

GCE 7th World Assembly

The Future of Education Re-Imagined



Image 1: Foro Dakar Honduras Representatives in the 7th GCE World Assembly

LEARNING BRIEF

Education Financing Observatory: Pilot Results - Honduras

This Learning Brief was compiled by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to share with members the critical findings identified in the Education Financing Observatory pilot project and the lessons learnt for the future rollout of the observatory. The content presented in this Learning Brief is the summary and recommendations that were generated from the presentations made by panellists and inputs from participants.

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About the webinar

On the 28th of February 2023, the GCE convened a webinar entitled ‘Education Financing Observatory: Pilot Results’. The webinar engaged GCE national and regional members, partners and other stakeholders on the findings and key lessons learnt from the implementation of the pilot project. Drawing on empirical evidence from four countries that participated in the pilot phase, namely Honduras, Georgia, Somalia and Tanzania; the webinar addressed the question of whether and how governments are investing the maximum of resources available to protect and fulfil everyone’s right to education effectively.

The webinar aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Engage GCE members with its Education Financing Observatory and share lessons and experiences from four countries where the pilot was conducted.
2. Provide evidence of the multiple ways in which the lack of adequate and sustainable financing compromises the right to education for all in general, and those traditionally excluded and marginalised from education systems.
3. Provide evidence of how the lack of investment in education concedes countries of the Global South’s possibility to achieve SDG4.
4. Provide evidence and share good practices of how GCE, specialists in the fields of education and financing, and university students can collaborate to better understand the gaps in education financing and provide recommendations for policy and advocacy work aiming to protect everyone’s right to education.

Audience: GCE national, regional and international members, partners and other stakeholders with a common interest, expertise and passion for issues related to education financing.

Background

In early 2021, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) launched the Education Financing Observatory (EFO). The overall objective of the EFO is to provide a multi-stakeholder platform to support the GCE movement with generating evidence and strategically guide the use of the evidence and knowledge to inform policy and advocacy on education financing in strengthening and delivering strong public education systems and the implementation of Education 2030 Agenda/SDG4.

In order to test the methodology detailed in the [Research Protocol](#), a pilot exercise was planned and put in place in 2022 in four countries: [Honduras](#), [Georgia](#), [Somalia](#) and [Tanzania](#). By the end of 2022, the pilot countries produced the final research report following the guide and structure provided in the [Research Protocol](#) designed by GCE. All the reports addressed the same question: *whether and how governments are investing the maximum of resources available to effectively protect and fulfil everyone's right to education.*

The pilot project was conducted bringing together three conceptual frameworks: the right to education 4A scheme, SDG4 and the 4S framework which frame the processes of data gathering and analysis focusing on the Share of national budgets that governments invests on education; the Size of budgets; the Sensitivity of public investment on education, in particular considering equity and inclusion criteria; and the Scrutiny of education budgets. This approach provides a structure for national initiatives to improve education through gathering and using strategic information; developing evidence-informed policies; scaling-up provision and use of education services; and strengthening linkages with other sectors such as academia, civil society, international donors, NGOs and other government departments. These intervention strategies all come together to try and address SD4 indicators such as the completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education), participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training-by sex, and parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated.

Two overarching empirical findings can be found in the reports: (i) Honduras is not investing the maximum of resources available to make progress towards SDG4 and secure the right to education for all; and (ii) Honduras is not fulfilling the 4 to 6% benchmark of government expenditure on education as a % of GDP and none of them are accomplishing at least 20% of investment on education as a % of government social investment either.

In subsequent pages, the learning brief provides the contextual analysis, findings of the pilot project, challenges, lessons and recommendations from the pilot undertaken in Georgia in collaboration with Foro Dakar/Honduras (FDH). FDH and GCE commissioned a local researcher to support this exercise in Honduras.

