

The Global Campaign for Education 2015 to 2019

The vision and strategy of the global civil society movement for the right to education

INTRODUCTION

This document presents GCE's four-year strategic planning, covering mid-2015 to mid-2019. It is the product of extensive consultation within the GCE membership from late 2012 to early 2015, as well as relevant evaluations, and was endorsed by the GCE World Assembly in February 2015.

This represents a plan for the GCE movement as a whole, containing agreed priorities, approach and ways of working together. More specific objectives for the Secretariat are included, and are developed in more detail through annual operational plans.

PART 1: The Global Campaign for Education and its role

1.1 The GCE mission

GCE promotes and defends education as a basic human right and mobilises 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.

1.2 GCE's history

The GCE movement was founded in 1999, in the build-up to the World Education Forum in Dakar, to provide a platform to unify and coordinate civil society voices in relation to the global education agenda. After Dakar, the organisations that had come together to form GCE committed to continue their collaboration, working to build a civil society movement that could hold governments and decision-makers accountable for the promised contained in the Education For All Agenda.

Since then, the movement has grown considerably, in particular through the expansion and consolidation of national civil society coalitions, acting independently but in solidarity to mobilise citizens, and call on governments to realise the right to education through provision of universal, quality, free and public basic education to children and adult learners. In 2011, the GCE movement, gathered at its World Assembly in Paris, agreed to continue working together beyond the 2015 deadline to achieve the Education For All goals, as a global civil society movement for the right to education.

By the start of 2015, GCE had more than 100 members, including 84 national civil society coalitions, 11 regional networks, and 14 international NGOs. Our national coalitions in turn encompass many thousands of civil society organisations – including national and local NGOs, teacher organisations, parents' associations, women's groups, disabled people's organisations, youth and student groups, and academic or research institutions. Each coalition is independent, and while the composition of each coalition varies between country and region, all are united by the commitment to the right to education, and to achieving change through the mobilisation of citizens and civil society.

GCE's collective work over time has included cross-national and global campaigns, as well as participation in shared programmes to build civil society capacity, influence and impact. A key vehicle for cross-national campaigning has been Global Action Week, organised annually by GCE, around the anniversary of the Dakar World Education Forum, since 2001 but increasing in scale since 2003. The GCE membership has chosen the themes of Global Action Week, which have included, for example, closing the trained teacher gap (2006 and

2013), quality education (2008), youth and adult literacy (2009), girls' education (2011), early childhood education (2012) and inclusive education for children with disabilities (2014). Each year, millions of people across around 100 countries have taken part in Global Action Week activities, which range from public marches and rallies, to conferences and seminars, to cultural activities like street theatre and exhibitions, to school-based workshops and classes, to television and radio broadcasts, to high-level meetings and seminars. Global Action Week has brought in a range of partners, notably UNESCO and UN Secretaries General. GCE remains the world record holder for the World's Biggest Lesson, held during Global Action Week in 2008 with a total of 8.5 million participants, while 14 million people took part in "The Big Read" in 2009. In 2010, GCE organised the 1GOAL campaign around the World Cup, as an official NGO partner, and mobilised millions of people around the world to use the opportunity of the global sporting event to draw attention to the need to achieve the right to education for all.

At the same time, GCE has focused on building the strength of its national civil society coalition members to influence the direction of education policy and delivery in their countries, through building their reach, their skills in monitoring, research and policy analysis, and their capacity to engage with and influence policy-makers. In particular, GCE has pursued this through developing and implementing the Real World Strategies (programme (2006-2010) and the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF, 2009 to present). Through CSEF, GCE – working very closely with regional and INGO partners across Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and with funding largely from the Global Partnership for Education – has provided funding, technical support and capacity-building, opportunities for learning and exchange and links to regional and global advocacy to 57 national coalitions in low- and lower-middle income countries.

Since its foundation, the GCE movement has helped advance progress towards the right to education through mobilising the power of citizen voices. We helped to shape reforms of the Global Partnership for Education (formerly Fast Track Initiative) as it became more of a genuine partnership, focused on supporting country-led strategies. We helped shape the post-2015 education goal and targets, bringing grassroots civil society voices and perspectives into the debate through our role in the Education For All steering committee. Global Action Week has helped raise the profile of crucial aspects of the right to education, nationally and globally, while RWS and CSEF have supported evidence-based civil society advocacy, all contributing to concrete national and local change. This change has included, for example, education budget increases in Zambia, new commitments to early childhood education in Bangladesh, tribal leaders' commitments to supporting girls' education in Yemen, improved policies on teacher deployment in Ghana, a 10-year gender policy in Colombia, new education financing commitments in Brazil, and improved adult literacy policy in the Solomon Islands.

This 2015-2019 strategy builds on the history, growth and successes of the GCE movement since 1999, as well as learning from its challenges, in setting our direction as a movement committed to ensuring that everyone realises their right to a quality education.

1.3 The GCE theory of change & GCE's role

GCE is driven by the conviction both that education is a universal human right, and that quality education for all is achievable. This means that everyone can and must have access to quality education, fully understood in all its aspects, as is their right.

