

Constitution of the Global Campaign for Education

Adopted by the World Assembly on March 23, 2021

Introduction to the Constitution

Preamble

GCE, which was established in October 1999, is a constituency- based movement that brings together a broad alliance of actors to campaign for and defend education rights. Its membership comes from diverse self-governing national and regional education coalitions, teacher unions, international NGOs and networks, and children's and youth rights organisations. It unites civil society across over a hundred countries in the common pursuit of the right to quality free public basic education for all. GCE is an international alliance registered in South Africa as a not for profit association.

Education is a fundamental right as well as an enabling right, strengthening people's capacity to secure other rights. GCE is committed to the indivisibility of rights and to making the case for education as a central responsibility of all States. The fulfilment of the right to education is key to promoting personal development, social and environmental justice, enhancing democracy, building active citizenship, promoting peace as well as supporting more tolerant and equal societies; education helps to improve health, reduces the spread of HIV, empowers girls and women, increases incomes and improves economic growth. Long-term investment in education can be fundamental to the struggle for addressing multiple crises and transforming present paradigms - towards supporting more sustainable human development. But all these arguments are secondary to the fact that education is a fundamental right recognised in numerous international treaties and conventions and in almost every national constitution.

GCE's founding aim was to ensure that the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000 would recognise the scale of the crisis in education and result in concrete commitments and viable policies to achieve education for all. The GCE committed itself to tracking the delivery of the six education goals agreed in Dakar, building an international movement with minimal bureaucracy, harnessing the energy of its diverse members. In its World Assembly in 2011, GCE reasserted the Education for All framework and pledged to maintain this movement until the struggle for education rights for all is achieved.

Mission Statement

GCE promotes and defends education as a basic human right and mobilizes public pressure on governments and the international community to fulfil their commitments to provide free, compulsory public basic education for all people, in particular for children, women and those from excluded communities.

Principles

1. GCE is committed to framing the struggle for free basic education for all as **a struggle for basic human rights**, recognising that human rights frameworks agreed by most governments, represent a commitment to a complex set of education rights that should guarantee quality teaching and quality learning processes and outcomes – for which governments as key duty-bearers should be held accountable.

2. GCE is committed to **challenging discrimination** wherever this is evident, arguing for equal education opportunities for all regardless of sex, race, location, ability, sexuality or any other criteria which disadvantages one group compared with another. GCE is committed also to challenging discrimination in its own practices as an alliance, in its relationships between members and in the dynamics within its secretariat.
3. GCE believes that the right to **quality education depends on good quality teachers** who receive fair salaries, have access to professional development and are valued for their work.
4. GCE is committed to **supporting the right to lifelong learning** – starting from early childhood, supporting second chances to learn and adult learning at every stage of life.
5. GCE places particular priority on **inclusive education that reaches the most disadvantaged groups** – particularly child labourers, children with disabilities, children affected by conflict, children of migrant workers and minority communities etc – and cutting across these, prioritising the education of girls.
6. GCE believes in the **democratic participation of civil society** (including teachers and their unions, as well as children and youth-led organisations) in every stage of education decision-making – from appraisal to strategic planning, from policy development to implementation, from monitoring to evaluation. Decision making at all levels of education systems from schools to district to national level needs to be transparent and accountable.
7. GCE believes that **transforming the financing of education** is fundamental to making sustainable progress, and that domestic financing (based on progressive macro-economic policies, tax justice and a fair allocation of 6% of GDP to education) needs to be matched with progressive policies by donors (harmonising their efforts in line with Paris/Accra/Busan) and by challenges to the IMF and World Bank where these institutions undermine investment in quality public education.
8. GCE is committed to **secular education** – so that education processes - open children’s minds to different ways of seeing, understanding and believing.
9. GCE believes that, progress on education rights is best secured through **public provision** by governments and challenges commodification, privatisation or public private partnerships where these threaten equity in education and quality education for all.
10. GCE seeks to **transcend the North-South dichotomy**, recognising that there are challenges to equity and education rights everywhere. We seek to make links where possible between challenges in one country and challenges globally, building solidarity and mutual understanding between all countries

CONSTITUTION OF THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

Article 1: Name

The alliance shall be called, Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

Article 2: Aims

The alliance shall:

1. Build an international movement with a long-term commitment to promote and monitor the fulfilment of basic education rights.
2. Provide a common platform and meeting point for civil society organisations to coordinate their campaigning activities on education for all and education rights.
3. Campaign for the implementation of the actions and policies needed to ensure that every woman, man, girl and boy, can realise their right to a quality free public education.
4. Help to build strong national and regional campaigning on education rights, facilitating learning and

- exchange of experiences.
5. Cooperate with other likeminded campaigns and initiatives, both in the education sector in other sectors, where these can help to advance the struggle for education rights.

