

Global Action Week for Education 2016: Fund the Future: Education Rights Now

1. Background

In 2015 the world has committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) in the next fifteen years. For education, this includes not only the broad pledge to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*, but also a set of clear, detailed and ambitious targets to realise the right to quality education for everyone, regardless of personal, social or political context. The implementation of the SDG agenda as a whole, furthermore, entails transformation in global development, including reform in global financial systems, and greater transparency and accountability overall.

As the world moves towards the implementation of the goals and targets, it is fundamental that the lessons learned over the last fifteen years are taken into account – and the biggest lesson is that good intentions and political commitments can only be delivered when there is sufficient, good quality financing. While money alone will not guarantee the achievement of the ambitious new education agenda, it remains essential – to train and hire qualified teachers, to ensure sufficient teaching and learning materials, and to provide adequate and appropriate learning spaces and broader infrastructure.

To realise the full SDG agenda, it is estimated that an additional US\$1.4 trillion in annual public spending in low and middle-income countries will be required, according to an updated analysis about to be published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). For education, according to the Global Education Monitoring report (formerly the EFA Global Monitoring Report), reaching universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education – of good quality – in low- and lower-middle-income countries will require a total of US\$340 billion per year. This will require low-income countries to spend 6.56% of GDP on education, which will still leave a funding shortfall of US\$39 billion – meaning that external assistance must work alongside domestic commitments to realise the vision of education to which governments have already pledged to achieve. It should be noted, however, that none of these calculations encompasses the full spectrum of ‘lifelong learning’ as included in both SDG 4 and the FFA – and specifically, there is no calculation on the cost or financing gap to achieve basic adult literacy and numeracy. Recent data is scant, but in 2009 expenditure on adult literacy programmes was less than 1% of GNP in virtually every country, and much less in some developing countries.

National education budgets, therefore, must increase to ensure adequate resources are allotted to the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda. The Framework for Action reiterates the imperative on states to invest at least 4-6% of GDP and 15-20% of their budgets in education. Furthermore, the implementation of the full Education 2030 agenda necessitates ensuring that national education plans respond to the new Goal 4 and Framework for Action. At the same time, plans must prioritise investments which will deliver the greatest impact in terms of delivering quality, equity and inclusion in their different national contexts. The SDG agenda clearly states that no target will be considered met unless met by all; this calls for a clear emphasis on investment in the education of the most marginalised – including all forms of marginalisation in its purview.

Enhancing national education budgets in a majority of countries will mean moving towards greater tax justice, entailing the development of progressive taxation systems, the closure of tax loopholes, and ending tax evasion. Indeed, developing countries lose US\$160 billion each year of tax revenue to the manipulations of multinational corporations – considerably more than they receive in aid. Considerable emphasis has been placed on partnerships with the private sector as a source of funding for the new agenda – in both the SDG framework and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), for example. However, as the 2015 report from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education has reiterated, there are clear negative human rights implications of PPPs in education. Reliance on PPPs often segments the education sector and amounts to the transfer of public resources to the private sector, rather than leveraging private resources to the public sector.

Much hope was pinned on the Third Financing for Development Conference (FFD3) in Addis Ababa in 2015 to fundamentally reform the existing financial system. Unfortunately, it failed to bring about reforms necessary to leverage the quantum of resources needed and while it referred to education, it omitted a clear reference to adult literacy and lifelong learning which are key components of the SDG agenda. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), however, will remain important in as much it reiterates the need to increase both domestic and donor financing: “...[to] *scale up investments and international cooperation to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education.*” The next year will see the roll out of the implementation of the AAAA.

In 2014, governments pledged billions of dollars to the education multilateral fund, the Global Partnership for Education, with US\$26 billion being pledged by developing countries in domestic budget expenditure, and US\$2.1 billion coming from donor pledges. However, in the immediate wake of the UN Sustainable Development Summit and the UNESCO Education 2030 High Level Meeting – at which the SDGs and the FFA respectively were adopted unanimously – several major donor countries announced confirmed or planned cuts to ODA, and in particular to ODA to education. One concerning announcement was an immediate cut to funding to the GPE, which had already been pledged for the last quarter of 2015. In addition, it is vital for developing countries to make good on their own pledges. Monitoring both donor and developing country pledges must remain priorities for civil society over the coming months and years.

