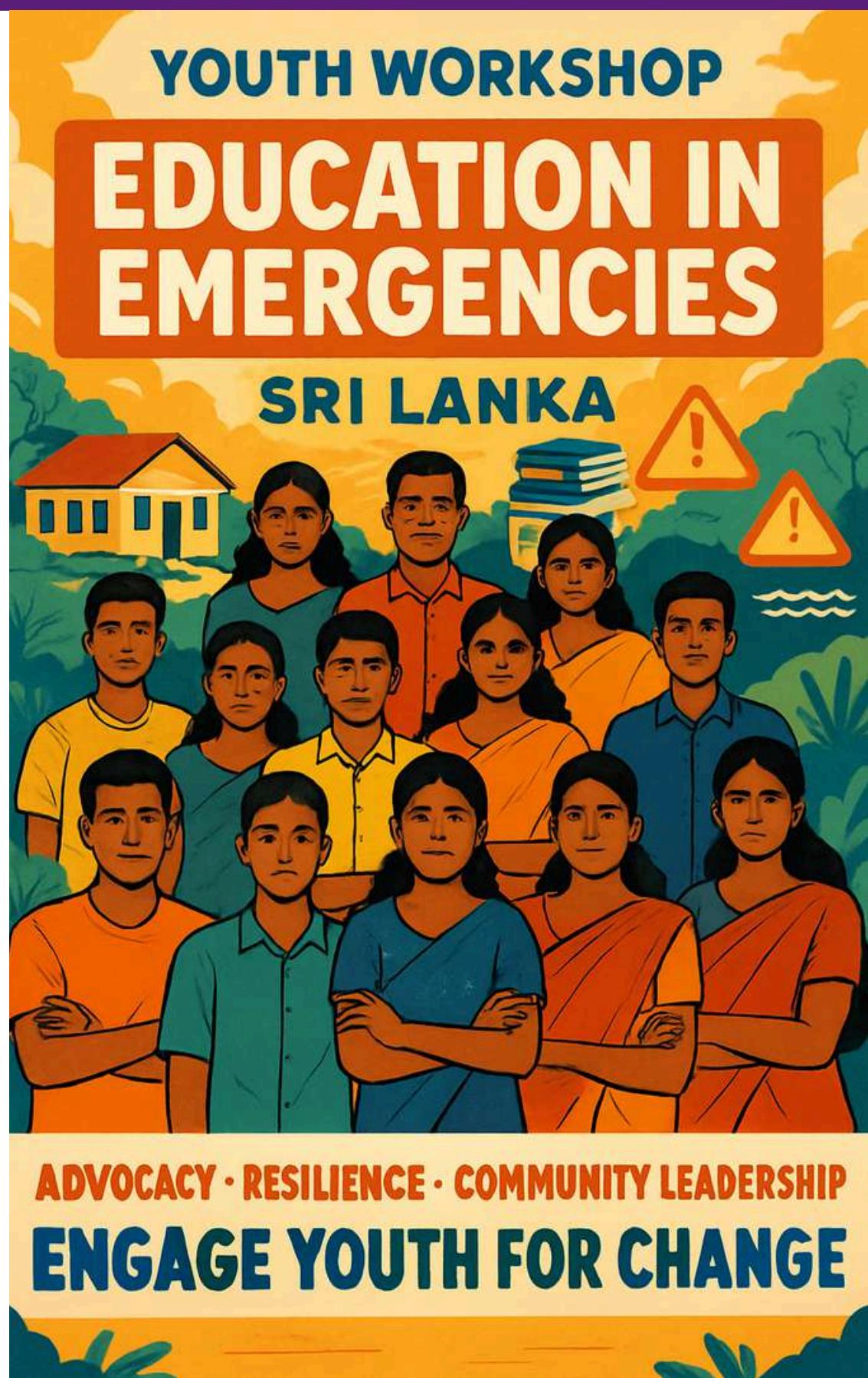


In February 2025, CED hosted a series of workshops, supported by GCE, to equip youth with knowledge and tools to champion education in emergencies. The first programme brought together 22 young participants from disaster-prone areas. They explored how advocacy and community action can help keep education functioning during crises. Sessions included a briefing on the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards by CED's National Coordinator Shantha Kulathunga, as well as discussions led by provincial and district-level disaster management representatives. Through group activities, participants identified local challenges and proposed concrete steps to address them, setting the stage for stronger community engagement in disaster risk reduction planning.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

