

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 2

Decolonizing education financing and AID to education

a. Introduction

Education financing is one of the state's central obligations, as it is stated by international human rights law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICECSR) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), reiterate the right to free and compulsory primary education, the right to education that is universally available and progressively free at secondary level, the right to lifelong learning from early childhood education through to adulthood, the right to a quality education, and the right to education without discrimination that meets the needs of the most marginalised.

This makes it clear that: i) education must be available and accessible to all; ii) it must be provided free of charge (at least for basic education and progressively to all) and without discrimination; iii) it must be of good quality; and iv) it must respond and contribute to its social context.¹

Despite the normative references, it is evident that education financing is an outstanding debt and that countless countries cannot allocate the budget required by their education systems.

SDG 4 cannot be realized by 2030 without a significant and well-targeted increase in financing, particularly in those countries furthest from achieving quality education for all at all levels. Therefore, the adherence to the international and regional benchmarks of allocating efficiently at least 4 - 6% of Gross Domestic Product and/or at least 15 - 20% of total public expenditure to education is very urgent. International standards also call on developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries².

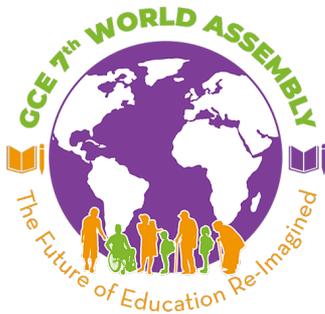
The fight for education financing has historically been at the heart of the GCE and is part of the strategic actions of the vast majority of its members. The World Assembly is an optimal opportunity to renew this commitment.

b. Context analysis and how this relates to GCE

In view of the growing privatisation, commercialisation and commodification in and of education, education systems are becoming increasingly inequitable, deepening broader economic exclusion, which threatens progress towards free quality public education for all. From an education-financing point of view, the estimation of the annual financing gap to reach

¹ Global Campaign for Education. Financing Matters. A Toolkit on domestic financing for Education, p. 22.

² Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action



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SDG4 in low and lower middle-income countries is \$148 billion³. Additional costs due to COVID19 related school closures risk increasing this financing gap by up to one third, or between US\$30-45 billion⁴. In light of this increased risk, there is an urgent need for civil society and especially for GCE to ensure accountability in that education financing reaches the most marginalised and that these resources are used to strengthen free public education systems for the benefit of all.

GCE engagement should strategically respond to the different risks, gaps and threats, so that the different flanks in which education financing is in danger are addressed. We have identified enormous needs in terms of domestic financing (including tax justice), international aid, growing indebtedness and privatization. All these spaces require both different and focused responses, although experience indicates that a coordinated and systemic approach leads to positive results.

The process involved in the Transforming Education Summit allowed GCE to be actively involved in the preparation of Action Track 5 Discussion Paper⁵, which contains a comprehensive approach to the most pressing problems in education financing and releases a call to mobilize more resources, to increase equity and efficiency of spending on education and to build stronger and accurate education financing data and accountability.

All these problems have in common the need to work on the decolonization of education financing.

Although decolonization is not a new concept in the regions where the GCE members operate, its application in financial policies is very important for overcoming the colonial relations that continue to weigh on developing countries.

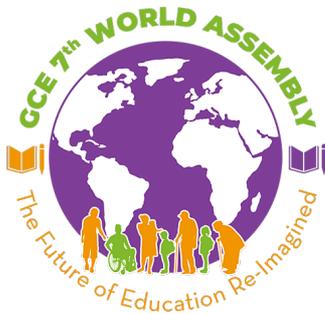
Unfortunately, colonial visions continue to offer wrong interpretations about the nature of financial problems, leading to believe that the scarcity of resources is attributable to the lack of people's capacity to solve their national problems, for which international aid is frequently proposed as a panacea to domestic budgeting, thus hiding the business ambitions and political domination behind it.

It is necessary to insist that international aid and cooperation are not called upon to define the contents of public policy in developing countries. The donor-oriented and aid-oriented actions could be examples of colonization, when their programs not only impose the payment conditions but also the way in which the resources should be invested.

³ <https://www.developmentaid.org/api/frontend/cms/file/2020/09/374163eng.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.developmentaid.org/api/frontend/cms/file/2020/09/374163eng.pdf>

⁵ <https://transformingeducationsummit.sdg4education2030.org/AT5DiscussionPaper>



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In some cases, the imposition is so dramatic that even recipient countries are forced to buy goods and services from providers of the cooperating or donor countries.

c. Key issues GCE members are to consider

Education financing should not be disconnected from the aims of education. It is not enough to increase school budgets if this does not lead to the democratization of investment. The sensitivity of the budget⁶ is, then, a guiding element of education policies and implies prioritizing investments in those populations that have been historically excluded.

The increase in educational financing is not enough by itself to break the cycles of exclusion, if it is not consciously directed at strengthening social justice through education. Education financing must have a political direction and that is why it is necessary to develop monitoring and data analytical systems to guide education policy.

GCE has launched the Education Financing Observatory (EFO), a multidimensional mechanism that will have a global reach and offers an unprecedented opportunity from civil society to generate and gather evidence-based insights and resources to effectively deliver transnational campaigns in response to the ongoing financing crises in education.

The fight for education financing should engage with other initiatives on debt alleviation and/or cancellation, tax justice and containment of multistakeholderism and corporate takeover of the public policies domains.

d. Leading questions to support the discussion

How GCE can improve engagement/coordination with other CSO movements

What initiatives to share good practices would you like to recommend?

What education financing monitoring and accountability strategies GCE can consider?

⁶ The GCE's "Financing Matters. A Toolkit on domestic financing for Education" provides a comprehensive explanation of the 4S scheme, including the sensitivity of the education budget.