



VOTE FOR EDUCATION

Equitable, inclusive and free:

A policy update and briefing on quality education beyond 2015

A Collective Vision

Driven by a common vision of the right to education, and a shared belief in the power of education, activists have consistently advocated for the implementation of the full Education For All (EFA) agenda over the last 15 years. With this vision yet to be achieved, in the last two years of post-2015 negotiations, the Global Campaign for Education has advocated for a broad, rights-based, overarching education goal within the post-2015 development agenda and the continuation of an aligned, revitalised Education For All framework, fully integrated with this goal.

Opportunities for influence

During 2015, education activists have their final opportunity to influence the content of the post-2015 agenda for education, in particular through influencing national government positions. The key declarations to influence are:

- **The post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** these encompass a broad development agenda, and a draft set of goals has been under discussion for some time; Goal 4 is explicitly about education, calling on governments to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The final SDGs will be adopted at a special UN summit in New York in September 2015.
- **The post-2015 Framework For Action on education:** this will be fully aligned with the education goal and targets from the SDGs (Goal 4), but will go into more detail on the education sector architecture for governance and monitoring of the goal and targets, and on strategies to secure implementation. UNESCO is leading this process and the framework has been drafted by the EFA Steering Committee; the initial Framework will be set out in the declaration of the World Education Forum in Korea in May 2015, and the final version will be adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015, once the SDGs have been adopted.

The indicators that will be tracked to measure achievement of the post-2015 goal and targets are not likely to be finalised until 2016.

Education must be at the core of a credible global development framework.

Education is a fundamental human right and a public good, key to ending poverty and building an equitable and sustainable future. In the United Nations' 'My World' worldwide survey of citizens' post-2015 priorities, it was the top-rated issue for all demographic groups and in all parts of the world. In the court of public opinion, education is the most important issue for the post-2015 agenda. The post-2015 agenda must not fail these expectations.

Quality, rights-based education empowers individuals, strengthens communities and is fundamental to the achievement of other development objectives. It is transformative, and provides people with the critical knowledge, abilities and skills that are needed to question, conceptualise and solve problems that occur both locally and globally, and to contribute actively to the sustainable and democratic development of society.

Post-2015 education goals must affirm existing human rights obligations and agreements already reached by the education community.

States have endorsed the existing human rights obligation to free, quality and equitable education through the ratification of many treaties and conventions. The post-2015 agenda must not regress from this. Furthermore, the new education goal, targets and framework must be grounded in the negotiated agreements of the representatives of education stakeholders worldwide, including education ministers and ministries, civil society, teacher unions and the private sector. These agreements are captured in the [Muscat Agreement](#) – agreed by the Global EFA Meeting and the EFA Steering Committee – and the outcome documents from regional EFA consultations held by UNESCO.¹

Quality education requires quality inputs and processes.

Every student must be taught by a qualified and well-supported teacher, and learn in a safe and inclusive educational environment with adequate infrastructure, facilities and resources regardless of where they live, including in conflict and humanitarian emergencies. Quality processes and practices are needed to ensure that children leave school with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to be active members of their society and contribute to resolving the local, national and global challenges of the 21st century.

Transformative education is equitable education.

The post-2015 education goal within the Sustainable Development Goals must include concrete steps to overcome all forms of discrimination, including those based on disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation and/or socio-economic status.

Governments must take responsibility.

Education is a recognised fundamental human right, and governments are duty-bearers. In particular, governments have a responsibility to provide sufficient funding for equitable inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all, including through fair and progressive taxation.

¹ The final statements from the EFA regional conferences can be accessed online [here](#) (Asia Pacific), [here](#) (Latin America and Caribbean), [here](#) (Middle East), [here](#) (Africa) and [here](#) (Europe and North America)

SPECIFIC ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION AT THIS STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

1. Secure ambitious, rights-based frameworks for education post-2015

Both key elements of the post-2015 framework for education – the Framework for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals – must be strong, rights-based and ambitious in their aspirations, and clear in their concrete commitments.