Building on this momentum, a second workshop focused on youth advocacy. Fifteen young leaders gathered to learn about effective campaigning strategies and the role of local leadership in strengthening resilience. Together with resource persons such as Nihal Premasiri from the People's Participatory Foundation, they drafted proposals for improving EiE in Ratnapura. These were shared with the Provincial Director of Education and later highlighted through magazine contributions and a youth-led Facebook campaign.



GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Most recently, as part of Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2025, CED convened a wider awareness programme under the theme, Education Saves Lives: Protect Education in Emergencies. Led by Biyanca Abeygunawardhana, the session highlighted the role of civil society in disaster management and underlined the importance of inclusive, resilient education systems. Representatives from member organisations, school development committees, and youth groups came together to share insights and reaffirm their collective commitment to protecting learning during crises.

These initiatives mark the beginning of a larger effort to mobilize young people as advocates and leaders in education resilience. Their energy, ideas, and determination are helping to ensure that no child is left behind when disasters strike.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

MAPUTO, JULY 2025



Mozambique Education Movement Boosts Skills of Youth Organizations in Gender and Inclusion

The Mozambican Movement for Education for All, MEPT, held a training workshop for youth organizations, members, and collaborators from 2-3 July 2025 in Maputo focusing on strengthening skills in gender equality and social inclusion.

Participants began the training with a thought-provoking exercise, stepping into a “world of imagination” where traditional roles of men and women were swapped. This activity set the tone for deeper understanding of gender dynamics and challenged long-standing cultural norms.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Wilma Chilundo, from the Association of University Graduate Students of Mozambique (AEFUM), highlighted the value of the session: *“This training is a chance for youth organizations to commit to inclusion, embracing diversity. As AEFUM, we needed this opportunity to share these insights with new members joining our organization,”* she said.

MEPT’s Executive Coordinator, Isabel da Silva, emphasized the broader goal of the initiative, *“Promoting this type of training goes beyond building the skills of youth organizations and their members. It offers knowledge that will be useful both professionally and personally. Addressing gender and inclusion is still challenging in our community, given our strong cultural ties. We hope this training inspires change in the communities where these young people live.”*

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



The workshop aimed to create fair, respectful, and inclusive institutional environments by:

- Increasing participant understanding of concepts regarding gender, diversity, and inclusion.
- Raising awareness about the impacts of discrimination in education and organizational settings.
- Identifying and challenging exclusionary practices, and proposing inclusive alternatives.
- Encouraging both individual and collective commitment to gender equity and social inclusion.

This initiative is part of the National Education System + (SNE+1) project, supported by the Global Partnership for Education.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



CLACSO 2025: Horizons and Transformations for Equality

"Education is a fundamental human right that must be guaranteed by states throughout life and to all people, without discrimination."

—Nelsy Lizarazo, CLADE
Coordinator

From 9-12 June 2025, Bogotá, Colombia, hosted the X Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences (CLACSO 2025), bringing together the region's top thinkers and changemakers. Under the theme, Horizons and Transformations for Equality, the event energized discussions about democracy, resistance, rights, and peace, setting the stage for social change across Latin America and the Caribbean.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



CLACSO | PLATAFORMAS PARA
EL DIÁLOGO SOCIAL

X Latin American and Caribbean
Conference of Social Sciences

Horizons and Transformations for Equality

Democracies, Resistances, Communities, Rights, and Peace

June 7-8, 2025 | Bogota, Colombia

#CLACSO2025



CLADE (Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education) highlighted years of research and advocacy, presenting on gender equality, technology in education, inclusion, and early childhood learning. Their contributions, led by sociologist Gabriela Arrunátegui Martínez, showcased inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching models in Guatemala and Honduras, emphasizing the role of community engagement in scaling effective policies.