Article 3: Membership

a) Membership

Membership of GCE shall be open to self-governing and democratic national and regional coalitions of civil society organisations, and international networks and non-governmental organisations working for quality public education for all.

b) Conditions for membership

An organisation seeking membership shall:

1. Subscribe to the mission and principles of GCE;
2. Submit a membership application to the GCE Board for consideration and approval.
3. Be an independent, self-governing civil society organization, coalition or network, developing its own by-laws and procedures.
4. Work at the national, regional and/or international level in the field of education - (education, research, lobbying and/or advocacy)
5. Contribute to the achievement of GCE aims through co-ordinated actions and activities
6. Pay annual membership fees based on a graduated scale approved by the Board according to the categories fixed below under article 11.

c) Rejection of application for membership

1. If an application for membership is rejected by the GCE Board, an appeal may be made by the applicant to the World Assembly;
2. In rejecting an application, the Board shall state the reasons for rejection and the Secretariat shall inform the applicant in writing of the reasons for non-admission;
3. The decision of the World Assembly shall be final.
4. If the World Assembly is more than 12 months away then an interim appeal can be heard by a separate body established in accordance with the by-laws.

d) Membership and Outreach Committee

The Board shall establish a membership and outreach Committee charged with considering membership applications and related issues. This committee will make recommendations to the Board based on the existing protocol on membership as stipulated in the by-laws.

Article 4: Rights and Obligations of members

a) Member organisations shall have the right to:

1. Participate in the activities of the organisation and in the World Assembly;
2. Use the GCE Logo with the approval of the Secretariat as defined in the by-laws;
3. Receive regular information on international discussions and consultations related to EFA and global education frameworks, including the implementation of the Post-2015 frameworks adopted by the UN and its agencies and other intergovernmental organisations. National coalitions and regional networks shall be assisted in seeking adequate representation on bodies established for the provision and maintenance of quality education for all.
4. Subject to budget allocations receive campaign materials for special events, and other GCE publications;
5. Seek to have its nominees elected to the governing structures of the organisation.

b) Member organisations shall:

1. Mobilise and advocate for the right to education;
2. Submit on regular basis reports on advocacy work undertaken and share other relevant information;
3. Pay annual membership fees;
4. Monitor and influence the implementation of EFA frameworks and the education agenda at national and/or regional and/or international levels and ensure transparency and accountability.

Article 5: Suspension and Termination of Membership

- a) The Governing Body of a member of GCE may lodge a complaint against another on the grounds of violation or non-compliance with the GCE constitution. The Board may also initiate a complaint against a member of GCE for non-compliance or violation of the GCE constitution;
- b) Such complaints shall be referred, to a special committee of not more than three members, as defined in the by-laws, which shall enquire into the charges and conduct a due hearing before presenting its findings to the GCE Board;
- c) The organisation whose membership status is under review by the special committee shall be given due notice, a copy of the charges, the right to respond to the charges and a copy of the finding of the committee; such organisation shall have the right to defend itself at the World Assembly;
- d) A two thirds majority of the membership of the Board present and voting shall be required for the Board to exclude an organisation from membership;
- e) The member organisation concerned shall be informed of the decision of the Board and of the reasons justifying that decision; an appeal can be lodged as outlined in the by-laws.
- f) An organisation which is more than 24 calendar months in arrears of the payment of the membership fees without the approval of the Board shall be excluded from membership;
- g) An organisation may also withdraw from membership in GCE but shall give notice of such intent six months in advance;
- h) Only notifications of withdrawal duly authorised by the members of the governing body of an organisation shall be accepted by the GCE board.

Article 6: Associates

The GCE Board may also admit into a special category of Associates, organisations which do not meet fully the membership criteria set out in article 3 above, under the conditions stipulated in the by-laws.

Article 7: Governance of GCE

The GCE shall be governed by the following Governing Bodies:

- World Assembly of its members
- GCE Board
- The Secretariat as delegated by the World Assembly and GCE Board

Article 8: World Assembly

The World Assembly of GCE shall be the Supreme governing authority of the GCE.

a) Membership of the World Assembly shall be:

1. Members of the GCE Board
2. Delegates from National coalitions and Regional networks
3. Delegates from International Organisations
4. Members of the Secretariat in a nonvoting capacity
5. Representatives of Associates in a nonvoting capacity

b) Entitlement to delegates and observers

1. Each fully paid member organisation shall be entitled to send up to 10 delegates (the first one will be supported if necessary).
2. Subject to the approval of the Board, member organisations may appoint Observers to the Assembly. Observers will not have any entitlement to vote at the World Assembly, or to speak without the express permission of the Assembly
3. The Board may also invite representatives of non-member organisations to participate as observers in their meetings and the Assembly.