As made clear by numerous human rights treaties signed by almost every State in the world, it is the responsibility of States to respect, protect and fulfil this right. A well-functioning, comprehensive public education system is therefore central to GCE's vision, and government action to implement this is a necessity.

What is needed to realise the right to education

In the 67 years since the right to education was recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 25 years since the Jomtien World Education Forum, and the 15 years since the agreement of the Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All and the Millennium Development Goals, there has been significant progress on realising the right to education for all. But the world is still a long way off that goal. GCE believes that these continuing gaps are, fundamentally, a political issue; the key factors that are necessary to ensure that governments make good on their commitment to ensure that every girl, boy, man

and woman – including the most marginalised – has access to quality education are: governments (both north and south) and the international community as a whole having sufficient political will to focus on and invest in education, particularly where the gaps are greatest; and States being effective, accountable and responsive to the needs and priorities of their citizens. Undeniably, there are economic constraints also to realising the right to education; but with sufficient political will from both governments and donors, sufficient resources can be mobilised.

The crucial role of citizens

Achieving both of these outcomes – the political will to focus on education, and governments that are effective, accountable and responsive – requires the active and informed engagement of citizens with decision-makers. Citizen pressure focuses government attention; citizen engagement makes policy and programmes more responsive and relevant – and in particular can ensure that they target the most excluded and marginalised; and citizen oversight can help drive effective implementation and accountability. Citizen participation is crucial because it can bring about not just the political will to agree a policy, but the accountability to sustain that policy and implement it effectively. Citizen empowerment is a right and a good in itself, and leads to the education goals we seek. This speaks to a need to go beyond time-limited pressure to bring about a specific set of government actions, to ensuring an informed, active and sustained citizen engagement in the education sector.

Building organisation to ensure citizens' voices are heard

GCE believes that, for citizen participation and engagement to be effective as a driver of responsive and effective state action in the education sector, it must:

- be facilitated by effective and coordinated civil society organisations;
- involve diverse voices, prioritising affected populations including children, adolescents, young people, parents, adult learners and teachers, and including the most marginalised;
- bring together a large number and diverse range of civil society organisations, prioritising those at the grassroots, to speak in unison;
- be reinforced and amplified by being a part of a larger, cross-border movement.

The nature of citizen and civil society engagement that will be most effective in driving change, however, can vary between countries and within countries, over time and by issue. Dependent on the context, opportunities and nature of the debate, the most effective activity may range from widespread public mobilisation to expert engagement by representative civil society organisations, or some include some mixture of approaches.

Acting locally and globally

Education policy-making, financing and planning is generally decided at national level, and national governments remain the primary duty-bearer of the right to education, while delivery happens at local (school) level. Nevertheless, there is a strong interdependence between national decision-making and implementation, and global debates and policy frameworks. Global agreements – such as the EFA framework – can help to focus political attention, and often play a role in driving donor priorities in donor-dependent countries. They can also be a useful tool to drive national accountability and publicity that helps to prompt government action. For such agreements to have an impact on the ground, they must have a strong national constituency demanding their implementation and using them in this way.

The role of the Global Campaign for Education

This understanding of how change can and should be achieved in terms of realising the right to education – of how to win the necessary changes in public policy and financing and ensure that they are implemented and sustained effectively – explains the existence and structure of the GCE movement. The GCE movement aims to inform and mobilise citizens around the right to education through broad-based civil society coalitions operating at national level and reinforced by regional and global organisations and alliances. At the same time, GCE members come together as a movement of civil society organisations in a global platform based on shared values, priorities and goals, in order to influence global debates and agreements and inter-governmental organisations, including multilateral banks. GCE seeks to ensure that, by being part of a global

movement, its members maximise their impact in their own political contexts.

GCE is unique in being a global movement of independent, nationally-led civil society coalitions (in more than 80 countries); regional networks and organisations; and international alliances and organisations – all committed to the right to education. Together, our members bring together many thousands of organisations – including NGOs, community organisations, teacher organisations, parents’ associations, youth groups, women’s organisations, associations of people with disabilities, and many more – and represent millions of individuals across the world. GCE’s collective policy positions are directed, informed and approved by its membership. The approach of GCE and its members may range from mass campaigning with the public, to political engagement by civil society advocates; but in all cases it will be rooted in the perspectives and priorities of citizens at the grassroots.

1.4 GCE structure

GCE as a whole is a broad-based movement, encompassing a huge variety of civil society organisations active in the education sector. Recognising the importance and interaction of national, regional and global levels, our membership includes civil society organisations and networks at all these levels.

GCE is both a diverse movement in itself, and one that works to ensure that its members at national level are also broad-based. GCE’s members at national level are all coalitions of civil society organisations, with the members of these national coalitions ranging in number from a dozen to more than 100. GCE is committed to supporting national member coalitions to themselves act as plural and representative structures. Moreover, a number of GCE’s regional and international members are themselves alliances and federations, who collectively represent or work with millions of citizens around the world.

GCE as a movement recognises its own diversity, and this strategy acknowledges the different ways in which national, regional or international members, each operating in their own context as well as operating as a collective, will engage with and contribute to the work of GCE as a whole, in pursuit of our shared aims.