The World Education Forum to be held in Incheon, Korea, in May will lead to the development of a Framework for Action (to be finalised in November after the adoption of the SDGs). A declaration will also be made at the end of the Forum. Both documents must be ambitious, not regress from existing human rights commitments and commit to a strong role of the State. The document must be aspirational and rally political will for its implementation.

As in 2000 when the MDGs were adopted, governments intend to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals through a declaration at the special United Nations Summit in September. The declaration will outline the rationale, commitments and priorities of the new sustainable development agenda. It is essential that the declaration includes a commitment to the right to education for all as well as recognition of education as a prerequisite and catalyst of sustainable development.

2. Ensure ambitious education targets

Two of the targets in the draft Goal 4 of the SDGs are expressed as percentages: the percentage of young people and adults who have relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (4.3); and the percentage of young people and adults achieving literacy and numeracy (4.7) – without saying what these percentages should be. They are simply expressed as “x percent”. GCE feels that these “x percent” targets must be replaced with absolute targets – that is, a target of reaching ALL young people and adults. This is in line with a proposal made by the EFA Steering Committee.

While there are elements of the draft goal that should be strengthened (see also the EFA [Global Monitoring Report briefing](#)), the language is the result of a long process of inter-governmental deliberations and negotiations, to which civil society was able to contribute. Given this, the most realistic chance of making progress and avoiding losing the whole framework is to focus on improvement of these “x percent” targets rather than calling for more wholesale change.

3. Ensure strong, relevant and comprehensive indicators

As governments move towards the agreement of the goal and targets, the selection of indicators becomes important. The indicators will drive implementation, and selecting narrow indicators could reduce the broad vision of the goal. The choice of indicators for the SDGs is thus a major policy decision, with long-term consequences, and as such must not be left to statisticians alone.

It is essential that the process of indicator development allows space for civil society participation at all levels (global, thematic, regional and national); the global and thematic indicators should be developed in tandem.

The current process of indicator development envisages four levels of indicators:

- *Global*: Up to 120 indicators will be used to monitor the entire SDG framework of 17 goals (which currently encompass 169 targets). This therefore implies a very limited number of indicators for the education goal and its seven targets.
- *Thematic*: These will be indicators proposed by the education community for more comprehensive tracking of the education targets across countries.
- *Regional*: Additional indicators may be developed to monitor specific regional targets.
- *National*: Countries are encouraged to propose additional indicators that correspond to their national education system, plans and policy agenda.

We are calling for the indicators for the post-2015 education goal and targets to:

- Drive national action, not just provide for international benchmarking: It is essential to prioritise indicators that are understandable by finance ministers and have the potential to drive decisions to finance the implementation of policies that will contribute to achievement of SDG targets.
- Be in line with existing human rights obligations and thus include structure, process and outcome indicators. A rights-based indicator framework evaluates the enjoyment of rights by rights-holders as well as the extent to which states fulfil their obligations as duty-bearers; strong governance systems and processes are essential to ensure that outcomes are achieved.
- Include a rights-based definition of quality education: This means that education must be not only 'available' and 'accessible' for all but also 'acceptable' and 'adaptable'. From a human rights perspective, the issue of learning outcomes in education must go beyond acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. Quality education develops learners' personalities, talents and abilities to live full and satisfying lives in their societies.
- Address issues of educational inequality and include equity in all forms (especially those already part of the SDG education targets).

A first draft list of global indicators for the SDGs has been prepared by the United Nations and can be accessed [here](#). The work is led by the UN Statistical Commission, which brings together Chief Statisticians from member states. They are not education experts and may have a preference for easily collected data. In most countries education statistics are collected by the Ministry rather than the National Statistics office, which means that civil society has a key role to play in broadening the scope of the proposed education indicators and pushing for indicators that are rights-based and transformative. We encourage the participation of our members in the process of refinement of indicators. At this stage, we encourage members to schedule a meeting with your national Statistical Commission to share your concerns and suggestions, share the GCE suggestions and reiterate the need for strong civil society participation in the monitoring of the new frameworks.

The final set of indicators will be finalised only in 2016. Meanwhile, UNESCO is working on a list of thematic indicators that would complement these SDG indicators.

GCE is proposing a draft set of global and thematic education indicators drawing on the GCE movement's consensus position, additional submissions made by GCE members and other technical inputs. This is available as an [Appendix](#).

4. Ensure effective monitoring of and accountability for the Post 2015 agenda

The Millennium Development Goals suffered from the lack of a coherent and robust mechanism for monitoring and accountability. It is essential to work towards a clear mechanism for monitoring progress and holding states to account for the fulfilment of the new agenda.

A UN-established body, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), has been mandated to “conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post-2015 agenda.”

The post-2015 monitoring and accountability mechanisms should reflect the following:

- Democratic governance and recognition of civil society: governments are primarily responsible to their own citizens through oversight bodies such as parliaments. Civil society is a critical interlocutor at all levels (local, national, global etc.) and must have space to participate in decision-making forums. Rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly must be respected and a clear commitment made to reversing criminalisation of civil society.
- Meaningful tracking of progress at all levels: in line with the existence of separate indicators for tracking progress at national, regional, global and thematic levels, mechanisms for monitoring progress should exist at all levels. UNESCO should ensure a strong thematic monitoring mechanism in the education sector.
- Coherence with existing mechanisms: accountability mechanisms should draw on existing mechanisms for review of human rights obligations, like the Universal Periodic Review. In the education sector, mechanisms must build on and strengthen the EFA Global Monitoring Report, the Global Education Meeting (GEM), the EFA Steering Committee and the Collective Consultation of NGOs (CCNGO).
- Rigour and force: monitoring should not be limited to voluntary reviews, but include independent, rigorous review of States’ policy efforts and achievements, and lead to concrete action to ensure appropriate remedies and corrective action.
- Comprehensiveness: mechanisms should encompass reviews of resource allocations and international cooperation commitments, and include means to ensure accountability of the private sector in the country of operation and, where relevant, the global community.
- Clear definitions: consistent understanding and measurement requires a process to develop internationally accepted operational definitions of the key concepts that are part of global and thematic indicators.
- Capacity-building: there must be sufficient statistical and administrative capacities of education departments to ensure understanding of the frameworks, strong data collection, and effective use of data for decision-making and planning.

5. Secure financing for SDGs in general and for education in particular

Adequate resourcing is critical for the implementation of both the SDG agenda in general and education goals and targets in particular. Financing was a crucial part of the negotiations at the last Global EFA Meeting in Muscat and at recent regional consultations on EFA.

In the context of the SDGs, most of the discussions have been about raising additional revenues to fund the framework as a whole, rather than focusing on expenditure in specific sectors (including education). Spaces for influencing the financing of the new agenda are provided by the Oslo Education Financing Conference (7th July, Norway that will provide an opportunity to advocate for reinvigorated commitment to ODA) and the International Conference on Financing for Development, Addis Ababa (13-17th July, Ethiopia that will look at financing for development in totality). The latter is being preceded by [intergovernmental preparatory process of the Conference](#).

Priorities in relation to financing are:

- Push for strong emphasis on financing in the education post-2015 agenda, including both domestic financing and strong commitments on ODA. This entails reiterating standing commitments to education

financing: at least 20% of national budgets being devoted to education, and an amount equivalent to at least 6% of GDP, and 10% ODA, being allocated to basic education.

- Reiterate the need for state responsibility for ensuring financing of the new agenda. An increased role for the private (especially for-profit) sector in education runs the risk of increasing privatisation of education.
- Support larger movements in favour of adequate funding for the SDG agenda and ensure that the needs of the education community are recognised in the process; this includes supporting the tax justice movement.
- See the existing mechanisms for education financing – notably the Global Partnership for Education – strengthened and moved into alignment with the new wider framework.
- Support greater focus on equity and quality in allocations – with the new finances being allotted to improving the teaching and learning environment and ensuring that the educational investments made are equitable.
- Call for greater budgetary transparency and accountability, including the participation of civil society in the planning and budgeting process.

CONCLUSION

Much of the post-2015 agenda has been determined – in particular, the broad goal and target for education – and education activists and civil society have played a significant role in influencing this. Nevertheless, there remain significant opportunities and needs for further influence during the course of 2015. The final decisions on ambitious framing of targets, indicators, accountability and monitoring mechanisms and financing will determine whether and how the post-2015 agenda for education is implemented and achieved. In this context, there is much for civil society to fight for.

GCE-Proposed Global and Thematic Indicators

SDG Target	UN Statistics Commission Proposed Indicators and Score assigned ¹	Our proposed Global Indicators	Our proposed thematic Indicators
4.1	Percentage of children who achieve minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics at end of: (i) primary (ii) lower secondary (BAA)	Percentage of children who achieve minimum proficiency standards in nationally defined domains at end of: (i) primary (ii) lower secondary * ²	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Countries with legislation to guarantee at least nine years of free compulsory education (primary, lower secondary, higher secondary) 2. Countries with legal framework setting minimum school quality standards (primary, lower secondary, higher secondary) 3. % schools complying with these standards (primary, lower secondary, higher secondary)³ 4. Gross Intake rate at the last grade (primary, lower secondary)* 5. Attainment rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary) 6. Out-of-school rate (primary, lower secondary)* 7. Participation rate (primary, lower secondary)* 8. Percentage of over age children enrolled by grade (primary, lower secondary)* 9. Mean Years of Schooling (disaggregated to understand extent of inequality)* 10. Average out of pocket expenses per child (Primary, Lower Secondary, Higher Secondary), * 4
	Completion rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary) (AAA)	We agree with the proposed indicator*	
4.2	Early Childhood Development Index (BBB) ⁵	% of teachers in pre-primary education who are qualified according to national standards #	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Countries with legislation guaranteeing at least one year of free pre-primary education 12. Countries with a legal framework setting minimum quality standards for ECCE provisioning

¹ The UN first list of indicators for the SDGs was shared with National Statistical Commissions who rated each indicator on a scale of A to C based on feasibility, suitability and relevance on each of the three criteria. An indicator rated “AAA” has been found to be easily feasible, suitable and very relevant to measure the respective target for which it was proposed by a majority of national statistical offices (60 per cent or more). GCE proposes improvements to all indicators other than AAA rated ones.

² Items marked with an * sign must be desegregated. At the global and thematic levels this is to be done by income quintile, gender, race/ethnicity, disability, rural and urban place of residence. Additional categories may be identified at the national level. The experience of the GMR’s WIDE database could be tapped into for the same. Additionally, the extent to which the gap between the highest and lowest groups is being closed (eg. first and fifth income quintile) should be assessed.

³ Items marked with an # sign must be disaggregated by Rural and Urban globally/thematically and by province/region is desirable at the national level

⁴ Disaggregation by private and public schools may be considered

⁵ Indicators have to be understandable and easily interpretable. Indices should not be indicators as it is difficult to interpret what any change means or is due to.

