



# GCE 7th WORLD ASSEMBLY

22 - 24 November 2022  
Johannesburg-South Africa

The Future of Education Re-Imagined

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## Discussion 3:

### **GCE Gender, Disability-Inclusion, and Intersectionality World Assembly Discussion Paper**

The struggles in favor of the right to education include, in a central way, the elimination of all forms of inequality and inequity and are aimed at building the necessary conditions so that the recognition and respect for diversity allow us to overcome exclusion.

Patriarchal frameworks are the central ballast that prevents progress in the construction of egalitarian societies. For this reason, it is urgent to move education towards cultures of human rights in which the notions of equality and non-discrimination are the center of pedagogical action.

With this understanding, the Global Campaign for Education has supported inclusive education, which would be impossible to undertake without a gender perspective and without a clear conviction of the needs and rights of people who have been historically discriminated against, including girls and women, people with disabilities, the LGBTQI+ community, ethnic and cultural minorities, and indigenous peoples.

For the GCE, Inclusive education acknowledges that every person has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs and that those learners with disabilities must have access to and be accommodated in the general education system, including adults. By considering the diversity among learners, inclusive education seeks to combat discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming communities, achieve education for all and improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching mainstream learners.

The Global Campaign for Education adopted the approved [Gender Strategy](#) in 2021 by the GCE Board. The gender expert group was created in 2022 to support the coordination, adaptation, and identify the critical interventions of mainstreaming gender throughout the movement by activating actions outlined in the [implementation plan](#) that would successfully integrate gender thematic areas in all GCE advocacy activities.

The term gender mainstreaming refers to a multi-collaborative approach where GCE coalitions will strengthen the advocacy capacity of the GCE movement by addressing existing and emerging gender barriers by integrating the gender strategy objectives within its global and national activities.

## **Gender and inclusion Contexts in Education Globally.**

## Challenges

Due to the rise of growing conservative movements, the political momentum of not closing gender disparities and excluding people living with disabilities is unprecedented. We are currently experiencing a rollback on women's and girls' rights and inclusive education for children with disabilities (worldwide, with specific militant groups in protracted crisis and emergency contexts preventing girls and other vulnerable groups from accessing their education and placing limitations on their human rights).

The gender and inclusion gaps in education are high throughout all the regions. Gender discrimination, coupled with a range of other socio-economic factors such as forced child marriages, sexual violence, circumcision, and lack of access to free sanitary pads, disrupt girls from going to school, and the prevalence of special schools as the only option for children with disabilities. At the same time, the boy child who experiences poverty and leads child-headed homes are forced to leave school prematurely to take care of their families. The facts around violence against girls and women with and without disabilities living in crisis are simply humanitarian crises.

Girls in crisis settings are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school and 90 percent more likely to be out of secondary school than those living in countries with no crisis. ECW (2022) indicates that 39 million girls were out of school or had their education disrupted because of war and disaster. In Afghanistan, 2.2 million girls lack adequate teaching facilities and women teachers. In the Lake Chad Region, where 3.5 million children are at risk of violent attacks on girls, forced marriages and abductions are experienced.

The gendered education crisis remains at 129.2 million girls/young women, and 128.2 million boys /young men are out of school. They cannot access education due to rural-urban disparities, and crisis and disaster are the root causes of this education injustice. The global Covid-19 Pandemic risks drive 24 million more learners out of school and exacerbate gender inequalities, affecting disproportionately vulnerable and excluded children and adults. A global push-back on human rights and gender equality significantly impacts accessible, inclusive, and quality education. Education illiteracy remains exceptionally high for women over 25 years in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa, and West Asia.

Additionally, despite the right to education for all being enshrined in myriad national and international forums, there are still challenges for children with disabilities accessing education, who are socially excluded in education and experiencing quality education. For instance, according to UNESCO (2021), in Eastern and Southern Africa, the disability prevalence rate in populations is between 10 and 16%. Yet, the reported number of children with disabilities in schools is much lower than 1.79% of total school enrolment in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. Moreover, this gap in enrolment widens as boys and girls with disabilities progress through educational phases, highlighting that serious attention is needed to 'ensure learning opportunities for all.

Addressing these social issues in education requires GCE as a movement to address these challenges and prioritize mainstreaming gender objectives within its programmatic work while advocating for inclusive, equitable education for all. The rise of growing conservative movements requires strong civil society advocacy to hold governments and multilateral agencies to account for commitments made in gender and education. Through capacity building, our members generate knowledge and make the necessary change amongst themselves regarding the composition of crucial decision-making processes.