GCE’s collective work as a movement encompasses collaboration and networking for shared learning and to strengthen impact at national and regional levels, as well as collective work at global level to influence international frameworks and debates.

GCE’s governance structure is as set out in its constitution:

- The supreme governing authority of GCE is the **World Assembly** of all its members, voting on an equal basis.
- The World Assembly elects a **Board** to provide oversight and strategic direction to GCE, with Board members elected on a constituency basis, representing different regions, international organisations, international child and youth rights alliances, and the teaching profession. It also elects a President to act as the lead spokesperson and political representative of GCE.
- The GCE **Secretariat** is made up of staff, accountable to the Board, who are responsible for implementing the strategic vision of the World Assembly and facilitating the work of the movement.

PART 2: The Global Campaign for Education’s context & vision

2.1 The current context for GCE’s work

At the time of GCE’s founding in 1999, there was a strong consensus within the education community that education was to a large extent suffering from political neglect, and needed to be given greater priority by decision-makers. Within civil society, this perspective provided a large part of the momentum towards forming the Global Campaign for Education, with founding members seeing GCE as a means to strengthen their own voices and the profile of their various campaigns in favour of education rights. Governments, civil society – including teachers – and other stakeholders agreed in 2000 on the Dakar Framework For Action on Education For All, which set out a broad agreement on the nature of the challenge; that is, the need to secure lifelong education from early childhood (EFA goal 1), through universal primary education (goal 2), and skills

and youth education (goal 3) to adult literacy (goal 4), ensuring that this education was equally available to girls and women (goal 5) and of good quality (goal 6). While the Millennium Development Goals narrowed this agenda to just universal primary education (often interpreted as enrolment) and gender parity, there was nevertheless a degree of consensus around the broader agenda. There was also a growing recognition of the role and importance of civil society in achieving education goals, reflected in the explicit statements about civil society participation included in the Dakar Framework.

Although there has been progress since then, this global agreement has not succeeded in making the right to education a genuine reality. The number of children who are not in primary and lower secondary school has fallen by more than 80 million (even as populations have risen), while the gap in enrolment between girls and boys has narrowed, particularly at primary level. However, there remains a long way to go: there are still 121 million children out of primary or lower-secondary school, and those who are excluded are disproportionately girls, children with disabilities, the poorest children and those who are most marginalised and excluded in society. Meanwhile, 758 million adults cannot read and write, and education systems in many countries are so poor that millions of children who are in school are not even learning the basics of reading and writing, let alone acquiring the richer set of skills, knowledge and values that make up a quality education.

The failure to solve these difficult challenges points, in part, to a continuing lack of the necessary political will and of adequate and well-used investment for the whole agenda. National frameworks, action and financing – from both governments and donors – have not always been commensurate with the promises made, or with the full scale and breadth of the challenge. Some elements of the global policy frameworks could themselves be seen as contributing to failures. The biggest progress has been on primary enrolment and gender parity at primary level, the focus of the two education-related MDGs; the concentration of policy and financing on the narrower MDG agenda can be seen as contributing to the comparative neglect of early childhood care and education, lifelong learning, adult literacy and – crucially – the quality of education. Moreover, there are some serious concerns – such as educational equity – that were not fully taken account of in any of the previous frameworks, and which have become more marked over the last 15 years.

In the face of these persistent challenges to realising the right to education and the education for all agenda in full, there are areas both of consensus and of difference – even if just difference in emphasis – within the education community. There is growing consensus, for example, on the role of civil society in policy debates in the education sector, a shift to which GCE has contributed. There are differences, however, in the framing and understanding of education that is emphasised in different contexts: education as a right in itself, an enabling right, and the means to achieve the “full development of the human personality”, or education as a means to employability and economic growth. Other differences relate to approaches; for example, there is a difference in emphasis between improving quality through a focus on test scores as an accountability mechanism, or through proper investment in the inputs needed, such as quality teachers, learning environments, materials and curricula.

In this context, the GCE membership as a whole has identified various issues as crucial in framing the context for our work as a movement over the coming four years. They are not all discrete and separate issues; on the contrary, they are strongly interlinked. Three of the broader social and political trends that are particularly relevant to education relate to privatisation of public space; inequality; and conflict and disasters as a determinant of educational access and quality. In terms of the nature and outcomes of education, quality is clearly a paramount concern, and has lagged behind access as a focus of effective intervention. Nevertheless, the access problem is still not solved, in inequality, again, is a major driver of this. The major systemic issues that underlie some of these problems – or their solutions – are education systems and governance, the extent and nature of data-collection and information-sharing, education financing, and the space for civil society and citizen voices in the education sector.

The privatisation of public space, and more specifically the drive towards **privatisation in and of education**, is of key concern to the GCE movement. Non-state providers have long been a feature of education systems all around the world, with NGOs and religious organisations, for example, educating huge numbers of children, often without charging fees. In recent years, however, there has been a qualitative and quantitative shift in private provision and the engagement of the private sector in education. This has been marked by a

growing view that the for-profit private sector can provide a route to quality education for all – including the poorest – and has also involved an expansion in the phenomenon of low-cost private schools, as well as a shift towards a pro-private orientation in the discourse of many donors and some governments. Such a shift links to weaknesses and gaps in public systems and perceptions of the state having a shrinking role in education, as well as to increasing corporate influence in the education sector. Despite good practice in some public systems (and clear evidence of the causes of problems in others), there are a number of private and governmental actors actively promoting greater privatisation in and of education. GCE does not oppose private schools, but is concerned that widespread privatisation of education, and in particular the growing influence of for-profit providers, is undermining access, equity, inclusion, education with a public purpose, and a rights-based understanding of education.

Any organisation focused on achievement of the right to education must take into account the fact and the implications of **increasing inequality** over recent decades. Recent research, including from the IMF, has demonstrated the massive social and economic impact of such inequality, including weaker democratic structures, social instability, economic underperformance and financial crashes. The links between education and inequality are multiple, critical and iterative. Broader social equality – in terms of gender, income, ethnic identity, disability etc. – have a huge impact on opportunities to access quality education: as access has expanded over the last 15 years these inequalities have, if anything, grown more marked: children in conflict-affected areas have considerably reduced access to education; an estimated one third of the children out of school have a disability; and poor rural girls are significantly less likely to complete education than wealthy, urban boys. Yet education itself can be a means to overcome these broader inequalities: equality in education has an equalising effect, promoting social mobility, creating equal opportunities and combating discrimination. This “virtuous circle” requires a sustained and substantive focus on ensuring that education itself is provided in an equal and equalising manner. Where this is not the case, massive disparities in educational access and quality will persist and in turn reinforce and exacerbate inequality of wealth, income and opportunity. In a context in which growing inequality should be a major focus of public policy, therefore, education should be prioritised as both a target and a tool of progressive public policy.

Conflict and disaster are increasingly significant determinant of educational outcomes. In many regions, conflict is escalating and the impact is felt through displacement of families and teachers; destruction of school facilities; disruption of government systems; and through brutal direct attacks on schools, learners and teachers. Moreover, some governments use the threat of insecurity to massively expand military budgets, including at the expense of education spending. Natural disasters – including climate change and disease epidemics – can have severe effects, in terms of destruction, disruption and displacement. Such disasters have a particularly catastrophic impact in countries with poor state systems, where the impact of environmental events or disease outbreaks can be deep and enduring. Many children become disabled as a result of conflict or natural disaster, which can jeopardise their access to quality education. Conflict-affected, fragile and disaster- and disease-affected states or regions need distinctive approaches and targeted financial support to ensure that education – which itself is a crucial contribution to peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction and resilience – is able to continue and/or resume during and after periods of conflict or disaster; that education budgets are not just protected but augmented; that schools, learners and teachers are protected from attack, from militarisation, and from insecurity; and that education systems are developed to build resilience to disaster and adapt to the consequences of conflict and disaster.

The GCE movement has long been deeply concerned about the poor **quality of education** in many countries, as evidenced by repeated GCE policy resolutions on this issue throughout its history. Despite clear commitments dating back at least to Jomtien in 1990, many governments have failed to put in place the financing and the policies necessary to create quality education – including a well-trained, professional teacher workforce, appropriate curricula and the necessary infrastructure and tools, and safe, secure and inclusive learning environments. A particular problem has been the failure to ensure sufficient, well-trained, motivated teachers, with clear structures for professional development and who are equitably deployed. These gaps explain the fact that today, over one hundred million children are in school without even learning to read and write, let alone acquiring the more complex set of skills, values and knowledge that are integral to a quality education, and that can lead to decent work, responsible citizenship, sustainable development

and a culture of peace and human rights. These failings have in recent years given rise to much more discussion of education quality – but this has far too embraced a dangerously reductive concept of quality, focused narrowly on reading and writing outcomes, and even more narrowly on increased testing as the key intervention to improve quality. This can serve to distort both the outcomes it seeks to achieve, and the broader purpose of education. GCE understands education not just as preparing young people to pass tests, or to enter employment. Rather, quality education needs to be clearly defined in terms of an education that supports the development of all individuals – building critical and political skills, recognising diverse identities, goals and needs – as well as one that helps to build a more equal and just world. There also needs to be a practical focus on the interventions that will deliver such an education, including, crucially, effective and comprehensive training of professional teachers in pedagogy, classroom management, child rights and inclusion, as well as on other key inputs. This should also include stronger emphasis on addressing other socio-economic factors – such as poverty or nutrition – in a comprehensive way. Furthermore, there must be more attention on equity in quality: systems in which some learners have well-trained teachers, access to ICT, excellent learning materials and broad curricula, while others have none of those, contributes to unequal societies.

One of the key systemic issues behind poor quality education – and contributing to some extent to the privatising trend – is the existence in too many countries of **weak public governance and systems** in the education sector. This is in itself a new development; but public systems that are expected to provide quality education for all are in some cases showing the strain much more clearly than systems of 20 years ago that only provided for a minority. There is a significant disconnect between the formal role of states as the duty-bearers of the right to education – the actors who have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education – and their actual, practical willingness and capacity to meet that responsibility. Governments often make commitments, but lack the mechanisms to implement them. This can be an issue both of governance and of systems, ranging from lack of transparency, to poor management, to corruption. In many countries, the quality and capacity of decentralised systems is crucial but far from adequate.

Remedying these problems requires increased, better targeted and better managed financing of the right to education. Despite the commitments made in 2000, the **global financing gap for education** remains a scandal to be addressed. The annual gap for the achievement of the SDG4 targets for pre-primary, primary and secondary education is \$39bn. The last 15 years have seen a significant shift in the sources of education finance. Since the financial crash of 2008, donor development assistance has fallen; but in this time donor financing for education has fallen deeper and faster than aid to other sectors. But at the same time, many governments in the South have been expanding domestic financing for education, and the 2014 Replenishment Event of the Global Partnership for Education, for example, saw significant additional commitments being made, far outweighing the scale of donor commitments. Nevertheless, the scale of financing is still not adequate and many governments are limited by weak revenue bases, indicating the need for tax reform and progressive revenue-raising, as well as, in many countries, a need for continued and expanded donor funds. Moreover, it is not just the scale of financing that is the concern, but its use: too much education financing is still not being spent to maximise quality and equity, or in a transparent and responsive manner. In this context, the financing available for civil society engagement on education is also of concern; the international community has not sufficiently supported national civil society, although their participation and oversight is essential to ensuring investment is well-directed and effectively used.

The **collection of and access to data and information in the education sector** is a critical determinant of both policy focus and funding. At present, global development actors, including the UN and – in the education sector – the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), are greatly interested in the idea of a “data revolution”. Yet at the same time, some governments still devote very little resource and attention to research, data collection or dissemination of information. As this changes, it is important for civil society to recognise that this is not simply a technical issue but a political issue: what is measured is what gets attention. Moreover, when it comes to high-stakes testing, for example, the act of emphasising certain metrics can have a hugely distorting effect not just on national policy and funding, but on classroom and school practice. This creates a need for civil society to engage with debates around data and measurements; to be calling for the development and use of indicators – on quality, on equity, etc. – that can help to inform and drive education

policy towards achieving the right to education; to argue against the over-reliance on metrics that promote reductive understandings of complex educational issues (like quality); and to be active in citizen-led data collection and qualitative research, and dissemination of findings.

GCE and its individual members cannot operate and deliver on their mandate of making governments responsive and accountable without **political space for civil society in the education sector**. Civil society should be able to access not just decision-makers but decision-making at all levels. Yet in too many countries, such access is denied, particularly to national civil society organisations. In a number of countries, governments have taken more aggressive action to limit civil society activity, from restrictions on funding, 'political activity' or protest, to direct criminalisation of civil society activity. Civil society always needs to choose the space in which it operates, for example judging the effectiveness of intervention in 'invited spaces' as opposed to 'claimed spaces', weighing possibilities of greater access to decision-making against the potential to be neutralised through the illusion of influence. But where governments are going to the extent of repressing or criminalising civil society voices and activity, resistance supported by cross-national pressure can play a role in opening any space at all.

2.2 The vision and priorities of the GCE movement for 2015 to 2019:

The GCE movement has agreed the following vision to guide its work to mid-2019: **GCE will influence governments to take the actions necessary to guarantee equitable quality education for all, on a lifelong basis, through effective and accountable provision of public education.**

In relation this vision, and in light of the current context, the movement has identified six strategic focus areas:

1. Quality education

GCE intends to contribute to an increased political and policy focus on quality education and the policies and resources that are necessary to create and sustain quality education. GCE will argue for a vision of quality education with rights and social justice at its core, and that embraces process of education, teaching and learning along with outcomes. Our campaigns to achieve quality education will prioritise teacher issues at all levels, calling for investment in and policies to ensure well-trained, well-motivated professional teacher workforces. We will also campaign for curricula that are relevant to learners, that incorporate mother-tongue instruction and cross-cultural dialogue, and that contribute to the knowledge, understanding and promotion of human rights, sustainable development, peace-building and global citizenship; the creation of safe, supportive, flexible and inclusive learning environments and adequate materials; and the appropriate use of formative assessment to measure learners' progress and inform teaching and learning. This includes quality education from early childhood to adulthood.

2. Equity, non-discrimination and inclusion in education and through education

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, not simply in relation to specific excluded groups. Our campaigning will embrace inequity on the basis of identity - gender, disability, ethnicity, etc.; on the basis of wealth or income; as a result of location, migrant status; or on other grounds, and we will call for governments to implement policies and programmes that actively target discrimination and promote inclusion. Our aim is to contribute to closing the massive disparities in education, ensuring that all learners are able to receive an education of good quality.

3. Strong, public systems, leadership and governance in the education sector

GCE will advocate for the state to effectively and responsively take up its role as the primary duty-bearer in education. This will include a focus on highlighting the negative impacts of privatisation of education and particularly the diversion of public funds into profit-making private providers; on reinforcing and monitoring

state capacity and systems to implement commitments; on demonstrating best practices in strengthening public education; and on advocacy targeted at improving governance within the education sector.

