



SUSTAINABLY FINANCING EDUCATION

All Day Civil Society Event

Civil Society Organisations' Statement

GPE Financing Conference, Dakar

Adopted 31st January 2018

We, the representatives of national, regional and international non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations from all regions of the world have gathered at the CSO event in Dakar, Senegal, on January 31st 2018. This event - jointly organized by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), the Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA) and Coalition des Organisations en SYnergie pour la Défense de l'Education Publique (COSYDEP) - has been held ahead of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Financing Conference, scheduled to take place in Dakar from the 1st to the 2nd of February 2018.

We welcome the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Replenishment Financing Conference and enthusiastically support the established goal set by the GPE, which aims to be mobilizing at least USD2 billion per year by 2020.

Following our discussions, we have adopted this statement, which reflects the aspirations of the Civil Society Organization community with regard to the implementation of the SDG4:

1. We reaffirm education is a fundamental human right that must be provided free of charge by States, through public systems that are inclusive, gender transformative and adequately funded. For this reason, the financing of public and free education is integral to the right to education and is one of the central obligations of governments and the international community. GPE should ensure all its work reinforces the right to education.
2. We recall that education is central to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and so unless we see a radical shift in financing for education that targets the most marginalized, the bold ambitions of the SDG agenda, and in particular of the SDG4/Education 2030 agenda, will continue to be at least 50 years off track. GPE should be in the forefront of promoting sustainable financing for the full SDG4 agenda.
3. We call on governments to honor their commitment to leaving no-one behind by investing more resources to address the diverse inequities and multiple disadvantages faced by girls and boys with disabilities; those living in remote

rural areas or slums; those from pastoralist and migrant communities; as well as orphans, refugees, from ethnic minorities and all other groups that face discrimination. A focus on gender equality in particular is essential to achieving the right to education for all. We call on the GPE to strengthen its support for the full SDG4 agenda/Education 2030, including youth and adult literacy and education, as well as early childhood education.

4. The right to education includes key State and International Community obligations. Legal and political frameworks state that governments must increase domestic resources to reach at least 4-6% of GDP and 15-20% of national budgets. We assert that 6% of GDP and 20% of national budgets should be seen as the minimum for developing countries. Under no circumstances, should there be a regression in terms of financing towards education – even in situations of economic difficulty or conflict. Governments should spend their education budgets with a greater sensitivity to equity, gender equality, inclusion and quality. Action to ensure budgets are transparent and funds are tracked independently, with civil society involvement, can help to ensure that new resources are converted into real delivery on the ground. Bilateral and multilateral assistance must increase to 0.7% and at least 30 percent of education aid should be committed to support multilateral efforts like GPE. GPE in turn needs to use its influence to ensure governments are truly committing at least 6% of GDP and 20% of their budgets to education, measuring this as a percentage of total revenue (as is the established practice) and not after debt servicing, tracking this closely in line with the requirement in GPE’s funding model.
5. The lack of adequate and just taxes deprives states of the resources required to sustainably finance good quality free public education. The illicit financial flows that are estimated at USD50 billion a year in Africa alone also undermine education financing, and are a systematic form of corruption. Concrete steps need to be taken to eradicate corruption at all levels. Governments should urgently invest in building a more progressive and expansive tax base; avoid giving away harmful tax incentives, and taking action to counteract tax abuses. Ministries of Finance should be engaged in strategic debates that link tax justice and education issues. GPE should explicitly expand its focus on domestic financing by looking beyond just the share of the budget to address the size of government budgets overall, for example using the indicator of tax to GDP ratios and some way of measuring the extent to which the tax base is progressive. GPE should add its voice to the growing call for a democratic inter-governmental body that is fully resourced to set and enforce global tax rules and empowered to tax the vast revenues deposited in tax havens.

6. We acknowledge the private sector is increasingly targeting public education systems as profitable markets, potentially sidelining citizens as the key drivers of policy by making private corporations and organisations more dominant in policy decision making. We call on all companies who support GPE and the Global Business Coalition on Education to be unequivocal in supporting the strengthening of transparent public systems and to commit to being in the forefront of progressive practices in their own tax affairs (including through country by country reporting). As GPE seeks to expand private sector engagement, this must always be focused on reinforcing government systems and the accountability of public education to national citizens. GPE should be explicit in not supporting private fee-charging schools, for-profit education businesses and any reforms that might create stratified or unequal education systems or a commodification of education.
7. The privatisation of education is inextricably linked to a process of limiting access of knowledge to the elite classes. This process is segmented and conditioned by the capacity to pay and relative wealth, both among families and across countries. In this generalised process, market-driven logic expands into all spheres of life and deepens inequalities on the global level – as such, the privatisation of education represents a critical barrier that undermines possibilities for establishing democratic and egalitarian political orders.
8. In line with the priority in the GPE Strategy 2020, GPE must place more focus on the professionalization of teachers, often women – as the most fundamental step towards improving learning environments and the quality of education. There should be no support for education sector plans that promote the use of unskilled or untrained teachers on low salaries, which undermine the profession. To get every girl and boy into primary school, we need 1.7 million more female and male teachers – 1 million more in Africa alone – and these need to be well trained professional teachers.
9. The Sustainable Development Goals apply to every individual and to all countries without distinction, so investing in migrant children's education, including refugees and asylum seekers, is a key obligation of all host states. Equally, education for internally displaced children is a key obligation. GPE must ensure that it has the systems to respond to the distinct challenges of delivering the right to education in fragile and conflict affected countries and emergency settings, including countries under occupation, and all contexts where the right to education is most jeopardized. GPE should work to ensure that initiatives such as Education cannot Wait are fully harmonized and if possible integrated within GPE.

10. GPE should continue its important focus on equity, ensuring that patterns of exclusion, under-provision and under-achievement are closely tracked in every country and context. There is an urgent need to track more systematically the steps taken to provide inclusive education, particularly for children with disabilities. Girls' education is one of the most transformative interventions that any country can make and all the obstacles to the enrolment, progression and achievement of girls need to be clearly articulated and addressed in GPE supported plans. Never before have we been more acutely aware of the devastating impact of conflict, crisis and emergencies on education. Girls face particular barriers due to various forms of discrimination that become pronounced during conflict, including gender based violence and early marriage. Ensuring credible data is collected in a disaggregated way is an important step towards advancing equity.

We pledge as civil society to pursuing increases, among developing and donor countries, to the share of budgets for education, the size of budgets overall, the sensitivity of allocations towards equity, and the scrutiny of spending to ensure education budgets are fully and effectively utilized in practice. We recognize we have a particular role to play in tracking pledges and providing independent oversight of education budgets. We call on governments and donors to respect civil society participation, to stop the criminalization of education activists, and to oppose the shrinking of civil society space. We call specifically on GPE to make broad-based civil society engagement and respect for human rights absolute requirements in its funding model.

We want to renew our willingness to continue working in dialogue within the Global Partnership for Education and all the partners of GPE, to work together towards the full realization of the right to education.

Co-convened by:

