

GCE Policy Summary 2004 to 2011

Introduction

This document is provided as a background for discussion of GCE policy prior to and during the World Assembly 2018. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is going into its 6th World Assembly in November 2018 as a relatively mature movement. Over the 20 years of its existence, the GCE membership has approved a substantial body of policy, in the form of resolutions debated and voted on at previous Assemblies, as well as policy reports building on these resolutions. At the World Assembly, the membership will debate and vote on any additional policy to be adopted.

In order to facilitate this process, this document provides a summary and overview of existing GCE policy resolutions; members can refer to the full resolutions documents for complete details.

This document presents existing GCE policy in relation to the following categories:

- A. The right to education and foundational to rights-based development
- B. Quality education, including teaching and learning
- C. Non-discrimination, equity and inclusion in education
- D. Lifelong education, from birth to adulthood
- E. Free and public education
- F. Education financing
- G. Education in emergencies and safe schools
- H. Governance, ownership, and civil society participation in the education sector

A. EDUCATION AS A HUMAN RIGHT AND FOUNDATIONAL TO RIGHTS-BASED DEVELOPMENT

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2008, Resolution U: The Enforcement of the Right to Education
- 2008, Resolution X: Education and Development
- 2008, Resolution Y: Human Rights Education
- 2011, Resolution 6: Pursuing education as a human right

GCE's policy on this issue includes strong statements on education as a fundamental human right, as acknowledged in numerous human rights treaties and conventions. Furthermore, it includes exploration of the implications of understanding education as a right, including commitment to the "4 A framework", which describes the right to education as implying that education must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. GCE policy calls for ratification of and engagement with relevant human rights instruments, and for States to understand and live up to their implied obligations, and states clearly the need for enforcement of this right. GCE's policy also points to the criticality of education for development, and the related importance of education being understood from a rights-based perspective.

B. QUALITY, INCLUDING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2004, Resolution 1: Quality Education
- 2004, Resolution 5: Teacher Status and Teacher Shortage
- 2008, Resolution A: Quality of Education
- 2008, Resolution N: Strategic role of Educators
- 2008, Resolution V: Financing Quality Education
- 2008, Resolution W: Diversity and intercultural relations
- 2008, Resolution Y: Human Rights Education
- 2008, Resolution Z: Teacher management
- 2011, Resolution 7: Educators: key to quality education
- 2011, Resolution 14: Equitable learning: all attaining a quality education

GCE policy sets out a rich and rights-based definition of quality education, which is understood in terms of recognised international definitions of the purpose of education: education directed towards “the full development of the human personality” (ICESCR) and education that includes “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be” (UNESCO). GCE policy includes clear statements on the importance of certain inputs in order to achieve quality education, including a good learning environment, an effective curriculum, an emphasis on mother tongue instruction in the early years, tracking progress in learning starting from the formative years, and – crucially – the need for well-trained, professional, qualified and motivated teachers.

GCE policy includes substantial emphasis on the central role of educators in achieving education goals, and expresses concern about shortages of qualified educators. In this context, GCE calls comprehensive, costed plans to build a strong teaching profession, with policies and investment covering high-quality pre-service and in-service training, professional working conditions, means to track and encourage women and persons from marginalized groups to enter teaching, and incentives for teachers to work in rural and remote areas. GCE opposes employment of “volunteer” teachers and para-teachers, as undermining the quality of teaching and learning.

In terms of the content of education, GCE points to Human Rights Education as the first step towards Human Rights promotion, and a core component of GCE's definition of quality education. GCE policy also points to the need to involve a range of stakeholders – including parents, school management committees, teachers, communities, and unions – in achieving quality education for all.

C. NON-DISCRIMINATION, EQUITY and INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2004, Resolution 3: HIV/AIDS and education
- 2004, Resolution 4: Child labour and education
- 2004, Resolution 12: Failure to meet Gender Parity Deadline of 2005
- 2008, Resolution B: Hard to Reach Children
- 2008, Resolution O: HIV and education
- 2008, Resolution S: Education and Disabled Children
- 2008, Resolution T: Gender Equality in Education
- 2008, Resolution W: Diversity and intercultural relations
- 2011, Resolution 4: Strengthening GCE’s concrete engagement in girls’ education and women’s literacy
- 2011, Resolution 9: The right to education and children and youth with disabilities: inclusive learning includes the right to adaptable systems for learning achievements.

GCE policy states that different forms of discrimination must be acknowledged in order to be fought, including discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity or cultural identity, language, disability, rural and marginalised

urban location, poverty and extreme poverty, sexual orientation, status as prisoner, internal or international migration, age, and other causes of vulnerability or exclusion.

In terms of overcoming discrimination, exclusion and inequity, GCE notes that it is imperative to promote intercultural relations, a deep respect for diversity and the responsibility to struggle against every kind of discrimination and subordination.

Most of the GCE resolutions on non-discrimination, equity and inclusion focus on specific groups of children or adult learners, and GCE policy contains recommendations on specific measures to enable girls and women, learners with disabilities, child labourers, learners in conflict situations and those affected by HIV and AIDS, to access free quality and compulsory public education. Specific measures described include implementing agreements on reducing child labour, removing cost barriers, promoting safe and non-violent learning spaces, reducing cultural barriers, promoting safe learning spaces, gender-based budgeting, teacher recruitment policies that promote diversity, measures to eliminate gender bias and stereotypes in teaching and learning, overcoming stigmatization based on HIV and AIDS, allocating resources for inclusive education, promoting child-centred pedagogy, appropriate teacher training, legal frameworks for inclusion, and promoting 'second-chance' education.

Overall, GCE policy highlights that commitment to non-discrimination, equity and inclusion in education requires specific commitments, targeted policies, dedicated investment, and will encompass measures focused on the teaching and learning process, as well as the wider school and community environment.

D. LIFELONG EDUCATION, FROM BIRTH TO ADULTHOOD

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2004, Resolution 6: Early Childhood Care and Education
- 2004, Resolution 7: Civil Society Demands for Policy Action in Adult Education
- 2004, Resolution 10: Relative Roles of Government and Civil Society with respect to Primary Education and Non-Formal Adult Education
- 2008, Resolution D: Adult Literacy
- 2008, Resolution AA: Early Childhood Care and Education
- 2011, Resolution 2: Youth and adult education, life skills and popular education, towards social transformation
- 2011, Resolution 3: Early Childhood Care and Education: successful transition into school
- 2011, Resolution 15: Prioritization of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

GCE policy resolutions affirm clearly that education is a lifelong right, from birth to adulthood.

GCE calls on states to invest in quality early childhood care and education, both because young children have the right to develop to their full potential, and because development during the years from birth to eight years old is crucial to human development. GCE policy includes calls to ensure that children are ready for school, and schools are ready for children. GCE calls on States to make available high quality, public early childhood care and education services as part of a comprehensive, inter-sectoral approach to services for young children, and to invest at least 8 percent of education budgets in doing so. This involves ensuring professional training of ECCE educators, focusing on diversity – including mother tongue instruction in early years – and taking action to avoid all forms of discrimination. Given that most ECCE provision is private, GCE notes that private providers must be effectively regulated.

GCE also points to the right of adults to education – which contrasts with the huge gaps in even basic education for many youth and adults. GCE believes that literacy should be seen as a continuous process and States – with the cooperation of CSOs – should ensure its universalization; this requires particular attention to women and marginalized groups, who are most likely to be non-literate. GCE calls on States to dedicate at least 6 percent of national education budgets to adult education. Adult literacy trainers and facilitators should be paid professionals, and learners should have an active choice about the language of instruction.

E. FREE AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2004, Resolution 9: Privatisation of Education
- 2004, Resolution 11: User Fees and Costs
- 2008, Resolution F: Abolition of User Fees
- 2008, Resolution L: Public-Private Partnerships
- 2011, Resolution 1: Public financing and democratic ownership for an available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable public education

GCE has extensive policy resolutions calling for education to be free from early childhood to secondary levels. Resolutions point to international treaties and conventions on the right to education, which commit to education that is free at primary level and progressively at other levels, as well as to the impact of fees in limiting and making unequal access to education. GCE policy therefore calls for the abolition of all fees and charges from early childhood to secondary levels, and to the need for campaigning against such fees and charges.

GCE policy also affirms the responsibility of the State for ensuring the provision of quality education at all levels, including adult education. It points to the dangers of extensive and rapid privatisation in and of education, and in particular the dangers of commercialization of education, and calls for state supervision and public oversight of Public-Private Partnerships. GCE policy also includes repeated calls to strengthen public finances in the education sector in order to better enable the State to live up to its obligations.

F. FINANCING FOR EDUCATION

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2004, Resolution 2: Financing for Education focusing on FTI
- 2008, Resolution E: International Monetary Fund
- 2008, Resolution H: External Financing of Education For All and the EFA Fast-Track Initiative
- 2008, Resolution V: Financing Quality Education
- 2011, Resolution 1: Public financing and democratic ownership for an available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable public education
- 2011, Resolution 8: The commitment of the international community to cooperate for the realization of the human right to education

GCE policy points to the right to education as imposing an obligation on States to guarantee sufficient financing for a public, free and quality education for all people, based on an analysis of the cost of realizing the right to education, taking into account access and quality of education. GCE states clearly that this requires, on average, an increase in government spending on education. GCE policy also notes, however, that many governments do not have sufficient resources currently at their disposal, and that additional measures are therefore necessary.