4. Financing for public education

GCE will continue its long-standing focus on financing for public education, calling for increased domestic financing for education, both as a result of allocating a minimum of 20% of budgets (and actual spending) to education, and through 6% of GDP being spent on education (seeking legislation to embed this where possible). We will connect with broader campaigns (e.g. Global Alliance for Tax Justice), promoting progressive expansion of the domestic revenue base, including through progressive taxation, particularly challenging tax avoidance by multinational corporations. We will call on donors to meet a target of devoting at least 10% of quality aid to basic education, using harmonised/aligned modes and prioritising countries with the greatest needs. We will hold both governments and donors accountable for the financing pledges they have made, including in the context of GPE replenishment, demystifying budgets and tracking spending down to school level, challenging misuse of resources (linking with others such as the International Budget Partnership). This will also include a focus on how sensitively, appropriately, transparently and effectively education spending is allocated, calling for progressive allocation to redress disadvantage, aid to strengthen public systems, and avoiding any investments entrench or exacerbate inequality.

5. Transparency, accountability and the role of civil society in the education sector

Fundamental to GCE's vision of an effective education sector are the concepts of transparency, accountability and participation. We will work to demand greater transparency and accessible sharing of information by governments, including budget and spending data; this will include work to ensure that relevant and appropriate data is collected and shared, and that this is complemented by civil society research and tracking. At the same time, we will be seeking to make use of and expand the space for participation of civil society and citizens at all levels – particularly learners (children, youth and adult), parents, teachers and others affected – in debate, decision-making and evaluation of government performance, challenging excessive influence of donors and the private sectors in education policy and the marginalisation or criminalisation of civil society. This will involve building important alliances between, for example, civil society groups and teachers' unions, media organisations, government departments, parliamentarians and others, in order to increase responsiveness, accountability and transparency. GCE needs to support expanded funds for civil society activity in the education sector, and support members to increase the capacity of their members to gather and share information.

6. Education in contexts of conflict or disaster

GCE will seek to expand its focus on education in contexts of conflict or disaster, drawing attention to the need to invest in education in emergencies, to adapt to and mitigate the impact of conflict or disaster situations, to build resilience, to protect learners, teachers and schools from attack. Our work will also aim to ensure that interventions to secure education in emergency situations do not ignore or bypass the participation and voices of citizens: there needs to be greatly expanded space for the voice of civil society and in particular of learners and parents in conflict and disaster situations. We will work with appropriate allies and experts, linking GCE's civil society membership to relevant international actors as well as ensuring relationships with key domestic actors such as tribal, religious and community leaders.

2.3 Scope

GCE remains committed to the lifelong right to education, from early childhood to adulthood, and will maintain this throughout our work on this strategic plan. We have a constitutional commitment to 'basic' education, and interpret that, in this context, to include early childhood care and education, primary education, secondary education, adult literacy, and adult skills and vocational training. We remain committed to the broadest possible expansion of education.

In terms of geographical scope, GCE's historical focus has been largely on education in the 'global South' (Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America & the Caribbean, the Middle East, etc.). GCE notes, however, that many of the key debates with which we will be engaging in the 2015-2019 period – including the role of the state,

issues of equity in education, approaches to guaranteeing quality – have resonance not just within these regions, but globally. GCE’s members in Europe and North America are committed to exploring how to build a more truly global nature for GCE. While the extent of this will vary between countries, some will work on expanding their membership and their links to encompass domestic education issues, a number will continue and expand their work on development education in schools in their own countries, and all will continue the current advocacy focus on their governments as actors in education in the South.

PART 3: Realising the vision: approach and activities

GCE’s key approach to achieving this vision will involve strengthening itself as a vibrant, effective, democratic civil society movement.

3.1 How we will work as a movement to achieve this vision

GCE remains unique – not just in the education sector but in any sector – in the extent and nature of its membership, bringing together independent, nationally-led civil society coalitions from across the world with regional and global alliances and non-governmental organisations. The GCE movement will seek to reinforce and deepen this nature, as a priority building and maintaining the following characteristics:

- Diversity of voices within the membership as a whole, and within member coalitions, including learners, parents, teachers and those most excluded from education, and a democratic structure to ensure they are represented – valuing diversity in the context of collective and coordinated action;
- Strong links between national, regional and global levels, including linkages both ways between community realities and global policy debates and decisions;
- Solidarity among the membership, allowing for collective work and cross-border alliances;
- Collaboration and synergy between members working in the same locations or on the same issues;
- Extensive capacity and credibility on priority issues and on advocacy approaches;
- The ability to mobilise members at the grassroots, prioritising widespread citizen and civil society mobilisation in members’ countries over deployment of high-profile individuals in global spaces;
- A culture of learning and exchange;
- Recognition of diversity in the contexts and capacities of members to take part in political dialogue, and taking action to address this; and
- Sufficient sustainable financing to guarantee independence.

In terms of how we will work together as a movement, this will involve the following actions:

- Establishing communities of practice on our focus issues, to support member learning, exchange and the development of expertise; these will be formed on the basis of interest, and seeking regional and language diversity;
- Regular sharing of information by members, through the Secretariat and through GCE-supported platforms, to build a shared knowledge base within our movement to support our individual and collective activity; GCE will manage communication flow in all its five official languages; and
- Building our membership to reach all education stakeholders, particularly those that may be currently under-represented in the membership at present.