c) Powers of the World Assembly

The World Assembly shall:

1. Adopt the rules of procedure and agenda.
2. Adopt the activity report of the GCE Board
3. Determine the policies, principles of action and programme of the GCE
4. Elect the GCE Board, as defined in article 9 and in the by-laws
5. Consider the latest audited Financial Report
6. Adopt general budget
7. Have the authority to amend the Constitution by two-thirds majority when the total votes cast amount to at least 50% of member organisations.
8. Take final decisions concerning appeals against a refusal to admit an organisation into membership or the removal of a member organisation from membership of GCE.

d) Meetings of the World Assembly

1. The World Assembly shall meet in Ordinary Session at least once in every four years.
2. Notice of the World Assembly shall be provided in writing to all members nine months prior to the World Assembly.
3. The venue, date and provisional agenda of the World Assembly shall be determined by the Board.
4. An extra-ordinary World Assembly may be convened on the authority of the Board or shall be convened at the written request by paid up member organisations that total at least 50% of GCE members. This can be a physical meeting or virtual meeting as defined in the By-laws.
5. A fully paid up member organisation (national coalition, or international network) shall be entitled to one vote, as defined in the by-laws.

Article 9: The GCE Board

The Board, the political organ of the Campaign, shall direct the affairs and activities of the GCE between World Assemblies in conformity with the resolutions and decisions of the latter.

a) Composition

The Board shall have a membership of not more than **SIXTEEN** elected from the membership of member organisations as follows:

- Teaching Profession: 2 seats
- International networks/alliances working on child labour/child rights/youth rights and international Alliances/ Organisations: 2 seats
- International and regional youth and or student-led organisations: 2 SEATS. The two representatives of international and regional youth-led organisations may not both be elected from then same region.

- National Coalitions or Regional Networks in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Middle East: 2 seats in total for each Continent/region
- Each constituency shall be responsible for choosing its representatives as outlined in the by-laws. They shall be confirmed by the World Assembly.
- Members of the Board shall be elected for a term of up to four years and may seek re-election. The term of office of each member of the Board shall expire at the end of each ordinary session of the World Assembly.
- All GCE Member Organisations, except the teaching profession and representative regional networks, shall only be eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms on the GCE Board. This applies to terms beginning on or after 2011.
- For the teaching profession and representative regional networks, the individuals nominated to serve on the GCE Board shall only be eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. This applies to terms beginning on or after 2011.
- Vacancies occurring in the membership of the Board shall be filled by the constituency concerned. A member so elected/nominated shall serve for the remaining term of the person he/she is replacing as provided for in the by-laws.
- From 2011 onwards, GCE Officers positions can only be held by the same person for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

b) Meetings and responsibilities of the GCE Board

1. The GCE Board shall meet at least twice a year.
2. The GCE Board shall:
 - Initiate policies and actions in accordance with the resolutions and decisions of the World Assembly and with the aims and principles of GCE.
 - Draft the agenda of the World Assembly
 - Review implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the World Assembly
 - Review and approve financial statements, establish annual budgets, and submit a general budget to the World Assembly
 - Appoint the auditors
 - Overall responsibility for internal governance of the GCE
 - Consider applications for membership in accordance with the constitution and by-laws.
 - Consider suspension or exclusion of member organisations in accordance with constitution and by-laws
 - Oversee all programmes and activities of GCE ensuring appropriate accountability mechanisms are in place
 - Ensure good communication and GCE engagement amongst its members
 - Determine the salaries and conditions of service of the staff of the secretariat
 - Submit to the World Assembly a report on its decisions and activities
 - Interpret the constitution in the absence of the World Assembly
 - Have the authority to co-opt any member of an affiliated organisation for any particular meeting but such a co-opted member shall have no voting rights
 - Support the President and Chair in their roles

c) Chair of the Board

The Board shall elect a Chair from the Board membership. She/he shall have leadership qualities in the field of education and advocacy.

She/he shall be elected by the Board during the GCE World Assembly for a term of up to four years. She/he is accountable to the GCE Board.

Her/his responsibilities include:

- Overall responsibility for the Board's functioning
- Responsibility for overseeing the financial arrangements of the GCE

- Responsibility for overseeing the GCE global coordinator on behalf of the Board
- Co-coordinating and chairing the GCE Board meetings and relevant sub-committees

The Board may also elect a Vice Chair to assist the Chair in fulfilling the Chair's duties and responsibilities or to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the post in the absence of the Chair. The Vice Chair will be elected under the same terms and conditions as the Chair. The Chair and **Vice** Chair may not be from the same constituency on the GCE Board.

d) President of GCE

- The World Assembly shall elect a President from the Board membership for a term of up to four years, as defined in the by-laws. She/he shall have leadership qualities in the field of education.
- She/he is accountable to the full GCE Board.
- Her/his responsibilities include:
 - Political leadership for the GCE
 - Lead spokesperson for the GCE
 - Senior representative of the GCE in political forums
 - Chair of the World Assembly

The GCE Board may also elect a Vice-President to assist the President in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the post or to undertake the duties and responsibilities in the absence of the President. The President and Vice-President may not be from the same constituency on the GCE Board.