Name of Coalition: Foro Dakar/Honduras (FDH)

Title of project: Education Financing Observatory Honduras: 2015-2021

Contextual analysis

To understand the challenges Honduras is experiencing in Education Financing and challenges the country is facing to protect and secure the right to education for all, it was reported that:

- Honduras is located in what is called the northern triangle of Central America, with borders with Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.
- 51% of the population are women (4,927,870) and 49% are men (4,669,869) who live mainly in urban areas (55%).
- The Honduran population struggles between poverty and extreme poverty which until 2021 affected more than 59% and 33%, respectively, according to the new measurement used by the National Institute of Statistics (INE).
- Honduras recorded a growing trend in the proportion of the population that fell under the poverty datum line during the analysis period, mainly in rural areas, where almost 2 out of 3 inhabitants are poor, and 2 out of every 5 are in extreme poverty.
- In terms of education, Honduras has a mixed educational system where public education and private education coexist. For the pre-basic, basic and middle education in the year 2018 counted a total of 25,416 educational centres of which 23,427 (92%) were public educational centres and 1,989 (8%) private educational centres. 56% of the educational centres did not have electricity, 47% did not have efficient drainage/sanitary systems to evacuate sewage, and 49% had no connection to public drinking water.
- The assessment of the damage caused by storm 'Eta' and Hurricane Lota in November 2020 carried-out by the Ministry of Education, established that some 534 educational centres were damaged, affecting 9 666 students in 14 regions of the country.

Methodology used to collect data

In this project, researchers utilised these data collection approaches in obtaining and analysing useful and relevant data:

- Data was gathered from reports and budgets of reputable national institutions such as the Ministry of Finance (SEFIN), the Ministry of Education (SEDUC), the Central Bank of Honduras (BCH) and the National Institute of Statistics (INE). Furthermore, data was complemented with information from organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Fund for Children (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational Organization, the Science and Culture (UNESCO).
- Once the statistics were compiled, they were subjected to an intensive desktop review which allowed the identification of existing information gaps, establishment of patterns and deduced meaning from the data.
- Since the focus of this research was public policy and sought to measure the government's investment to guarantee free public education and of quality, emphasis was placed on

resources from national coffers and external sources that pass through the General Treasury of the Republic, disbursed as a single State budget.

National budget education allocation findings

Through the research, it was established that:

- The State of Honduras in the 2015-2021 period did not allocate sufficient resources, nor the maximum resources available, to comply with its obligation to provide access to quality education to the Honduran population. Despite an allocation that is close to 5% of GDP, low coverage and minimal results persist.
- The education budget has experienced a growth of around 10% between 2015 and 2021. However, it has decreased from 17 to 14%.
- There was a significant reduction of the % allocated to higher education from 24 to 20% of the educational budget.
- The COVID-19 pandemic increased pressure on the economy which led to an increase in both internal and external debt that grew by 84% in the analysis period, rising from about us\$8.6 million dollars in the year 2015 to US\$15.8 million dollars in the year 2021.
- It is worth mentioning that budgetary rigidities are caused by administrative and national commitments, such as the obligation to transfer 6% of the government's net income to the National Autonomous University of Honduras, 3% for the Supreme Court of Justice and 11% to the municipalities. Added to this is the payment of public debt service, which is already around HNL52 000 000/US\$2 106 000 and represents around 45% of the national revenue. The rest of the budget is highly committed to paying wages, with very little left to allocate resources to construction and improvement of learning centres and educational facilities, provision of furniture and access to connectivity services.
- Another problem is the high vulnerability of the country to the effects of climate change, which obliges the government to allocate resources to humanitarian emergencies and infrastructure reconstruction damaged during floods and storms.
- Twenty to 25% of the educational centres are catered for by only one or two teachers, without adequate training and educational resources.
- High rates of unemployment and poverty in Honduras forces young people to join organized crime and gangs, making the completion of studies difficult and forces them to migrate to the USA and Spain at a very tender age.
- The educational system presents low coverage, mainly from the third basic cycle (seventh to ninth grades), high dropout rates and low levels of educational performance.
- Educational retention and completion rates in Honduras are low, with deficient coverage in early, middle and higher education which means that once boys and girls stop their formal education, they lose interest in returning to classes and get involved in both legal and illegal money making schemes at an early age.