## **Opportunities**

A holistic, integrated approach that will mainstream gender in the work of the GCE movement will harness opportunities to connect gender equality objectives with GCE programmatic work to create robust results. Strengthening the movement's capacity to mainstream gender through targeted gender-conscious learning and generating knowledge centralised on gender in the education sector through transforming education, education in emergencies, and education financing. GCE movement will strengthen the gender strategy within its internal activities with joint advocacy actions with other critical actors. GCE members will influence decision-making processes by identifying and engaging feminist movements and disability groups to draw significant attention to gender challenges experienced in the education sector. There is an opportunity for members to review and advocate for eradicating gender bias and stereotypes within themselves. GCE members will increasingly use social responsibility tools to integrate gender programmes in all its advocacy spaces and campaigns.

Furthermore, GCE will work to expose and draw policy attention to inequity, discrimination, and exclusion in education – both in terms of access and in terms of quality – and the links to broader social and economic inequality. We will draw attention to non-discriminatory and inclusive education as an integral part of the human right to education and raise awareness of inequity and exclusion broadly based on gender, disability, and all vulnerable groups.



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## **In Strengthening the Movement**

By Setting clear goals and action plans for achieving greater gender equality in regional and national coalitions and the Secretariat

1. Establishing a gender policy and policy protocol on GCE's position on gender transformative education as a model for all our members
2. We are promoting greater equality within our global movement, including in decision-making and membership composition, and by making available safe spaces and channels for incidence reporting to our members.
3. We are promoting practical tools and resources that help our members to adopt a gender-transformative and inclusive approach to their work and improve their internal ways of working.
4. The GCE will collectively increase the body of evidence on understudied gender and inclusion issues in education.

## **GCE Gender Advocacy Approach**

Gender Transformative Education seeks to utilize all parts of education systems, from policies to pedagogies to community engagement, in changing perceptions of gender norms and binaries by challenging power relations related to institutional inequality and patriarchy. The Gender Transformative Education approach goes beyond improving the accessibility of education for girls and women only but across all intersectionality that is affected by gender inequality and exclusion. The role of civil society is to engage stakeholders, policy developers, communities, teachers, people with disabilities, and governments to examine and challenge harmful, discriminatory social practices and interrogate educational system power imbalances. Gender Transformative Education applies in all contexts by unlocking children's true potential in all their diversity.

The movement will progress towards gender transformative education by calling for transforming power structures and decision-makers in the policy and political engagement spaces. By calling out specific commitments to heads of state, education sector ministers with multilateral agencies'

support are held accountable for inclusive, safe education systems that are equitable to all. Advocating for the increase in investment in crisis-affected areas and vulnerable states and increasing investment for girls affected with gender-based violence, child marriages, child-headed homes, and healthy sanitation facilities to ‘keep a girl child in school.’

The movement will identify evidence-based approaches that promote gender-responsive inclusive budgeting and policies. The gender-responsive education sector planning approach prioritises marginalised children who experience the most significant gender gaps from pre-primary to secondary, with low numbers of female teachers and a high prevalence of gender-based violence in communities. Furthermore, GCE will promote a transformative education curriculum that engenders equal participation of girls and boys. Transform gender evidence generation by generating disaggregated data to inform the best approaches to creating safe school environments with gender-responsive sanitation facilities.

Gender programmes will focus on gender-responsive education in emergency contexts, gender-responsive education financing, and transformative education with gender and intersectionality as a cross-cutting theme.

**With the Gender Strategy, GCE aims to:**

- Unleash the gender transformative potential of its global and national programmes.
- Mobilise the movement to bring an end to gender inequality in and through education as a tool for promoting equality and respect for diversity.
- Inspire internal changes within GCE members to advance gender equality and inclusive education within the broader vision of achieving education for all.





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## **World Assembly discussion questions to inform the adaptation of the GCE Gender Policy and Focus on Inclusion:**

1. How will the GCE movement promote inclusion and equality in the movement through an intersectionality lens?
2. What approaches are required to strengthen inclusive education and increase opportunities for people with disabilities?
3. What social behaviour change interventions should be adopted to tackle stigma and discrimination within the movement and promote inclusion?
4. What are robust, strong accountability mechanisms required to include performance measures to ensure gender-transformative and disability-inclusive education is achieved in the movement? How do these mechanisms account for intersectionality within their measurements?
5. How will the GCE movement enhance women's participation in decision-making processes with women as change agents within institutional governance processes?
6. How will the GCE movement enhance the participation of people with disabilities and disabled people's organisations in decision-making processes with people with disabilities as change agents within institutional governance processes?
7. What best approach is to integrate GCE gender and disability-inclusion objectives within the youth and students' regional networks and activities?



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