In the event of vacancy in the position of President between World Assemblies, the Board may appoint any Board member as interim President until the next World Assembly.

Article 10: The Secretariat

1. The Board shall appoint a Global Coordinator to manage the secretariat and implement its decisions and those of the World Assembly
2. The GCE Global Coordinator shall be assisted by such additional staff in the Secretariat as the GCE Board approves from time to time
3. The Secretariat shall support the Board in its efforts to achieve the objectives and implement the principles set out in its mission statement and the work of GCE members
4. The Secretariat shall facilitate national and international campaign activities
5. The GCE headquarters shall be determined by the GCE World Assembly.
6. The Board shall decide on the venues for the secretariat staff outside of the headquarters.
7. The Board shall determine the procedures regarding the appointment, suspension, salaries and conditions of employment of staff members.

Article 11: Finances

a) Income

The finance of GCE shall include

- Membership fees
- Grants and special contributions for specific activities/programmes
- Proceeds from Fundraising Activities and
- Contributions from other sources as approved by the Board

b) Scale of membership fees

There shall be a graduated scale for payment of membership fees according to the following categories and as set in the by-laws

National coalitions

- Least Developed countries
- Developing countries
- Countries in transition
- Developed countries

Regional organisations/networks

International organisations/networks/alliances

Associates

c) Funds

The funds of the GCE shall be deposited in savings and /or current account in a bank approved by the Board.

d) Finance and Personnel Committee

- The Board shall establish a Finance and Personnel Committee charged with oversight of financial and human resource matters within the GCE Secretariat. Under the terms of South African accounting practice, the FPC functions as the Audit Committee of GCE. It will report accordingly to the Board and the World Assembly.
- The Finance and Personnel Committee shall be composed of members of the Board and shall meet at least once a year.
- The Board and the Finance and Personnel Committee may commission, as needed, the services of a qualified expert on technical or financial matters as provided for in the by-laws

e) Audit

The Board shall appoint external auditors to the Global Campaign for Education

f) Financial liability

Only GCE tangible properties shall be considered as security for financial liabilities. Elected members of the Global Campaign shall not be held personally responsible for such liabilities.

g) Financial Year

The financial year shall be the calendar year ending on the 31st of December.

Article 12: Membership fees

1. Membership fees to be paid by the member organisations shall be determined according to the category they belong to. Specifications shall be given in the by-laws.
2. Membership fees shall be paid before March 31 of each year.
3. If a member organisation is unable to fulfil its financial obligations, owing to extraordinary circumstances, the Board shall have the authority to grant a delay, a temporary reduction or, in extreme cases, a temporary exemption from the payment of such fees. Such special agreements must be requested and established in writing, and shall be limited to a maximum of two years, extension being subject to review by the Board.

Article 13: Official Languages

The official languages of GCE shall be Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and any other languages recommended by the Board and approved by the World Assembly.

Article 14: By-Laws and Rules of Procedure

The Board shall make by-laws and rules of procedure to regulate elections, conduct of the World Assembly and Board meetings and other matters referred to it by the constitution.

Article 15: Legal Status of the GCE

The Board shall have the authority to take such steps as are necessary to ensure continuous registration of the GCE as a Not for Profit legal entity with entitlement to employ staff and hold bank accounts in the country in which its secretariat is located. The current registration is in the by-laws.

Article 16: Miscellaneous

1. Interpretation of the Constitution

The interpretation of this constitution and by-laws is within the competence of the Board.

2. Translation of the Constitution

The English version of the constitution is the main copy legally registered in South Africa. Translated versions of the constitution must be approved by the GCE Board.

3. Amendments of the Constitution

Notices of motions to amend the constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by a GCE member or the GCE Board not less than four months before the opening of the World Assembly. They shall be circulated to all member organisations prior to the opening of the World Assembly as detailed in the by-laws. A proposed amendment to the constitution shall be declared adopted if supported by not less than two-thirds of the total votes cast by at least fifty per cent of member organisations.

4. Dissolution of GCE

The GCE may be dissolved by a vote at a World Assembly on a motion from a fully paid –up member organisation to dissolve the GCE, of which four months' notice must be given to the Secretariat, and which receives not less than two-thirds of the total votes cast by at least sixty percent of member organisations. In the event of the dissolution of GCE, any remaining funds shall be given to a charitable institution as decided upon by the World Assembly at which it is dissolved.