The global context in which the financing of the new development agenda is taking place is impacted by at least two major issues. The first is the ongoing conflict in Syria; over 4 million Syrian citizens have fled and are registered as refugees since the conflict started in 2012, with thousands more fleeing every day. UNHCR estimates that over US\$ 4.5 billion is needed to deal with the refugee crisis, with less than half this amount being raised to date. This has led to donor countries directing large amounts of aid to support the humanitarian effort over the last three years, but more recently there have been indications that these governments will redirect other parts of their ODA budgets to in-country expenditure for housing refugees. Indeed, the Netherlands has already ramped up its percentage of overall ODA spend in-country from 7% in 2014 to 18% in 2015. At the same time, the focus on the refugee crisis has drawn the global community's focus on the need for sustained solutions in humanitarian crisis situations, including the need for financing for education in emergency settings, including instances of chronic conflict. The world's first Humanitarian Summit in 2016 will provide an opportunity to highlight the need for funding for education in emergencies.

The second issue is the trend of declining aid to education since 2010, coupled with the announcement of actual or possible ODA reductions by donors which have been champions of education. Aid to education fell – by 10% - between 2010 and 2012; a slow recovery since then has, in fact, occurred at a lesser rate than the growth in ODA to other sectors: overall ODA disbursements rose by 9%, with education disbursements increasing by only 6%. Almost all of the donors which have historically supported or prioritised education – Australia, the Netherlands, the UK, Norway and Denmark – have made worrying announcements of actual or potential cuts to ODA (and some specifically to ODA to education) in the last five years: Australia and the Netherlands downgraded their support for education almost immediately after their national elections in 2013 and 2010 respectively; Denmark has announced it will substantially reduce its commitment to GPE in 2015 and 2016; Norway has announced planned cuts to ODA in 2016, and there have been noises from the UK that it may shift funding from genuine ODA to in-country spending to support refugees settling in the UK. Of the five countries listed above, three of them achieve and remain committed to 0.7% GNI/ODA, and another had consistently met the target until 2013, so these are serious

champions not only of education but of development overall – but civil society needs to monitor the new national and OECD debates on where that ODA can and should be spent.

A final note too should be made on the role of the private sector as providers of education. While the AAAA's emphasis on the role of private finance in the delivery of a broad sustainable development agenda, as has been noted above, it should also be recognised that there has been rampant growth in for-profit, low-fee, private schools – and in particular in chains of such schools, such as the Omega Schools, Bridge International Academies, Lekki, and Spark Schools. The claims to quality made by such schools remain questionable, and much work remains to be done to put in place safeguards relating to standards and accountability, but in any case the growth of these schools, and any reliance on them by governments, harms equity gains made by the eradication of fees, and flies in the face of the fundamental human right to free and public education. Profits are also earned through other means including by the textbooks and evaluation industries, teacher training, etc. In many countries, different levels of government are outsourcing all forms of services to private companies, even the development of education plans and legislations.

When governments worldwide have politically committed to a shared vision for development in the next fifteen years, and have used UN mechanisms to make specific commitments to education, civil society must maintain its vigilance in holding governments to account for the delivery of free, public, inclusive and equitable quality education. The first year of the implementation of the agenda will be critical in ensuring a strong start. Important national opportunities, like elections, provide space for raising these issues. The imperative of the adoption of the 2030 agenda has also seen the formation of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity and the opening of consultative processes towards exploring the setting up of a, humanitarian fund for education in emergencies. These international processes will be important in the year to come. The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity must work towards ensuring the implementation of the full agenda, including 12 years of free primary and secondary education as well as adult literacy and education.

Money may not be everything in the education sector, but without it, the ambition of realising the rights of everyone to an education which is inclusive, equitable, free and of good quality will never be fulfilled.

2. Global Action Week 2016 campaign aims & objectives

In this context, the overall aims of Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2016 are to ensure that governments:

- individually commit to and take policy action to enable the implementation and financing of the Education 2030 framework for action
- deliver their existing financial bilateral and multilateral pledges to education
- make measurable progress towards delivering mechanisms to ensure tax justice nationally, regionally and globally.

Our **specific objectives for GAWE** are:

- Individual governments make specific commitments on implementing and financing (in line with national demands) the new Education 2030 agenda, including commitments to spend at least 4-6 percent of GDP and at least 15-20 percent of national budgets on education and at least half of this on basic education, and 10 percent of ODA on basic education,¹ with national mechanisms to deliver this commitment.
- Financial allocations promote quality and equity in education across the full agenda and prioritise sustainable financing for education in emergencies.
- Citizens are aware of the financial implications of delivering the right to education nationally and are motivated to take action to hold governments to account.