GCE therefore calls on the international community to live up to its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to provide assistance to states lacking the means to finance education, together with the commitment made in the Dakar Framework for Action that “that no country seriously committed to education for all with be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.” This requires much more serious efforts by donors to fill the education financing gap, in particular

through the Global Partnership for Education (previously the Education For All Fast Track Initiative). Donors should include within their financing funds for civil society. GCE policy also calls repeatedly on donor agencies – governmental and intergovernmental – to respect national ownership, sovereignty and democracy, and principles of aid effectiveness, and provide assistance that is long-term, predictable, and delivered in ways that promotes accountability to the citizens of recipient countries. GCE opposes donor conditionalities that impose wage ceilings and other harmful macroeconomic policies, and encourages States to resist these kinds of donor requirements.

GCE policy also, however, states that domestic financing for education should be prioritised, including through progressive tax policies, challenging capital flight, and strengthening public financial management, but avoiding public private partnerships or other mechanisms that absolve the state of responsibility for guaranteeing resources for education.

In terms of the allocation and spending of resources, GCE calls for participatory methods for budget-setting and expenditure monitoring. States must institutionalize genuine civil society participation in such processes. GCE policy also includes some specific recommendations on spending allocations, including spending at least 8 percent on early childhood care and education, and at least 6 percent to adult education.

G. EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AND SAFE SCHOOLS

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2008, Resolution M: Violence in Schools
- 2008, Resolution P: The Financing of Education in Conflict Affected Countries and Fragile States
- 2008, Resolution R: Provision of Education in Emergencies
- 2011, Resolution 11: Education, Teachers and Students Under Attack
- 2011, Resolution 13: Conflicts, emergencies, climate change, fragile states (including small island states)

GCE recognizes education as an essential right and service for children in emergencies – including conflict and humanitarian disaster as well as slow-onset emergencies such as climate change, economic crisis and state fragility – and believes that education should be included in the first phase of all humanitarian response. GCE notes that education is a vehicle for promoting peace and normality in conflict situations and can be life-saving. In emergency situations, curricula need to be responsive to the needs of children in emergencies. GCE policy condemns attacks on students, teachers and schools, and calls for global monitoring of such attacks and for schools to be safe places. GCE states that international bodies much hold state and non-state actors accountable for violations of the right to education through attacks.

The provision of education in emergencies requires participatory approaches, often specific efforts to overcome weaknesses in government capacity, and sufficient financing. GCE's policy states that 4.5 percent of funding provided for humanitarian assistance should be for education.

GCE policy also affirms that no violence against children is justifiable, and that all manifestations of violence in education – including humiliating discipline, harassment and bullying – must be opposed. GCE states that, while the causes of violence in schools are complex, governments must commit to non-violence in schools, and take action to produce this, including by ensuring effective teacher training, sufficient teacher numbers to provide oversight and reduce stress, the teaching of non-violence and promotion of a culture of peace, supervision mechanisms, and implementation of codes of conduct that reiterate positive discipline.

H. GOVERNANCE, OWNERSHIP AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Relevant GCE policy resolutions include:

- 2004, Resolution 8: Social Participation as a Right and Cornerstone for Transformation
- 2004, Resolution 10: Relative Roles of Government and Civil Society with respect to Primary Education and Non-Formal Adult Education
- 2008, Resolution G: Social monitoring and democratic management of public policies for education
- 2008, Resolution J: Teacher Unions and NGOs
- 2008, Resolution K: Civil Society Education Funds
- 2008, Resolution Z: Teacher management
- 2011, Resolution 1: Public financing and democratic ownership for an available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable public education
- 2011, Resolution 5: Strengthening democracy and citizens' participation in realization of the human right to education
- 2011, Resolution 10: Enhancing civil society participation in the Education For All – Fast Track Initiative Partnership

GCE policy states clearly that civil society must be able to participate in processes that effectively influence policy making, extending beyond consultation to meaningful participation in debate and decision-making on political, legal and budgetary frameworks, and oversight of implementation. Participation should include children, young people and adults, teachers, parents, education workers. Such participation must be structured (at all levels of government), institutionalised, genuine and proactive, and must be supported and facilitated through genuine transparency. GCE condemns violations of the right to participation. At the same time, GCE policy focuses on civil society engagement with and participation in global policy processes and forums, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE, formerly EFA-FTI).

GCE policy also points to distinctive roles for civil society structures. For example, CSOs can play an important role in community mobilisation, while teacher organisations are crucial to issues of teacher management: teacher salaries and conditions (which should respect 1996 ILO/UNESCO recommendations) should be determined by collective bargaining.

GCE calls on its members to fully support the concept of funding for civil society activity through Civil Society Education Funds, as a mechanism to direct at least 3 percent of donor funds to civil society activity. GCE opposes governmental waste, fraud and mismanagement.