Section 3.5 includes specific objectives for the GCE Secretariat that encompass support to these areas.

3.2 Collective work as a movement to achieve these objectives

Global Action Week for Education

Since 2003, the GCE movement has led a week of campaign action focused on aspects of the right to education and the Education For All goals, held each year in late April around the anniversary of the 2000 Dakar World Education Forum. Focusing on themes including girls’ education (2003 and 2011), trained teachers for all (2006 and 2013), quality education (2008), adult literacy and lifelong learning (2009), and disability and inclusive education (2014), Global Action Week has proved to be an extremely important

vehicle for building the civil society movement for the right to education, for engaging policy-makers and the public, for shifting the debate on crucial education issues, and for achieving impact in terms of concrete changes at national level in education policy, practice and financing. The 2015 evaluation of Global Action Week highlights the aspects and examples of this impact.

Over the last 12 years, Global Action Week activities have been led by GCE members in around 100 countries, and have ranged from high-level forms, to school-based events around the country, to cultural events, to letter-writing campaigns, to mass public rallies. Many engage high-level politicians. Millions of people worldwide have taken part in individual Global Action Week mass actions such as the World's Biggest Lesson (2008) or 'Back to School' days for politicians (2006). While led by the GCE movement, Global Action Week has received crucial recognition and support from other allies, most notably UNESCO and the office of the United Nations Secretary-General, adding greatly to its profile and impact.

During this strategic plan period, the GCE movement will continue to organise a week of action on education, renamed as Global Action Week for Education. By acting in coordination during Global Action Week for Education – presenting policy-makers with specific demands and mobilising citizens all over the world to take part in national activities and a mass global action – the GCE movement and allies will help to drive national and global debates and action on key education issues. Global Action Week for Education will remain the key moment for citizen and civil society campaigning action on education, all around the world. The GCE movement's campaigning on the Global Action Week for Education issues will not, however, be limited to this one week, but will continue throughout the year, supported by briefings, updates and alerts to opportunities.

During this strategic plan period, the GCE movement will organise Global Action Week for Education under the overall theme "Free, quality, inclusive public education for all", which reflects our broad policy priorities for this period. Each year, Global Action Week for Education will focus on a different aspect of this theme (e.g. free and public education; financing; securing quality in education; equity and inclusion, etc.). The membership will vote in the previous year on the specific focus, from a shortlist proposed by the GCE Board; this gives the movement the opportunity to take advantage of opportunities, or respond to challenges, that may arise during this period. Some national coalitions might also choose to pursue a slightly different focus within the overall theme, given national contexts and priorities, and the materials will be sufficiently flexible for this. The dates will continue to mark the anniversary of the Dakar World Education Forum in late April, unless or until determined otherwise by an agreement of the membership

The GCE Secretariat will continue to coordinate a Global Action Week for Education working group each year, and to produce relevant campaign materials and resources (see part 3.5). The GCE Secretariat and Board will seek funds for dedicated staff to support this important global campaign action.

Tracking the delivery of global commitments

Relating back to the founding purpose of GCE, the GCE movement affirms its collective commitment to track delivery of commitments made in global frameworks: this will include both the commitments in the post-2015 agenda, and the pledges made in the context of GPE replenishment. GCE will not seek to duplicate the work of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report, but rather seek to fill specific gaps where independent civil society tracking will add value. This work will encompass both national work, and coordinated work by the movement as a whole, facilitated and supported by the Secretariat. It may include, for example, periodic global civil society reports on progress in implementing post-2015 frameworks or GPE pledges (depending on resources and capacity). Within the overall post-2015 framework, GCE's emphasis will be on the vision and the six focus issues identified above.

3.3 Engagement of GCE with other stakeholders

As the global civil society movement on education, GCE provides a crucial platform for coordinated engagement of its members with other actors and stakeholders in the education sector. This includes

intergovernmental bodies as well as other civil society movements and non-governmental organisations outside the education sector. Of course, many GCE members have their own direct relationships with key institutions (such as UNESCO), with ongoing and valuable engagements. But given that there is often limited space for civil society presence and voice in global policy spaces, GCE will, during this strategic plan period, provide a means for coordinated input to and feedback from key forums, institutions and processes.

During this period, this will include a mixture of:

- GCE representatives taking part in processes or forums with a commitment to consult with and inform the wider membership;
- GCE Secretariat facilitating processes for participation of elected or nominated civil society representatives in particular bodies;
- Individual members with access to particular spaces sharing information with and, where possible, seeking input from the broader GCE membership, facilitated by the Secretariat;
- GCE Secretariat supporting and coordinating member engagement in more open processes and forums, for example by alerting to consultation opportunities; seeking funding to support member participation; and coordinating preparatory planning discussions and follow-up discussions.