¹ It should be noted that this calculation requires revision; it is based on the current EFA and MDG frameworks, and needs revision in line with the post-2015 frameworks.

- Lead a coordinated and sustained campaign across 2016 which brings together key partners, including but not limited to tax justice networks and campaigns, the Global Partnership for Education, financial monitoring organisations and other CSOs which are committed to monitoring financial commitments to delivering the right to education.

3. Policy demands

All governments must:

- Fulfil their financial commitments to education, including domestic and donor commitments to GPE, bilateral commitments by donors, and global commitments contained in the Sustainable Development Goals, Education 2030 Framework for Action, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- Develop fully funded, phased, and implementable plans aimed ensuring access to free, good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education and literacy and lifelong learning for all by 2030. These plans must strengthen public education systems, especially prioritising investments in quality and equity and addressing the educational needs of communities and regions suffering from historic disadvantage.
- The implementation plans must specifically prioritise filling the trained teacher gaps and ensuring decent working conditions and training of teachers.
- Review budget proposals and spending for differential impact on girls and women and other disadvantaged groups (such as persons with disabilities and indigenous communities), through gender and inclusion audits.
- Allot a minimum of 6% GDP and 20% of national budgets to education of which at least 50% must be dedicated to basic education.²
- Maximise revenue available for investment in education and to address inequality through building progressive and expanded domestic systems of taxation, reviewing tax and royalty agreements in the natural resource sector, and closing loopholes which enable tax avoidance and evasion by the private sector.
- Report regularly and transparently on budgets and spending on and across education, enabling communities and civil society to see where public money is being spent.
- Give a formal role to civil society organisations in open planning and budgeting processes at national and sub-national levels.

Donor countries must also:

- Set out clear national plans to deliver 0.7% of GNP as ODA by 2020.
- Commit at least 15-20% of all ODA to education. At least half of education aid must go to basic education.³
- Allot at least 4% of humanitarian aid to education.
- Focus aid on supporting fulfilment of equity targets by focusing on countries with the greatest needs and on groups at risk of exclusion. ODA impact data should be disaggregated to show impact on marginalised communities (including persons with disabilities) and specific programmes funded to redress exclusion.

The UN system and the international community should:

- Agree new international rules to promote global tax transparency and prevent tax avoidance. Developing countries must have access to multinational companies' accounts to scrutinise and assess tax liability and ensure that companies pay due taxes.
- Support a strengthened Global Partnership for Education (GPE), with the mandate to fund and support the Education 2030 agenda.
- Apply pressure on the IMF to ensure that it uses its influence on tax policies in low- and lower-middle income countries to support countries to raise their tax to GDP thresholds, while easing the tax burden on the poor.

² Please see previous note.

³ Please see previous note.

- Build a more inclusive humanitarian system that recognises the need for sustained financing to deliver education in emergency settings, including chronic emergencies.
- Call for an increase in expenditure to promote equity, inclusion and quality education for learners from marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities, agricultural communities, and indigenous peoples.

4. Targets

As has been noted above, the landscape is shifting swiftly and radically, particularly on donor financing. However, there are political targets which remain fundamental to financing, and these include the following.

- a) Developing country governments:
 - Heads of state
 - Education ministers
 - Finance ministers
 - Parliaments and parliamentary oversight committees on education
 - For GPE partner countries, individuals which represent governments on the GPE Board of Directors
 - Countries with national elections in 2016.⁴
- b) Donor countries, particularly those which are already committed to financing education bilaterally and/or multilaterally:
 - Development assistance or foreign affairs ministers
 - Finance ministers
 - Individuals which represent governments on the GPE Board of Directors
 - In-country political groupings on education, such as all party parliamentary groups.
- c) Key players in international discussions:
 - Global Partnership for Education
 - International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity
 - Regional Commissions, Regional Blocks and other political groupings (for example the European Union, the African Union, G 77)
 - UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs mandated for follow up of FFD
 - World Bank/Regional Banks/IFIs
- d) Private Sector:
 - Potential donors to education, acting through GPE and other global initiatives, and regionally and nationally.

