



GCE 7th WORLD ASSEMBLY

22 - 24th November 2022
Johannesburg-South Africa

The Future of Education Re-Imagined

#EducationReImagined

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
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Discussion Paper 13:

Diversify and grow our membership, network and reputation

a. Introduction

After its foundation in 1999, the GCE movement has grown significantly, in particular through the expansion and consolidation of national civil society coalitions worldwide. At the moment, the GCE represents over 100 national and regional education coalitions and international organizations. Diversity is one of the movement's key strengths, as our membership comprises many national, regional, and international civil society organizations, teachers' organizations, parents' associations, women's groups, disabled people's organizations, youth, and student groups, academic or research institutions, and child rights campaigners – representing millions of individuals worldwide. In this sense, the GCE is a unique platform that links up grassroots movements all over the world with high-level political spaces, the global South with the Global North – all united to defend the right to free, quality education for all.

Diversity being one of the GCE key strengths, as aforementioned, the movement should work to further increase this diversity, particularly in a growingly changing world, in order to gain more allies for our mission and include different perspectives, therefore further strengthening the movement. Civic support is one of the key elements that not only gives legitimacy to GCE's work and demands, but also contributes to the achievement of our mission and objectives – inasmuch as the GCE increases its civic and public support, its capacity to put pressure on policy and decision makers to make real changes will increase.

On the other hand, given the increasing complexity of the current world, working in network is becoming essential. Just like any country can't face global challenges on its own, civil society organizations will only be able to success in their mission by working in partnerships and networks. The organizations defending not only the human right to education, but all human rights, must find their common ground and network together in advancing common objectives, and the GCE should actively work in that direction.

Diversifying and growing our membership, as well as working in networks, would also contribute to improve GCE's reputation and visibility as a key stakeholder in the education sector. Strengthening GCE's reputation has to do with effectively accomplishing our objectives and building a strong brand through communications and campaigns work, but also with the way we collectively work with others in order to achieve greater goals.



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b. Context analysis and how this relates to GCE

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is becoming increasingly evident that the world is in a process of change and transformation, with more polarization, growing crisis and emergency situations, financial challenges, forced displacement of people, shrinking space of civil society, and technological developments. All these elements, among others, are affecting the space where civil society organizations operate and making it more difficult to have a meaningful impact. In order to address these challenges, civil society organizations need to make themselves more relevant to the public and gain wider citizen support – and this means working together, particularly with youth and emerging movements, strengthening their reputation and focusing on responding to the challenges faced by the most vulnerable.

GCE also needs to adapt to this changing context by proactively diversifying and growing its membership, working in a network with different stakeholders and showing its added value in order to strengthen its reputation. GCE plays a unique role in elevating the voices of those that are currently being left behind in terms of their right to education, from the grassroots level to the highest-level decision-making spaces. On these bases, the GCE needs to reflect on how to make the best of its added-value and determine how to diversify and grow our membership, network and reputation.

c. Key issues GCE members are to consider

The first step should be strengthening cohesion of current membership; the size and diversity of our movement is an asset, but sometimes it has proven difficult to manage. The GCE needs to find ways to reinforce its internal coordination and communications, in order to bolster the sense of ownership of its members and become a stronger organization.

Secondly, the GCE needs to define and implement a partnership and networking strategy in order to strategically join our forces with relevant stakeholders and, ultimately, expand our membership. A proposed first step is to do a mapping exercise at national, regional and global levels in order to identify those key stakeholders we should approach to establish partnerships, create networks and, if appropriate, become part of the GCE – with a particular focus on youth & student organizations and feminist movements. Current members can be the best ambassadors of GCE in order to steadily grow and diversify our membership.

Finally, the GCE should make a strategic use of advocacy & campaigning & communications to strengthen GCE's reputation. The GCE already has a longstanding reputation as the most important global movement within the education sector. However, in the aftermath of the 20th anniversary of the movement, the GCE needs to work on connecting with the wider public and engaging with emerging groups, including youth, in order to rebuild its brand and promote its reputation as an advocacy & campaigning actor, capable of having a real impact on the right to education. A strategic use of advocacy and campaigns work – including an innovative use of new



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technologies and social media - can be key to boost GCE's reputation as a major player and agent of change at the political level.

d. Leading questions to support the discussion

- How can we best strengthen the cohesion, coordination and sense of ownership of current members?
- Which stakeholders should we establish partnerships/networks and/or try to incorporate to the movement? What would be the criteria for starting this process from a strategic approach? What added value would GCE be contributing with?
- What would be needed to diversify and grow our membership? (in terms of resources, structures, etc.)
- How can we best use GCE's advocacy & campaigning & communication work to bolster GCE's reputation?