Noting that the international education architecture may change – including as a result of post-2015 agreements – the types of bodies with which GCE as a collective body will seek to engage are:

- **Global multi-stakeholder governance structures in the education sector:** space in such structures tends to be limited, and GCE will seek to hold a place to represent its membership and civil society. For example, GCE will seek to maintain a high-level representative on the SDG4/Education 2030 Steering Committee, who will share information and opportunities for input with the GCE membership and broader civil society constituency. (Note, at present this requires election to the UNESCO Coordinating Committee of EFA CCNGO.)
- **Global funding partnerships for education:** again, space tends to be limited, and GCE will support civil society seat-holders to act as effective and consultative representatives. For example, the GCE Secretariat will continue to facilitate the election of civil society representatives to the Board of the Global Partnership for Education, and will increase Secretariat support to these representatives, including by maintaining mailing lists and other mechanisms to share information with civil society organisations.
- **Global monitoring initiatives:** the GCE Secretariat will maintain a relationship with global mechanisms to monitor agreed education goals (for example, the Global Education Monitoring Report), and share news and opportunities for input with members.
- **UNESCO and other UN agencies:** GCE will retain formal relations with UNESCO, as well as informal connections around, for example, Global Action Week for Education. The Secretariat will alert members to opportunities for engagement.
- **Relevant NGO campaigns or initiatives outside the GCE movement:** where relevant and in line with GCE vision and policies, GCE will build relationships with other campaigns and initiatives, sharing information and updates on opportunities with members.

GCE will also seek to support and link to engagement with regional bodies, while noting that regional networks remain the lead partners in these relationships. Specific Secretariat activity to support these areas of work is described in section 3.5. All activities are dependent on available resources.

3.4 The contribution of GCE members

Outside the collective work that GCE carries out as a movement, national, regional and international members are committed to undertake their own work that contributes to the overall achievement of the objectives of the movement. Even while this work may be distinct in many ways, by sharing, exchanging, learning and linking, each member of GCE also contributes to and reinforces the work of others, and of the movement as a whole.

National member coalitions will:

- monitor their own governments' commitments and put pressure on them through advocacy and campaigns;
- consult and manage debates among their own members, and building public awareness;
- contribute to global discussions and debates, including by building and sharing a strong base of evidence relating to what is happening in their country; and
- build strong and representative coalitions at national level.

Regional member networks (outside their own organisational objectives) will:

- support members and/or affiliates, as relevant, to carry out national advocacy and campaigning;
- monitor regional debate and decision-making, sharing information throughout the GCE movement; and
- ensure that the voices and perspectives of their region are heard and represented in GCE's global advocacy, including by working with the GCE Secretariat to support the engagement of members or organisations in their region with global debate and policy processes.

International member networks and organisations (outside their own organisational objectives) will:

- provide support to national coalitions (funding, strategic advice, programme links, etc.);
- support and encourage national affiliates, chapters or members to link with GCE coalitions in their countries;
- provide technical support and inputs to the movement as a whole (policy analysis capacity, research evidence, expertise in specific areas, etc.);
- provide some access to global forums and debates for the movement;
- make financial contributions; and
- mobilise their own members, supporters and constituencies in support of shared GCE objectives.

3.5 Role and focus of the GCE Secretariat

The GCE Secretariat is accountable to the membership through the GCE Board. This section sets out the operational focus areas for the Secretariat, which are designed so that it can best support the movement to realise its vision and approach, and bring about change in the strategic focus areas according to GCE's theory of how that change will happen.

Specific activities will be determined on an annual basis and approved by the Board, dependent on the context and – importantly – the resources available. The work described here includes management and implementation of the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF), which cuts across all focus areas.

1. Strengthen the movement-based character of GCE by supporting networking, communication and learning between members.

The relevant activity areas will include:

- Management of GCE tools and platforms for communication, sharing and exchange, in all five GCE languages, including the website, discussion forum, blog, members' mails and GCE Network News.
- Support to GCE Communities of Practice, related to the strategic focus areas, to be facilitated by GCE members.
- Coordination of the sharing of learning, evidence and best practice, in particular in relation to CSEF.
- Support to deepen and strengthen the diversity and reach of the GCE membership, both at global level and within national coalitions.
- Organisation and preparation of the GCE World Assembly.

2. Support effective and high-profile cross-national campaigns and advocacy on GCE strategic focus areas.

The relevant activity areas will include:

- Coordination of Global Action Week for Education on an annual basis, including coordination of the working group and production of materials.
- Support to ongoing advocacy through the year on the GEW theme.
- Where prioritised by members, coordinating advocacy towards or engagement with global targets (e.g. GPE) or collective advocacy to influence the global debate on a specific issue.

- Providing support to GCE representatives in collective representation on global bodies or steering committees, and facilitating the participation of members in global policy spaces.

3. Support expanded technical capacity and knowledge within the GCE movement

The relevant activity areas will include:

- Working with the membership to produce policy briefings or papers on priority focus issues.
- Carrying out policy analysis.
- Providing learning tools and handbooks on education issues or advocacy approaches, drawing on member experience.
- Other technical support or capacity-building, particularly in the context of CSEF.

4. Support the sustainability of the GCE movement by securing and – where relevant – managing funds

The relevant activity areas will include:

- In the context of CSEF, the Secretariat should secure and manage funding for many member coalitions for the period 2015-2019.
- Outside the context of CSEF, the Secretariat will seek to work with GCE members to identify other potential funding sources for the movement, to support sustainability and diversification, while noting that securing such funds remains a significant challenge.