Sessions on gender-transformative education featured experts such as Laura Giannecchini (CLADE) and Jesica Mariana Baez (FemNet4GTE), calling for schools that empower women, girls, and marginalized groups while challenging exclusionary systems.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



A key innovation was the "Derribar Mitos, Construir Inclusión" collection from RREI (Red Regional por la Educación Inclusiva), offering practical resources to help educators rethink disability and enable real inclusion. The OREI observatory provided tools and research to promote rights-based, democratic learning environments valuing diversity.

Speakers, including Israel Quirino, Laura Giannecchini, and Theresa Adrião (UNICAMP), critically examined the challenges of education digitalization and privatization, urging for technology use that strengthens equity and digital rights.

Amid threats to democracy and equity, CLACSO 2025 reaffirmed the call for public, feminist, antiracist, and inclusive education as the foundation for just societies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

CLACSO 2025 was both a showcase of new ideas and a rallying point for solidarity and transformation - a powerful reminder that education must remain public, inclusive, and dedicated to the common good.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

Inclusive and Resilient Education in the Arab region

The past two months have been marked by resilience, innovation, and renewed solidarity across the Arab region as education coalitions and partners responded to pressing crises while advancing long-term goals for inclusive, quality education. From Palestine to Sudan, Tunisia to Egypt, civil society continues to champion the right to learn for all.



GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

Recent initiatives and events reflect growing commitment to collaborative, community-driven education models, especially in contexts affected by conflict, displacement, and inequality.

Efforts in Palestine took centre stage. A June 2025 webinar hosted by the Arab Coalition for Education for All (ACEA) explored ‘Palestine’s Experience with Learning Cooperatives: Successes and Lessons’, offering a rich discussion on how educators, parents, and youth are working together to sustain learning opportunities amid difficult conditions.



Arab Campaign for Education for All
الحملة العربية للتعليم للجميع - اكها

للتّعليم للمشاركة في ندوة فلسطين في التعاونيات نجاحات و دروس

لتجربة الائتلاف التربوي الفلسطيني في مجال
إمكانيات تعميم هذه التجربة على المستوى
الائتلافات التربوية في المنطقة العربية.

رك في الندوة



أ. ميس أبو حاشيش
منسقة تعاونية الشباب
التربوية، الائتلاف التربوي
الفلسطيني



د. وحيد جبران حمد
مختص في التعليم في حالات
الطوارئ



أ. نسيم قبها
منسق تعاونية تعلم وتعلم
الكتاب في الائتلاف التربوي
الفلسطيني



د. أحمد أبو الهيجا
منسق تعاونية الوعادة - عضو
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م. رشاد العرب
منسق تعاونية جنوب الخليل
العلمية - إحدى مبادرات
الائتلاف التربوي الفلسطيني



دكتور رمزي عودة
وزير التعليم العام للحملة الدكاكينية
لدولية لمناهضة الاحتلال و
الابتهاج

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Building on this momentum, the Jenin Education Cooperative launched its forum 'When Jenin Rescues Its Children', spotlighting education as a form of resistance and resilience in the face of siege and instability. Community-led cooperatives in Nablus also advanced adult education, stressing the role of lifelong learning in strengthening social justice and resilience. Meanwhile, a regional seminar, led by the Palestinian Educational Coalition's Parents and Youth Cooperatives, opened meaningful conversations around transforming vocational education in Palestine, urging greater investment, modernized strategies, and partnerships to empower youth.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



At the regional level, ACEA continued strengthening advocacy and capacity building. In July 2025, a regional workshop in Amman equipped 35 civil society participants with tools to monitor progress on SDG4, reinforcing accountability through Spotlight Reports set for the 2025 High-Level Political Forum. Later that month, ACEA also launched the Education Policy Academy on Psychosocial Support, gathering teachers and experts to address well-being in times of conflict and to influence policy across Arab education systems.