	Participation in organized learning (1 year) (BAB)	<i>Participation rate in one year of pre-primary education (one year before the official primary entry age) *</i>	<p>13. % Preschools complying with these standards (R/U) #</p> <p>14. % of ECCE institutions that do not charge fees or levy indirect costs. #</p> <p>15. Percentage of children under age 5 who are developmentally on track in the following areas: language/literacy, numeracy, physical, socio-emotional and cognitive domains *</p> <p>16. Percentage of children under age 5 attending an early childhood education programme *</p>
4.3	Enrolment ratios by level and type of education (TVET and tertiary) (AAA)	Agree with the UN Stats proposal *	<p>17. Countries with legal and policy frameworks for TVET which include clear provisions to guarantee non-discrimination and support access to students from low income backgrounds</p> <p>18. % of TVET institutions meeting national standards #</p> <p>19. Tertiary gross enrolment ratio *</p> <p>20. Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15-24 year olds) *</p> <p>21. Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (25-64 year olds) *</p>
4.4	Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 12 months among 25-64 year-olds (BAB)	Percentage of young and adults receiving vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training, *	<p>22. Countries with legal framework for technical and vocational education and training, including provisions to guarantee non-discrimination (structural indicators)</p>
	Percentage of youth/adults who are computer and information Literate (BBB)		
4.5	Parity indices (female/male, urban/rural, bottom/top wealth quintile] for all indicators on this list that can be disaggregated (BBA)	Parity indices (female/male, urban/rural, bottom/top wealth quintile, race/ethnicity and disability] for all indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	<p>23. Countries with laws, policies and resourced plans that ensure the enjoyment of the right to education for all marginalised groups, without discrimination and with equal opportunities</p> <p>24. % primary students taught in their mother tongue *</p> <p>25. Per child state expenditure on education. (Primary/ Lower Secondary/ Upper Secondary) #</p>
4.6	Percentage of youth/adults proficient in literacy and numeracy Skills (BAA)	Participation rate in literacy programmes (% illiterate 25-64 year olds) *	<p>26. Countries with legal or institutional frameworks which make access to literacy and lifelong learning a fundamental right and provide for an operational framework for its implementation.</p>
	Youth/adult literacy rate (AAA)	Agrees with the UN Stats proposal*	
4.7	Percentage of 15- year old students showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience (BBB)	Percentage of teaching hours dedicated to education for sustainable development / global citizenship education/human rights and peace #	<p>27. Percentage of schools that provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education #</p> <p>28. Countries implementing the framework on the World Programme on Human Rights Education (as per UNGA resolution 59/113)</p>

	Percentage of 13-year old students endorsing values and attitudes promoting equality, trust and participation in governance (CBB)	Countries where human rights education, peace, global citizenship and education for sustainable development incorporated in education policy and curricula	
4a 1	Percentage of schools with access to (i) electricity; (ii) drinking water; and (iii) single-sex sanitation facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions) (BAA)	Percentage of schools with access to (i) electricity; (ii) drinking water; and (iii) single-sex sanitation facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions) (iv) adapted infrastructure and materials for people with disability (v) adequate pedagogical materials and learning facilities #	29. Legal framework defining minimum norms and standards for safe learning environments 30. Countries where there are mechanisms in place to investigate complains pertaining to discrimination and other violations of the right to education. 31. Percentage of schools built since 2015 with a disaster resilient location, design, and construction. # 32. Percentage of schools with (i) electricity and (ii) internet access for pedagogical purposes # 33. Percentage of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for people with disabilities # 34. Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions⁶
		Percentage of students experiencing corporal punishment, bullying, sexual abuse and discrimination *	
4 b 1	Volume of ODA flows for scholarships by sector and type of Study (BBB) ⁷		35. Total volume of ODA directed to education⁸
4.c 1	Percentage of trained teachers by level of education according to national standards (AAA)		36. Countries with legal framework regulating the status of teachers. 37. Percentage of teachers that receive free continuous professional development and support # 38. % teachers trained on pedagogy, positive discipline, inclusive education, child rights and gender equality approaches 39. % teachers receiving salary below national average wage. *# 40. Teacher attrition rate * #

⁶ May be disaggregated by region/province at the national level

⁷ GCE feels this target is not strong and meaningful enough to yield tangible results. Furthermore, much of aid based funding for scholarship has constituted shadow aid (subsidizing universities in the global north out of funds for development assistance) and risks exacerbating the problem of donors counting assistance towards disproportionately elite populations. Funds for scholarships may be tracked, but must NOT be counted as part of ODA flows, and there should certainly not be incentives to count scholarships as ODA. Data on provision of any scholarships should be disaggregated according to characteristics of the recipients, including gender, income quintile of the parents, and whether the recipient has a disability.

⁸ Any counting of the share of ODA for scholarship must be preceded by an indicator of the overall ODA value. .