Challenges/limitations that were identified through the research project:

- Budget information was opaque and not easily accessible which limited detailed analysis of where the funds were allocated and made it difficult to trace how the funds were spent.
- Lack of information disaggregated by variables of interest. The data was not recorded with sufficient detail of the characteristics of beneficiaries which made it difficult to extract information disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, level of education, disabilities, among others.

- Lack of homogeneity and comparability of the data between institutions was evident throughout the data analysis. It was difficult to compare, let alone triangulate or contrast data between institutions, in view of the fact that in their institutional reports there appeared different figures, data classification and disaggregation presented in a format (image of a print) that made it difficult to read and process.
- The challenge of citizen participation persists despite the signing of various commitments to move towards greater participation of citizens in the budget cycle, being part of initiatives such as open budget and government.

Learning aspects/best practices of the project:

- In instances where information in the reports and budgets was not clear, researchers made appointments with duty bearers to seek clarity.

Way forward

- The findings of this research will be used beyond this pilot exercise to influence and call for more attention and funding towards the promotion of education. This resource will be shared and engaged with universities, government departments, and other stakeholders in Honduras showing where the gaps are in terms of Education Financing, ethnicity, PWDs, gender, children, lifelong learning, teacher's welfare, among other critical issues to secure everyone's right to education identified in the report.
- The Coalition will use the findings of the EFO to organise advocacy campaigns around strategic international commemorations to ensure that the government addresses the issues raised in the report.
- The Coalition will create/provide a multi-stakeholder platform to support the GCE movement with evidence generation and strategically guide the use of evidence and knowledge from the EFO report to inform policy and advocacy for education financing in strengthening and delivering solid public education systems and the implementation of the Education 2030/SDG4 Agenda in Honduras and countries in its region/reach.
- The Coalition will deepen monitoring, oversight and social audit actions on the financing and management of resources allocated to the national education system.
- The Coalition will keep the EFO database updated and produce periodic reports that promote dialogue between agencies of government and civil society aimed at the effective protection of the right to education for the entire Honduran population.

Recommendations

In light of the issues/concerns raised above, the government of Honduras should:

- Take adequate steps to fund education in the country to fulfil the 4 to 6% benchmark of government expenditure on education as a % of GDP and try to achieve at least 20% of investment on education as a % of government social investment.
- Give priority to education as a means for the realization of other human rights, through a substantial increase in the budget allocation aimed at improving educational coverage and inclusion with sensitivity to gender and indigenous and Afro-Honduran learners.

- Expand the catalogue of registration of public spending on education in such a way that it is transparent and fiscal destinations are made clear and respond to the needs of Honduran learners.
- Invest in improving educational quality, including the construction and improvement of educational centres in the country. The government should also speedily rebuild and restore adequate infrastructures of learning that were damaged during the storms in 2020. This should be done with an understanding that the right to education is connected to having water, proper sewer/waste services, connectivity and electricity at education premises, step-up provision of teaching and learning materials, educational programs such e-learning (in case of other natural disasters/emergencies) and deploy qualified teachers as key drivers towards the attainment of Agenda 2030.
- Make public goods and services, such as education, readily available and accessible to their population that allow them enjoyment of their human rights; accepting that those goods and services must be provided in such a way that people can access them free of charge, bearing that the right to education is a human right, not a privilege.
- Make a qualitative leap in terms of citizen participation through the incorporation of social and private stakeholders in the budget cycle of the national system of education, in such a way that public spending/investment in the sector is increased.
- Allocate more relief funds from the Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty towards rural schools and indigenous areas and Afro-descendants who show large educational gaps and allocate adequate resources to cater for the special needs of vulnerable people such as girls, youth, women, indigenous population and Afro-descendant, people with disabilities, migrants and internally displaced people in such a way that ensures their inclusion in the national education system.

In conclusion:

- The GCE looks forward to the development of similar strategies and rolling-out of the EFO project in other countries so as to promote data collection and evidence-based interventions in education financing.
- GCE members should use such tools for advocating for the right to education, share the findings of the EFO report with strategic partners such as the government and engage with other stakeholders to secure more funding for education.

Resources:

You can access the webinar recording: [here](#).

You can access the project presentation: [here](#).

You can access the detailed pilot report: [here](#).