ACEA's leadership remained present in global and regional advocacy arenas. In July, Refaat Sabbah, GCE President, and Secretary, ACEA, took part in the Cairo Conference on Education in Emergencies and Crisis Contexts, where he highlighted Temporary Learning Spaces in Gaza as acts of education resistance. He further raised the voices of Arab and global civil society in UNESCO's [#FundEducation](#) blog, calling for reforms in tax systems, reparative financing, and justice-based solutions to education funding. The blog is based on his presentation on behalf of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) at the UNESCO-GPE side event during the 4th Financing for Development Conference, held in Seville, Spain, from June 30 to July 3.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Elsewhere in the region, coalitions are expanding their efforts in capacity building and social empowerment. The Coalition Éducative Tunisienne trained its members on governance principles to strengthen transparency and accountability. The Sudanese Coalition for Education for All launched a vocational training initiative in Red Sea State, empowering 500 displaced women and girls with skills in trades such as sewing, recycling, electrics, and food processing while linking them to sustainable livelihoods. In Egypt, the Union for Education Policies and Research (EUEPR) concluded a nationwide campaign on climate change and education, urging stronger policies and the integration of green education into curricula, in alignment with Egypt's national strategy.

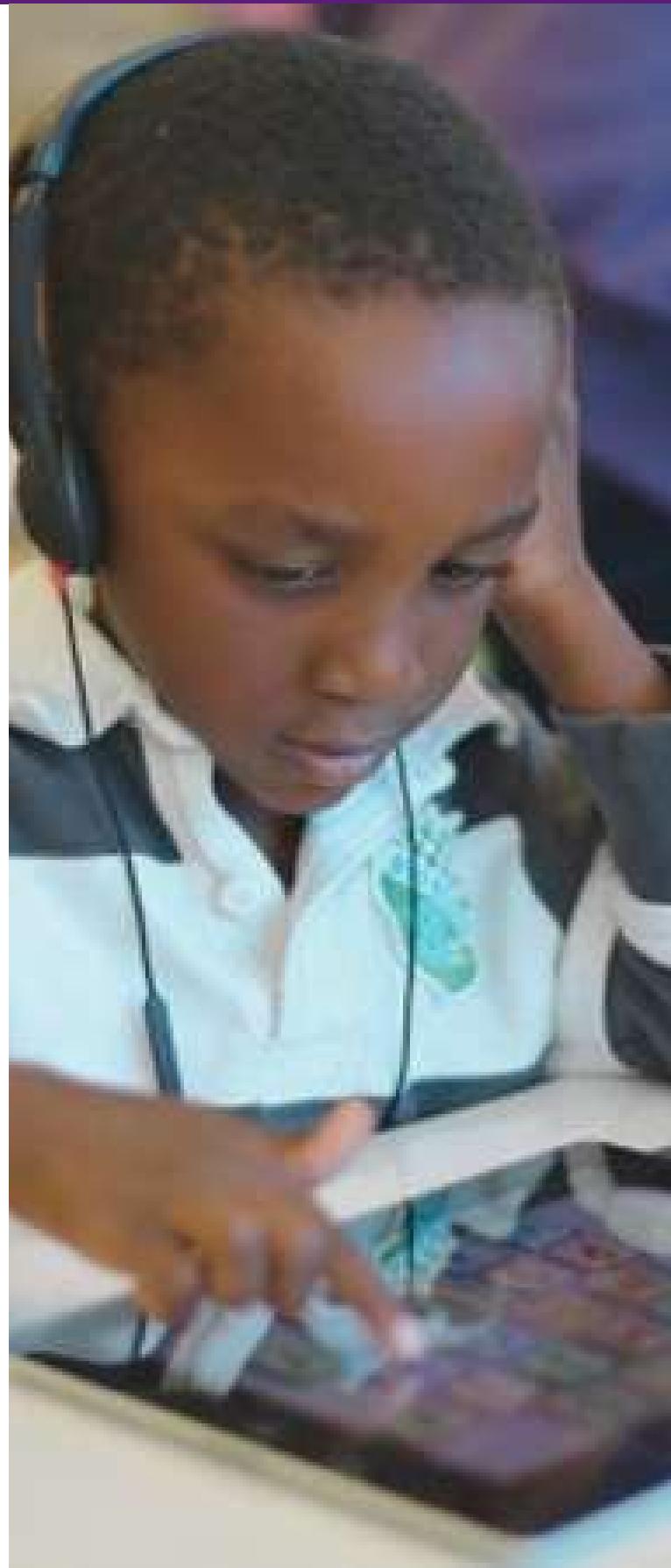
Across these diverse initiatives, one theme stands out - education is both a right and a tool for resilience. Whether through cooperatives, advocacy, vocational training, or climate action, Arab education coalitions are demonstrating how community-driven approaches can overcome barriers and advance inclusive, transformative education.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

Securing Digital Futures for Students in the Global South

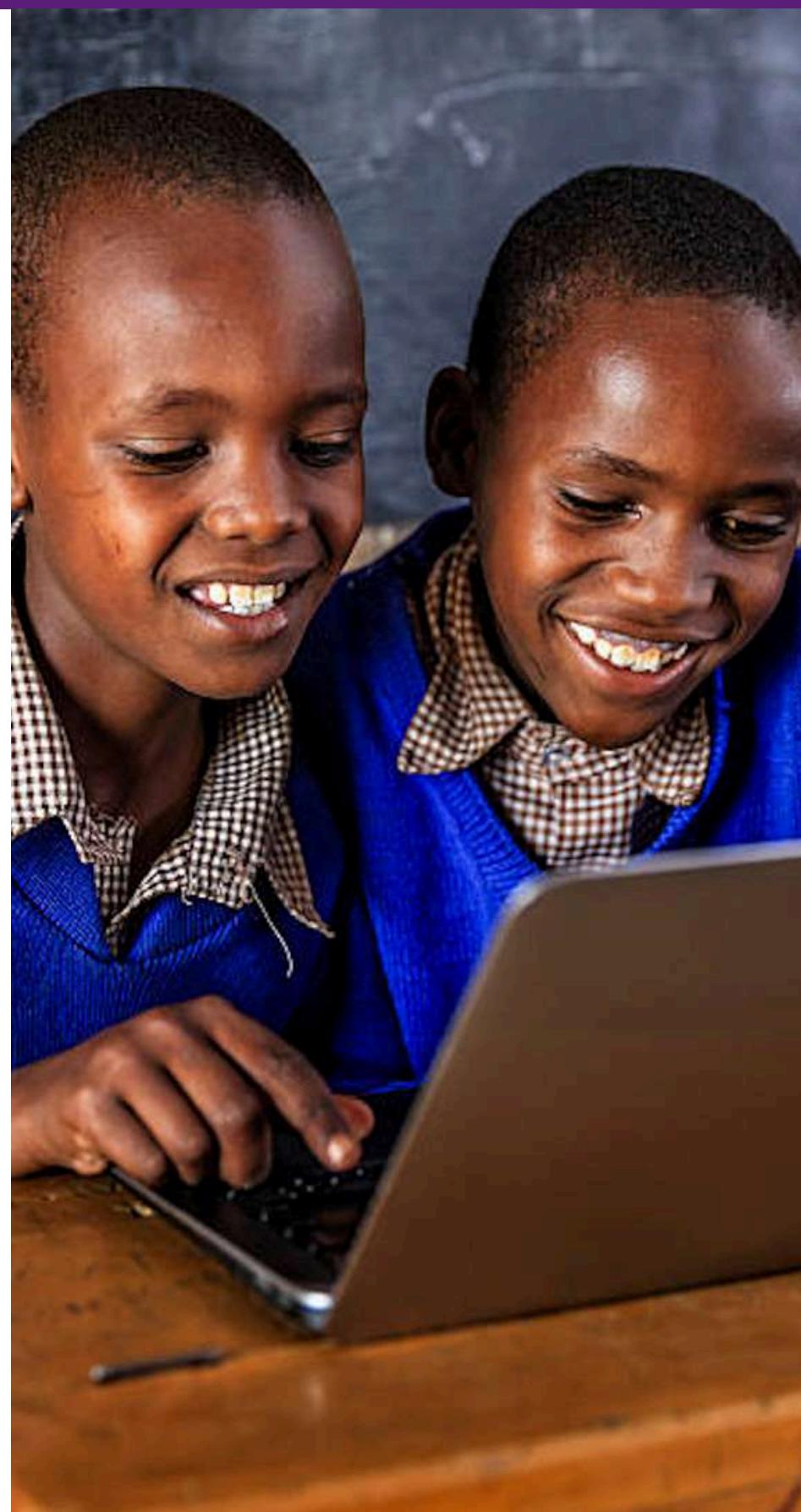
Across the Global South, the classroom is transforming. In Nigeria, students now access online learning through mobile devices, laptops, and school-supported platforms. Yet as connections grow stronger, so do the risks. For many first-time users, the internet can be both a gateway to opportunity and a space of hidden dangers, ranging from cyberbullying and scams to identity theft and exploitation.



GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

That's where SaferNet steps in. Developed by the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI), SaferNet equips Nigerian secondary school students with the digital literacy and online safety skills they need to thrive online. But its approach goes further than just training students. By bringing together young digital ambassadors, teachers, and parents, SaferNet creates a shared safety net for children navigating the digital world for the very first time.



GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



At the heart of the program are the Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellows, young ambassadors specially trained to engage teenagers in their own language. Through storytelling, real-life scenarios, and interactive tools, these Fellows lead peer learning sessions in schools, making online safety both relatable and practical. Teachers are trained to weave digital literacy into their lessons, while parents, often unfamiliar with the platforms their children rely on, are guided to offer support and supervision at home. The result is a community-wide effort where online safety becomes everyone's responsibility.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



The impact speaks volumes. In just a few months, 20 Fellows have been trained, more than 4,000 students have participated, and over 50 teachers now champion digital literacy in their classrooms. To reinforce learning, BBYDI also created the *Staying Safe* student manual, an illustrated resource filled with relatable characters, practical tips, and everyday examples, helping children turn technical safety concepts into real protective habits.

As more students across Nigeria and the Global South move online, access must go hand in hand with safety. SaferNet is leading the way, ensuring that young people are not only connected but also empowered, confident, and protected in their digital journeys.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Mobilizing for Inclusive Education in Burundi: The EPT Bafashebige Coalition Leads the Way

In Ngozi, northern Burundi, the national Education For All coalition, EPT Bafashebige, is at the forefront of efforts to prevent school dropout and promote truly inclusive education. Supported by the Education Out Loud (EOL) programme, Bafashebige empowers local educational actors to rethink their approach to dropout and take action in their communities.

Recent training by the coalition has led to a striking shift in how teachers and "school aunts" (Tante-Écoles) view school dropout. Marie Goreth Ndikuryayo, a teacher and elected school aunt at the Urban Lyceum of Ngozi, recalls a time when a student's departure was hardly noticed—sometimes even welcomed to reduce workloads. Now, inspired by the coalition's workshops, she actively raises awareness about dropout among colleagues and the wider community.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025

EVERY CHILD, BOY OR GIRL, DESERVES TO BE HEARD.



TONTON AND TANTE ÉCOLE - BURUNDI

In Burundi's "Tonton and Tante École" initiative, these teachers, chosen by students for their moral character and listening skills, play a key role in supporting all children. Odette Barakamfitiye, another school aunt, notes: *"Previously, my attention was mostly on girls. Bafashebige taught me that every child, boy or girl, deserves to be heard without discrimination."*

For Melchior Manirambona, a teacher and representative of COSSESONA, the creation of community dialogue forums across several districts marks real progress. *"If the coalition receives more support, it can help keep children in school and protect them,"* he emphasizes.

GCE BUZZ

June-July 2025



Denis Barampanze, deputy head of Bafashebige's Ngozi branch, adds that those trained now have a much clearer understanding of their roles, especially within these community forums, which include school officials, local administrators, justice, and security representatives. *"We have even intervened directly in cases when children were unjustly expelled,"* he reports.

Paul Niyonzima, legal adviser to the governor of Ngozi, describes how the coalition's dialogue initiatives have led to a shift in dealing with vulnerable students, especially those with disabilities. As he notes: *"Thanks to the Coalition's work, mistakes that previously hurt children simply won't happen anymore."*

While Bafashebige's efforts have made a tangible difference, stakeholders recommend expanding these activities to the most local (hill and sub-hill) levels, where community administrators are closest to families and best placed to ensure that these positive changes last.