5. Key messages

- Political commitments made at the global level mean little without financial commitments at the national level: no government will meet the education goal or targets without adequate and reliable financing, of good quality.
- Education underpins the achievement of all development goals: failing to make adequate investments in education puts the fulfilment of the entire SDG 2030 agenda at risk.
- Financial commitments which have already been made MUST be fulfilled – including domestic and donor commitments to GPE, bilateral commitments by donors, and global commitments contained in

⁴ <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/139DkI49C7FBPkuzRlpGGrm4FwRnirDwbsaS-QEUOWHI/edit#gid=0&vpid=A1>

the Sustainable Development Goals, Education 2030 Framework for Action, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

- Citizens have a responsibility to hold governments to account for reneging on any existing financial commitments which could deny them their right to education.
- The commitment to 12 years of free education from early childhood to secondary must be backed by prioritisation in national education budgets and in ODA to education.
- Youth and adults have been systemically failed by decades of underfunding for literacy programmes – this trend must be reversed to ensure that future generations can fulfil their potential, engage in active citizenship, and increase their contributions to communities and societies.
- Political leaders must make the necessary commitments to ensure quality and equity in education, prioritising investments that have the most impact.
- Domestic financing to fulfil the right to education IS accessible – with fairer tax systems, big companies paying their fair share, and when revenues generated by natural resources are converted into lasting benefits for citizens.
- Tax is the most sustainable source of financing for developing countries, and a concerted effort must be made by states to make global tax rules fairer.
- Public money, including through ODA, must go to strengthen public education systems
- Adequate funds must be allotted to address all forms of educational inequities including, but going beyond, gender to include other bases of exclusion.
- Budget data should be available in transparent, disaggregated and timely manner in a form that can be used for tracking by citizens and civil society.

Other messages will relate to specific national contexts and challenges.

6. GAWE activities

GCE has moved away from major, global mobilisations in recent years, choosing to focus instead on social media-led mobilisation and targeted global advocacy, with events to support these where appropriate. This has been due to a combination of some national coalitions choosing themselves to focus on targeted advocacy efforts (or possibly not always having the resources to run mass public mobilisations), and the reduced capacity in the GCE Secretariat compared to the years in which a global action was delivered. However, there remain many national coalitions which still hold mass public rallies and events, combining these with media outreach, high-level discussions with government etc.

This is not to say that in 2016 GCE should not run a global public mobilisation activity. If there is demand, and if there are ideas for something which could work across all GCE constituencies, it is definitely worth considering. To date, the GAWE Advisory Group has suggested a global social media action, but other ideas are welcome!

In addition, it should be considered whether or not to engage in direct advocacy activities around events such as the ECOSOC Special Meeting on international cooperation on tax (22 April 2016), and GCE members should identify other key lobbying moments on financing – globally, regionally and nationally.

7. Allies

Global Action Week for Education seeks engagement and involvement from across the GCE movement. This year, other actual and potential allies are:

- **Global Partnership for Education:** GPE has been the first international institution to have felt the impact of the withdrawal of donor country support, with this occurring in the last quarter of 2015. Having run a partially successful replenishment campaign – of which GCE was a partner and ally –

particularly with developing country partners, GPE has a serious priority to ensure that all of its country partners fulfil their commitments to GPE and to engage new donors in the course of the new year.

- **Global Education Monitoring Report and UNESCO Institute for Statistics:** both the GEM and UIS teams have produced recent reports and new online tools to identify education spending and aid flows, and have offered to work with GCE on GAWE 2016 on producing nationally-tailored resources based on this data.
- **UNESCO:** UNESCO is a long-standing GAWE partner, and lead convenor of the Education 2030 Framework for Action. In previous years the UNESCO DG has participated in letter-writing campaigns and filmed messages of support for GAWE; the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) has engaged in GAWE activities; and the UNESCO Regional Offices have run their own GAWE activities over several years.
- **Malala Fund:** Another key player in lobbying for increased financing, the Malala Fund has also released its own report on education financing in 2015, and has indicated its willingness to support GAWE in 2016 (having taken part in 2015 for the first time).
- **Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE):** leading the global consultation on a mechanism for financing education in emergencies; GCE is currently supporting and responding to this consultation.

Potential allies with which we could engage:

- **International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity:** The Commission, chaired by Gordon Brown, will explore how over the next 15 to 20 years, education could lead to greater economic growth, better health outcomes, and improved global security. It is comprised of current and former heads of states and ministers, as well as private sector organisations, celebrities and other individuals. It is due to report back to the UN Secretary-General in September 2016.
- **Groups working on tax justice:** While relationships exist between the Tax Justice Network and GCE members, direct engagement has been relatively limited. Other players active on taxation issues include the Bretton Woods Project, ChristianAid and Eurodad. Some collaborative action took place with all of these during the SDG negotiations, but the relationships have never been formal.
- **Dedicated FFD Watcher Groups,** like the CSO FFD group. The latter was extremely influential during the FFD3 summit and would presumably continue to exercise influence.
- **Groups working on budget transparency:** International Budget Partnership, Transparency International and Government Spending Watch.
- **SDG Tracking Movements and Groups.** These include Together2030, the Global Civil Society Platform on Sustainable Development; and think tanks like ODI (which maintains a resource site: [deliver2030](http://deliver2030.org)) which expect to maintain a strong focus on tracking and supporting SDG implementation. Groups representing marginalised communities (such as disability groups) pushing for equity in financing and implementation of the SDG agenda are potential additional allies.

8. Campaign identity: Fund the Future – Education Rights Now

In 2011 and in 2014 GCE worked with its members on the GPE replenishment efforts, and established the Fund the Future: Education Rights Now campaign, which was run during both replenishment campaigns. In 2014 the campaign demands covered donor funding, domestic financing, and taxation.

The Fund the Future campaign identity will be used for GAWE 2016, and policy demands have been updated in line with the developments since the 2014 replenishment campaign.

The Fund the Future website will be updated accordingly, and the current site can be viewed here: www.fund-the-future.org

9. Campaign products

Campaign pack including:

- Logos in all languages
- Social media toolkit (including infographics, branded images, autoTweets, Facebook posts)
- Campaign outline and key messages
- Evaluation form

To note, different social media toolkits may be provided – one for the announcement of GAWF 2016, and one closer to the actual week.

Website:

As noted above, there is already a Fund the Future website, which will be updated with new campaign demands, materials, and in all GCE languages. In addition, Twitter, Flickr and Facebook feeds will be added to stop coalitions having to upload their own posts twice.

Financing Toolkit:

This toolkit is being produced to support civil society organisations and education activists' advocacy and campaign work on education financing. The toolkit builds on training materials previously developed from within the GCE movement, while responding to the new Education 2030 agenda. The toolkit supports a step-by-step approach, working through the different issues to build an understanding in a logical sequence, related to how to understand the budget process and components, followed by exercises designed to ensure key concepts have been absorbed and understood, and that readers are adapting this understanding to their own contexts.

GPE Pledge Monitoring Tool:

This will be a guide to support national coalitions track the pledges made by governments during and subsequently to the 2014 GPE Replenishment Conference, which is crucial in a context where at least one donor country has already reduced its existing commitments, and where developing countries have pledged large-scale increases in domestic education financing.

Education financing policy reports/briefings:

Rather than an all-encompassing policy report, the aim is to release a series of shorter briefings to respond to both the different aspects of education financing and the different target groups we may wish to focus on. The potential briefings are:

- Updated briefing based on Education Aid Watch to take into account reductions in ODA
- Fund the Future ODA update
- A brief update of the GCE report '[A Taxing Business](#)', plus advocacy tools to support coalitions in the run-up to the Bretton Woods and ECOSOC meetings on global taxation are taking place in mid-April.
NB: The Financial Transparency Coalition is also preparing some tools, so we could potentially work with them.
- A briefing on financing for education in emergencies (May, to coincide with the World Humanitarian Forum) *NB Save the Children is also preparing an update around this topic. INEE is also undertaking a process of consultation on the various options for a Humanitarian Fund to be released around the Forum.*
- A civil society 'roadmap' for the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity.

10. Timeline of key events to date

Date & location	Event	GCE engagement
31 March New York	ECOSOC Forum on Partnership	
11-12 April New York	UNGA High Level Thematic Debate: Implementing Commitments on Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Financing	
15-17 April Washington New York	World Bank Spring Meetings High Level meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the World Bank, IMF and the ETO and the UN Conference on Travel and Development	
18-22 April New York	ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development	
22 April New York	ECOSOC Special Meeting on international cooperation on tax	
24-30 April	Global Action Week for Education	
23-24 May Istanbul, Turkey	World Humanitarian Summit	
14-16 June Oslo	GPE Board Meeting	
20-22 June New York	Humanitarian Segment of ECOSOC	
23 June	UN Public Service Day	
11-15 July New York	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2016)	
18-22 July New York	ECOSOC High-level segment: The Theme "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results"	
13-26 Sept New York	71 st UN General Assembly Submission of the report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity	