

# GCE Strategic Plan

2023 – 2027



*“Re-ignite and grow the influence of the global movement for education”*

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR

**EDUCATION**

[www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)

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# Who we are

The Global Campaign for Education represents the voice of Civil Society in education policy spaces and processes worldwide. Our members advocate and campaign together for a free, inclusive quality education that is without any discrimination and bias, promotes lifelong learning, and adequately values and invests in teachers.

Founded in 1999 during the World Education Forum in Dakar with the purpose of providing a unified platform that coordinates Civil Society voices on education, we are a global movement that comprises national education coalitions from around the world as well as international and regional organizations. All our constituencies advocate for quality public education for all. **Our mission is to promote and defend free, public quality education as a basic human right and mobilize public pressure.** Coordinated by a Global Secretariat and under the strategic oversight of a board that represents all our constituencies, our movement works together to advocate, campaign, and build knowledge around most burning issues affecting people's right to education.

## Our global strategy

Our global strategy is determined by our members. It is built around their most important priorities and needs. It was developed in a consultative process that involved all constituencies through surveys, Key Informant Interviews, and the collection of feedback on a set of draft strategic priorities. It integrates, wherever possible, already existing sub-strategies (youth/gender) to mainstream and lightens strategy implementation and monitoring processes.

### Our strategy defines two sets of priorities for 2023 – 2027:

1. Three joint, worldwide advocacy and campaign priorities:
  - a) Transforming Education
  - b) Education in Emergencies and Crises
  - c) Education Financing
2. One common goal and four objectives for our movement. These aim to strengthen our ways of working so that our movement is best equipped to conjointly drive the needed change in education decisions, policies, and budgets at all levels.
  - Goal:** Reignite and grow the influence of the global movement for education
  - Objective 1:** Step up our influence through advocacy and campaigning
  - Objective 2:** Diversify and grow our membership, network, and reputation
  - Objective 3:** Grow our collective ability to influence
  - Objective 4:** Strengthen our sustainability and accountability

Given the diversity of our members and the contexts they operate in, the strategy is not a straitjacket but rather a framework that engages as many members as possible in each of GCE's priorities and actions. Its successful implementation depends on the leadership of all constituencies and their commitments to the strategic ambitions they identified

# The global state of education: our key concerns

## Setback on progress

Despite the significant achievements in education worldwide over the past two decades, advocating for inclusive, quality public education and lifelong learning for all is today more urgently needed than ever. The knock-on effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of disasters, conflict and emergencies threaten worldwide progress on education and risk failure to achieve Sustainable Development Goal no. 4 (SDG4). Rapid population growth and growing numbers of students have outstripped the capacity of education systems in many contexts. Rapid external change associated with climate change, technology development and changing social and economic environments require fundamental rethinking of what education content is required, and how education is provided and continuously adapted to changing realities.

- 222 million crisis-affected school children are in need of support (ECW)
- 5000 attacks on schools and universities in 2020/21 (ECW)
- Only 68% of refugee children have access to primary education (ECW)

## Education at the crossroad

Worldwide, education institutions are failing to provide learners with relevant education, that responds to their needs and enables their personal and professional growth while helping to build socially just and sustainable societies. The digital gap and education institutions' ability to transmit digital and critical thinking skills will more than ever become determining factor for educational progress. Moreover, lifelong learning is still far from being realized in most countries – particularly Early Childhood Education, Adult Learning and Education and education for children with disabilities and for Out-of-School-Children-and-Youth require governments in many countries to step-up to the task.

- In high income countries 90% of young learners are digitally connected but in Sub-Saharan Africa this figure is as low as 5% (UNESCO)
- About half of countries make no mention of climate change in their curriculum (UNESCO)

## Privatization and public disengagement

Responding to existing demands, education is increasingly being privatized with detrimental effects on education equity and equality. Lines between public and private education are increasingly blurred and monitoring of privatization, private education providers services, and their impact is weak. Public investments in **public** education are needed more than ever to address setbacks but are insufficient and often inefficient.

- 350 million children are educated by non-state actors (GEM 2021/22)
- Nearly 200 billion US\$ is the annual gap in education financing in low and lower middle-income countries (GPE)

## Continued discrimination and roll-back of rights

Gender inequality, discrimination on the ground of disability, race, ethnicity, or any other social characteristics continue to affect educational entry and success of learners of all ages and genders. Global pushback on the rights of women and people of other SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) is undermining transformational progress and the delivery of critical educational content such as comprehensive sexuality education.

School related gender-based violence remains rampant. Women dominate the teaching profession in most regions - particularly in often less paid lower grades education. A lack of free, public early childhood, primary, and lower secondary education in many countries maintains unequal high burden of unpaid care work for women.

## Shrinking and changing civic space and engagement

Crackdowns on civic space in many parts of the world with new tactics undermine the voice of civil society in all spaces, including in education decision-making. This is being exacerbated by challenging funding opportunities for organizing, advocacy and activism. Digital spaces are now offering prominent platforms for organizing and activism – but also for attack from anti-rights forces.

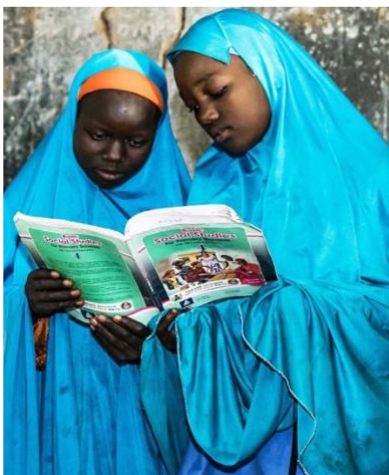
We are concerned about the rise of authoritarianism and threats to democracy, which include not only the closure of spaces for participation, but also the repression of peaceful and legitimate social protest and the criminalization of students and teachers.

Young people and students across the world are increasingly mobilizing and the new generation creates their own structures and activism. However, their actions are often disjoint and disconnected from the efforts of others. This undermines their access to critical policy spaces, but also limits opportunities that inter-generational solidarity could create.

Given the urgent need for transforming education to meet the needs of today's and future generations, the global movement for education needs a revival to re-engage citizens and harness new global dynamics and opportunities in close collaboration with grassroots youth movements and democratically elected student representatives of the student movement.

- Except for Sub-Saharan Africa, girls world-wide have closed or reversed gaps in education access and completion (GEM Gender Report 2022)
- 85 % of countries have policies on sexuality education but Sex education content is often not comprehensive, binary, and biased
- 770 million people lack basic literacy skills – 98 million of whom youth 15 - 24 and 2/3 of them women (UIS)

- Almost 45 % of countries have a repressed and over 25% a closed civil space.
- In 2021, in 12 countries space narrowed further. (Civicus)



# Our position and added value

With over 20 years of experience coordinating and unifying civil society actors working on education across the globe, the GCE is uniquely positioned to represent THE voice of civil society on education worldwide. Our global network of national and regional education coalitions, international NGOs, teachers, youth and students allows us to be at the pulse of challenges to education right at the grassroots and to independently connect the experiences of all education actors

– including students, young people, teachers, and parents  
– with global, regional, and national education policy and decision-making processes. The international education sector has created additional venues to engage diverse civil society actors through international education monitoring- and UN-led funding and mobilization processes. These include:

The GCE has a crucial role to play in advocating for the Sustainable Development Goal 4 and in the monitoring of its full implementation, and in holding governments to account for their commitments. With only eight more years to go until the deadline of the 2030 agenda, and progress having been reversed in many parts of the world, maintaining and increasing pressure on governments is critical. At the country level, monitoring is happening with locally defined mechanisms that generally engage civil society. At the regional level, monitoring engages regional CSO networks and other partners.

At the global level, the GCE is bringing the perspectives of civil society into the following critical mechanisms and fora for SDG 4 implementation and monitoring: (i) the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, including the Education 2030-SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee, Global Education Meetings, and the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education (CCNGO 2030);

(ii) follow-up to the Transforming Education Summit, including processes under the different action tracks and the upcoming UN Summits; (iii) the Education & Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) within the Major Groups and other stakeholders, as recognised in the 2030 Agenda; and the (iv) Global Education Monitoring Report, which tracks progress on SDG4 in collaboration with all stakeholders.

Financing for Development and other key financing policy

spaces, such as World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings, where we need to challenge financing that undermines the right to education; other global education policy processes around specific SDG4 targets, such as International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) and follow-up to the World Conferences on ECCE and Higher Education; climate policy processes related to education.

Moreover, the GCE has a role to play in supporting members in their engagement and contributions to the processes within the UN system for monitoring the implementation of SDG4, as well as the right to education, such as the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) and the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR).

**The global Partnership for Education (GPE)** is a global fund to transform education in lower-income countries. GPE's strategy to 2025 aims to strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development, mobilizing coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change, and strengthen capacity, adapt, and learn to implement and drive results at scale. GPE engages civil society through local education groups for greater accountability. GPE funds advocacy and social accountability through its Education out loud fund to enhance civil society's capacity to engage in education sector planning, policy dialogue, and monitoring.

**Education Cannot Wait (ECW)** is equally a global fund for education, dedicated to enabling education in emergencies and protracted crises and dismantling silos between development and humanitarian aid efforts and funding. ECW works through the multilateral system to increase the speed of response and build bridges between immediate relief and longer-term interventions through funding multi-year programs. ECW works in partnership with governments, UN agencies, Aid actors, and civil society organizations. It works in countries with emergencies and protracted crises. ECW's strategic plan is running out in 2022. It focused on inspiring political commitment, generating additional funding, planning, and responding collaboratively, strengthening the capacity to respond to crises, improving accountability by developing and sharing knowledge of what works and does not work, and collecting robust data to inform investment decisions.

ECW advocates with UN member states and multilateral and regional intergovernmental organizations on the right to Education on Emergencies (EiE), emphasizing gender equality and the centrality of protection.

Their positioning and offer make the GPE and ECW essential donors for the GCE and Civil Society. In addition, they could be considered a potential competitor for services and a parallel convenor and partner for civil

society. We aim to minimize competition with GPE and ECW but work wherever possible in synergy with GPE and ECW processes, support their fund replenishment processes, and avoid duplication of platforms and services offered to civil society. We distinguish ourselves from the GPE and ECW by mobilizing civil society worldwide without particular focus on countries and independently from funding agendas.



# Our successes and learning

Our new strategic plan builds on the successes and learnings of previous strategies. Our last 2019 – 2022 was marked by:

- a. A critical transition from spending disproportionate efforts on acting as a grant agent into strengthening GCE's nature as a movement builder. This has brought us back to our organizational purpose and constitutes a fundamental stepping stone for our new strategy.
- b. The global Covid-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on education worldwide. It also accelerated digital working and connections. We stood up to the challenge and expanded our online and digital presence at all levels. We deepened member participation this way and established more effective and efficient learning and knowledge management systems. These are gains that we must leverage in the new strategy cycle.

Notwithstanding the significant challenges that the past strategy cycle brought, we were able to produce significant achievements in the last strategy cycle. These include:

## Advocacy and Campaigning

Advocacy and research have been integral components of the coalitions in GCE's network during the last four years. Being part of reputable regional and global networks helps strengthen the voice of the organisation at the national level. The movement has made great strides in terms of facilitating CSO collaborations and solidarity across different levels and members in different regions. Moving forward, GCE members need to reframe, localise and adapt their campaigns for individual realities to make them more effective in their context.

**We globally campaigned for Education in Emergencies** with #ProtectEiENow, reaching over 75,000 people across social media platforms. The project "Voices on the Ground" for the campaign employed reporters in four countries to collect local stories on the challenges faced by communities and national coalitions where COVID-19 was also an important focus.

In the coming strategy cycle, the SDG monitoring process and its associated events at all levels offer critical opportunities for influencing.

## Research and Knowledge Generation

Our research helped inform global and national thinking on education financing and transformation:

1. Desk research with NFER to analyze civil society organization's around non-state actors for the fifth UNESCO 2021 Global Education Monitoring Report, revealing that CSOs' engagement was guided by a right-to-education lens.
2. Budget tracking to help understand the impact of Covid-19 and debt servicing on education financing informing the One Billion Voices Campaign. The report presented a set of policy recommendations for national governments in Africa, donors, and the international community.
3. Research in seven African countries to understand how they harnessed technology in education to respond to Covid-19.

## Youth and Student Engagement

We made progress in strengthening and incorporating youth voices in our global advocacy structures and enabling youth-led policy dialogues. Youth and students were particularly active in GCE's Covid-19 recovery efforts. GCE supported fifteen youth-led country-level projects for youth and student-led COVID-19 recovery response strategies that involved participatory research, capacity strengthening, policy influencing, lobbying, and youth activism. The project results have then informed GCE's Global Report on the "State of Youth and Student Organising During a Time of Global Crisis". Following these initiatives, the Global Student and Youth Caucus in Tanzania in March 2022 represented a tipping point for GCE's youth movement, consolidating the youth and student representative structures and paving the way for deeper involvement in the GCE. How to sustainably fund this engagement and make young peoples' and students voices heard even more effectively at all levels, tapping into existing youth movements and activism, needs to be on our radar for this new strategy cycle



## Knowledge Exchange and Learning

We developed a Knowledge Exchange and Learning Strategy together with members and created and launched an online Learning Hub to engage, collaborate and facilitate knowledge sharing between members. The Learning Hub is essential for GCE as the movement's success depends on sharing and collaborating on common agendas.

## Fundraising

Reduced funding for civil society activism is a real threat for GCE as well as for other civil society movements. Stepping back from being a grants manager for country projects, GCE is stepping into an increasingly challenging and competitive funding environment for activism.

This context calls for GCE to think out its funding strategy and would benefit from an exploration of new forms of work. During 2019-2022 several strategies have been hinted at, for example, leveraging technology for fundraising (social media, crowdfunding, mobile giving); identifying cross-country and cross-regional collaborative funding opportunities; partnering with other civil society actors; forming alliances with actors in competing areas of interest that receive donor funding (climate change, youth, mental health, security and fragility, etc.); and ramping up organisational intelligence through modern analytics tools.



# Advocacy and campaign priorities

As a rights-based movement, we will continue to advance our foundational asks for a free, inclusive quality education that contributes to just, sustainable, and peaceful societies and:

- is free from any forms of discrimination and bias
- promotes lifelong learning
- adequately values and invests in teachers

These asks are cross-cutting to all our advocacy and campaign efforts.

We will focus our **global campaign** efforts on the most critical progress needed to ensure education transforms to meet the challenges of our changing world. Our **worldwide joint advocacy** will address key barriers that hinder the progress of education – the causes and consequences of emergencies and crises on education, and the challenges to equitable and adequate education financing. Our three priorities as well as our foundational asks will hone in on a sub-set of asks and priorities that have been identified as of particular importance to our members. During strategy implementation, GCE will develop a set of policy positions and information/learning resources on these elements to support joint advocacy and campaigning.

<b>Global campaign</b>	<b>Transforming Education</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital learning &amp; transformation</li> <li>• Education leadership and civil space</li> <li>• Relevant education: skills for life, work &amp; citizenship and contribution to sustainable and peaceful societies</li> <li>• <b>Quality Climate Change Education</b></li> </ul>			
<b>Worldwide Advocacy</b>	<b>Education in Emergencies and Crises</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis-sensitive and inclusive education planning and budgeting</li> <li>• School safety, security, protection (psychosocial support and socio-emotional learning)</li> <li>• Space/voice of students, parents, teachers and civil society in response</li> <li>• Education for refugees, IDPs, returnees, asylum seekers, migrants and stateless people</li> </ul>			
	<b>Education Financing</b>			
<b>Foundational Asks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing public investment in education systems, from early childhood through to adult learning in education.</li> <li>• Protecting education budgets, including in times of austerity and debt crises.</li> <li>• Increasing financial investment in education to both long-term development aid for education and humanitarian aid for education in emergencies.</li> <li>• Advocating for tax justice.</li> <li>• Exposing and working to end the privatisation and commercialisation of education</li> <li>• Ensuring accountability for education investments and aid Including debt</li> </ul>			
	<b>Lifelong learning</b>	<b>Equality and Inclusion*</b>	<b>Teachers and Teaching</b>	<b>Students and Student Unions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood Education</li> <li>• Education solutions for out-of-school children and youth</li> <li>• Adult Learning in Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality and transformation</li> <li>• Disability inclusion</li> <li>• Inclusion of historically excluded population segments and groups</li> <li>• Racial equality</li> </ul> <p><b>*see GCE Gender Strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate training and continued professional and leadership development</li> <li>• Fair remuneration and working conditions</li> <li>• Strength and equality of the teaching profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful student participation at all levels of decision-making</li> <li>• Representative student unions and democratic student organizing</li> <li>• Recognition of pupils and students as main stakeholder groups of the education community</li> </ul>

# Transforming Education

Worldwide, education systems and institutions grapple with the challenge of how to meet learners' differentiated needs for the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to be resilient, adaptable, and prepared for an uncertain and complex future. At the same, education must enable students to take a leading role in its transformation process while actively contributing to more just and sustainable societies and the well-being of people and the planet. Education systems need fundamental reform to achieve these two aims simultaneously. <sup>6</sup>

With the world on course to fail the commitments of the Paris agreement and keeping global warming below +1.5°C, urgent action aimed at slowing the progression and mitigating the impact of the climate crisis must be at the center of our political efforts. The Education sector holds a profound responsibility to utilize the transformational potential of education in the pursuit of learners to aid the development of more sustainable and inclusive societies. Quality climate change education must become a fundamental and crosscutting priority through all levels and sectors of education. To this end, educators need to be provided with adequate training and resources to integrate climate and sustainability into teaching and learning, including a focus on lifelong learning and upskilling opportunities aimed at supporting the increasing number of learners undergoing the transition from unsustainable to greener jobs. Students should not only achieve climate literacy by the time they complete their education but enjoy a supportive educational environment that encourages climate action and sustainable behaviour throughout their educational journey.

Profound education reforms will rethink what kind of educational content is required and how education is provided while simultaneously preparing systems to continuously adapt to changing realities. Education reforms will need to be contextually and culturally sensitive and aim to reach those first who are currently furthest behind with education. Despite critical skills gaps in the labour market, which could be filled more easily if education systems took a lifelong learning approach, in many countries, lifelong learning is still far from being realised. Particularly Early Childhood Education, Adult Learning and Education and education for Out of School Children and Youth are areas many governments must step up on. Digital and technological solutions can play the role of catalysts in education reform and enable the access to learning and continuity in education for students with critical access barriers such as those with disability or in emergencies. Closing the digital gap and education institutions' ability to transmit digital and critical thinking skills will more than ever become determining factors for educational progress.

## Our asks for governments and decision-makers at all levels:

### 1. Technology and digital opportunities

- Leave no one behind when increasing connectivity and access to technology to help close education divides
- Providing free and open, easily accessible, contextually relevant curriculum and support high-quality digital education content for learners, teachers, parents, and communities
- Ensure education fosters critical thinking skills alongside digital skills to ensure learners can critically assess and safely use and benefit from online information and opportunities
- Invest in innovation to test new pedagogies and accessible technologies that effectively use digital and hybrid approaches
- Invest in continuous learning for teachers to enable them to maximise digital and technological opportunities and tools
- Ensure that technology does not replace the physical presence of a teacher in the learning process and is used as an important pedagogical component that follows pedagogical principles

### 2. Quality Climate Change Education (QCCE)

- Ensure sufficient investments in and equitable access to QCCE for all learners, across all sectors and levels of education
- Facilitate capacity building and training for educators to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement QCCE
- Foster critical thinking, civic engagement and a multicultural approach that recognizes indigenous knowledge within QCCE curricula
- Cultivate an understanding of climate injustice that encompasses the unequal contribution of countries in causing climate change and the inequitable and unsustainable system of production and consumption further fulfilling it
- Safeguard that the professional autonomy and academic freedom of teachers, further and higher education personnel are protected and guaranteed when teaching science-based QCCE
- Secure that the impacts of climate change do not prevent children and young people from enjoying their right to quality education

### 3. Education leadership and civil space

- Invest in educational leadership that;
  - (i) promotes collaborative processes between decision-makers and civil society representing learners, parents, teachers, and young people in all their diversity to improve the quality of education and the education system
  - (ii) Connects social, economic, and environmental trends to educational and institutional needs and practices and develops effective linkages and collaboration with other sectors
  - (iii) Ensures accountability for education decisions, investments, use of resources, and outcomes at all levels
- Guarantee open space, an enabling environment and adequate funding for civil society organizations, movements and networks advancing the right to education

To exercise pressure for change conjointly, we will conjointly:

- Focus our global campaigning on those matters most urgent and essential to enable education transformation
- Represent civil society in all their diversity in critical spaces where education policies and decisions are being shaped and promote collaboration and leadership for representative student organizations and young people at the table
- Together, take timely position and action when clampdowns, shrinking space or funding opportunities threaten civil society and its members to have their say in education matters; or when education decisions undermine transformative education investments and reforms
- Develop our memberships, partnerships and alliances to foster inter-sectoral collaboration and the finding of new solutions
- Prioritize learning from and with each other on how to effectively and safely advocate and campaign in changing civil space
- Influence most critical actors such as major players in Education Technology, to contribute to positive change

# Education in Emergencies and Crises

The impact of disasters, pandemics, conflict, and emergencies threaten worldwide progress on education and risk failure to achieve sustainable development goal no. 4 (SDG4). Worldwide, an estimated 222 million crisis-affected school children need support (ECW). In 2020/21, 5000 attacks on schools and universities were carried out, putting students' and teachers' lives at risk and destroying school infrastructure. Refugees remain a critically underserved group for education, it is estimated that only 68% of refugee children have access to primary education (ECW).

All over the world the acts and voices of students and pupils are being met with increased surveillance, vicious policing, criminalization, and killings. Associated with the global pandemic, violent responses have become more frequent, more coercive, and more intense as public and policy discourses frame students and academics as terrorists and "dangerous subjects" to be feared. Student unions have been banned in several countries and despite the consistent lack of systematic case monitoring, we know that thousands of students and pupils have been deprived of their right to education because of their attempt to shape their educational realities, lives and futures.

## We ask that governments and decision-makers at all levels:

- Adopt and operationalize the safe-school declaration
- Conduct crisis-sensitive and inclusive education planning and budgeting at all levels so that schools can actively mitigate crisis and disaster risk for learners in all their diversity
- Prioritize funding for education in emergencies applying a development-humanitarian-peace nexus approach
- Provide adequate policy frameworks that enable recovery of education after disaster and crisis
- Keeping schools safely open to the maximum extent possible while providing safety, security, and protection (psychosocial support and socio- emotional learning)
- Enabling effective distance learning when school closures are necessary ensuring that digital divides for learners in all their diversity are being reduced
- Implementing social welfare and health programs to support teachers and learners during emergencies, and other measures to support their well-being
- Strengthen coordinated education planning and response in crisis, ensuring that civil society, as well as students, parents, and teachers, are at the table when decisions are being taken and that response is localized wherever possible
- Instituting education system reforms that build the resilience of and social cohesion within education institutions, learners, and teachers as well as greater trust in education systems and services

- Guarantee education for refugees, IDPs, returnees, asylum seekers, migrants, and stateless people in all their diversity, free from discrimination and bias
- Invest in teachers to be better equipped and prepared to teach learners about disaster risks and climate change, health, human rights, causes and consequences of conflict and how to live and interact peacefully; and to support learners and colleagues' safety and well-being when and after disaster strikes
- Recognition of qualifications and fair remuneration of teachers working in emergency
- Set up Student at-risk schemes, and temporary protection programs for student activists under threat of political persecution, to ensure students' and pupils' right to continue their education in other countries, through paid scholarships, and supporting their safe return after the crisis
- Protect students' rights to assemble, to unionize and to exercise their right to academic freedom and freedom of expression
- Support monitoring of SDG4 and attacks against students, teachers and other personnel including cases of violent repression of student protests that either occur at institutions of higher education, or, if they occur off-campus, focus on education-related policies and laws monitored by UNESCO.

## To exercise together pressure for change, we are conjointly:

- Systematically engaging with local, regional, and global education clusters
- Advocating and campaigning vis-à-vis donors to ensure increased and more effective funding across the development-humanitarian-peace nexus
- Draw attention to emerging and forgotten crises and its educational impacts
- Research on how funding and education leadership enables or disables preparedness, response, and recovery from crisis
- Represent systematically the voice of civil society in Education Cannot Wait processes and platforms on Education on Emergencies (EiE), putting a particular emphasis on gender equality and the centrality of protection

## Education Financing

Public investments in education are needed more than ever to address setbacks in education progress worldwide. However, assets are insufficient and often inefficient. The annual gap in education financing in low and lower-middle-income countries is nearly 200 billion US\$. Responding to current demands, education is increasingly privatized, detrimental to education equity. An estimated 350 million children are educated by non-state actors (GEM 2021/22). Lines between public and private education are increasingly blurred, and monitoring of privatization, private education providers' services, and their impact is weak.

### **We ask that governments and decision-makers at all levels:**

- Invest in public education to the maximum of their available resources and by increasing the share, size and scrutiny of their education budgets as well as the sensitivity of their public spending on education – nationally and through international aid. This should involve:
    - i. Increasing domestic resources for education through Fairer Taxation
    - ii. Sustainably use available Natural Resources
    - iii. Ensuring Equitable Spending of Education Resources
    - iv. Ensuring Transparency and Accountability in Collecting and Spending Revenues
  - Allocate the resources established in financing education laws and national education plans and increase the size and share of the budget for financing public education
  - Invest financial resources considering the needs of marginalized and excluded groups, particularly those already excluded from education systems or at risk of being left behind
  - Secure financial resources to enable lifelong education and learning emphasizing filling gaps in early childhood education, education for out-of-school adolescents and youth, and adult learning
  - Set legally anchored funding targets for education, education improvement and development assistance and implement plans for how to achieve established targets
- Improve monitoring of the privatization of education, the services and practices of private education providers, and the impact of privatization on education equity

### **To exercise pressure for change conjointly, conjointly we are:**

- Advocating and campaigning towards governments for more significant investments in free and public education; and vis-à-vis donors to ensure increased and more adequate funding across the development-humanitarian-peace nexus
- Monitoring educational investments, spending, aid trends and opportunities worldwide
- Together, take timely action and position if decisions and policies restrict funding for education and education activism or when it undermines the delivery of rights-based education
- Invest in research on the privatization and commodification of education, their threats and opportunities, and practical solutions for financing lifelong learning for all
- Promote learning and collaboration on how to access education funding, including for civil society organizing and action
- Developing partnerships and alliances with actors and institutions specialized in the budget, tax, aid and financial analysis and the development of financial solutions

# Foundational Asks

The GCE stands together for a free, inclusive quality education without discrimination and bias, promotes lifelong learning, and adequately values and invests in teachers.

## Lifelong learning

We believe that every person, free from all discrimination, has the right to lifelong learning, which means the right to benefit from formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities from early childhood to late life. Conjointly we claim this right at all levels, using international and regional human rights provisions as a lever. We demand that governments respect, protect, and fulfil the right to education and lifelong learning, making education available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable for learners of all ages. We ask that lifelong learning meets the needs of learners in all their diversity and contributes to building more just and sustainable societies. We acknowledge that international human rights law currently does not stipulate free education beyond the primary and fundamental stages and push for greater public engagement and investment in education for children in pre-primary age, as well as for young people and adults.

## Equality & Inclusion

The GCE defends and promotes education as a fundamental right for all people – including people of all genders, sexual orientations, gender expression, identities, or characteristics (SOGIESC). We understand that gender inequality intersects with many other factors that can exclude a person from education during their life. We put pressure on the international community and governments to fulfil their commitments to provide free, inclusive, quality public education without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, identity or characteristics or other grounds, including but not limited to race, disability, ethnic origin, age, language, location, religion, or belief, migrant-, refugee- or any other minority status.

### We act together so that education policies, systems, and content:

- do promote a more just and equal way of thinking and acting; and people's ability to make informed decisions for their life, body, and relationships
- don't perpetuate any discriminatory norms, gender stereotypes or the acceptance of violence as a legitimate tool to enforce patriarchy

### We stand with:

- All women and girls who are out of school because of unfair policies and harmful gendered norms, beliefs and practices that undermine their educational choice and opportunities and career choices
- All people of non-normative sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sexual characteristics which are excluded or forced into invisibility; and who are harmed by restrictive education policies, content and systems and the people within it

- Everyone who stands up against all forms of discrimination – whether due to sexism and heterosexism, homophobia, racism, ableism, classism, or any other form of social and economic oppression

## Teachers & Teaching

We believe that teachers are pivotal to the success and future of education. Investing in the teaching profession is one of the smartest investments to generate returns for just and sustainable societal progress.

We act together so that education policies, systems, and institutions:

- Adequately value and remunerate teachers at all levels and put in place enabling and equitable working conditions
- Engage teachers, education support personnel and teachers' unions in shaping education systems and institutions
- Urgently fill the growing teacher gap, duly considering the diversity and equality of the teaching profession
- Provide continuous professional development and learning opportunities for teachers at all levels to meet the changing needs of learners in all their diversity and society overall
- Maximize safety and security for teachers, education support personnel and learners in all contexts

## Students and Student Unions

Quality Education is best shaped by those involved. Ensuring students and pupils' right to unionize and engage in shaping education policy from institutional level is crucial to realize quality education and institutional democracy. Investing and supporting representative, independent, democratic student and school students' unions is an investment in meaningful representations of learners as not only receivers of knowledge but co-creators of learning spaces. We act together so that educational policies, systems and institutions:

- Promote meaningful student participation at all levels of decision-making processes within educational governance and policy making at local, national, regional, and global level
- Promote representative student unions and democratic student organizing especially in those regions/countries where student unions are illegal and/or persecuted
- Transforming education cannot be achieved without the recognition of students and pupils as one of the main stakeholder groups in the presence and participation of democratically elected student representatives in global spaces.

# Strategic goal and objectives

To effectively drive the worldwide policy and practice changes in in our priority themes, we set our- selves the ambitious goal **to reignite and grow the influence of the global movement for education, positioning the GCE as THE voice of Civil Society in education matters**. This will require **stronger member engagement and leadership**, particularly in our global advocacy and campaigning and in diversifying and growing our membership and network. It will also need the establishment of strategic alliances with movements outside education – for example those challenging illegitimate debt, advancing political rights and freedoms, tax justice or gender justice. At the same time, it will necessitate stepping up the capacity of the secretariat to **effectively coordinate efforts and ensure key support** to GCE members which enables their work and equitable, active participation. These are needed to drive effective change and action.

## Strengthened constituency leadership

### Step up our influence through advocacy and campaigning

1

- 1.1. Effectively represent and make the voice of civil society heard in key policy spaces
- 1.2. Increasing the power of our joint campaigning
- 1.3. Taking timely action and position

### Diversify and grow our membership, network, and reputation

2

- 2.1. Diversifying our membership
- 2.2. Enhance our network and reputation

## Strengthened constituency support

### Grow our collective ability to influence

3

- 3.1. Increasing member capacity to influence
- 3.2. Improving peer support and learning
- 3.3. Providing relevant information and tools

### Strengthen our sustainability and accountability

4

- 4.1. Strengthening resources to guarantee member support and joint, inclusive, and inter- generational solidarity action
- 4.2. Strengthening accountability for movement-wide results

# Key strategic actions

To achieve our strategic objectives, we have identified high-level supporting strategic actions and associated key milestones (please see the milestone plan). These actions will synergistically lead to a more effective influence of our movement on policies, budgets, and decisions to transform and finance education and guarantee education in emergencies and protracted crises. All of them require active involvement and collaboration of GCE's members and the secretariat. To drive the achievement of each goal, they require differentiated levels of leadership from the side of either the secretariat or GCE members:

## Greater member leadership and engagement

### 1.1 Step up our influence through advocacy and campaigning

#### 1.1.1 Effectively represent and make the voice of civil society heard in key policy spaces

- Engage GCE members in critical events to speak on GCE priority themes at all levels
- Develop and adopt membership informed driving policies and resolutions
- Develop evidence-based policy briefs for effective engagement
- Engage GCE members in SDG4 monitoring and GEM processes
- Establish and maintain advocacy and campaigning consultation processes and working groups

#### 1.1.2 Increase the power of our joint campaigning

- Carry out context-specific organized CSO rallying and mobilizing efforts with local actors
- Implement context-specific policy dialogues with the governments and high-profile policy makers
- Engage print, digital, and social media

#### 1.1.3 Take timely action and position

- Develop and issue timely joint position statements and advocacy messages for key advocacy moments
- Develop and issue timely position statements and responses to emerging education issues to support solidarity action
- Mobilize the media to pick up GCE language/statements on key events/issues

### 1.2 Diversify and grow our membership, network, and reputation

#### 1.2.1 Diversify our membership

- Conduct a membership baseline assessment
- Establish a membership monitoring and management system
- Develop a membership diversification plan based on existing coalition plans

#### 1.2.2 Enhance our network and reputation

- Ensure strong CSO representation in policy dialogues at all levels
- Forge new alliances and partnerships including non-education movements
- Establish new collaborations with non-GCE members, organizations, or activists



## 2. Greater Secretariat coordination and member support

### 2.1 Grow our collective ability to influence

#### 2.1.1 Increase member capacity to influence

- Thematic and technical capacity needs assessment
- Structured learning initiatives, i.e., workshops, training, and online courses
- Sub thematic learning initiatives within Communities of Learning
- Advocacy actions and messaging based on lessons learned

#### 2.1.2 Improve peer support and learning

- Organize formalized peer learning and a coalition's interconnected mentorship initiative
- Facilitate Learning Hub interactions

#### 2.1.3 Provide robust information and tools

- Generate lessons learnt to inform advocacy actions and to message
- Provide tailored, practical, and context-specific learning resources
- Develop knowledge-sharing solutions for thematic, technical, and practical knowledge
- Develop advocacy and campaigning guidelines and practical toolkits

### 2.2 Strengthen our sustainability and accountability

#### 2.2.1 Strengthen resources to guarantee member support and joint, inclusive, and inter-generational solidarity action

- Develop and implement a resource mobilization plan
- Mobilize and earmark resources to support a) advocacy and campaigning, b) Research, c) capacity development
- Sustain and increase the level of resources mobilized to sustain the GCE secretariat core

#### 2.2.2 Strengthen accountability for movement-wide results

- Establish and regularly update an operational and multi-annual plan with clear roles, responsibilities, and contributions of GCE members to deliver the strategy
- Develop an institutional monitoring system in coordinated efforts with global, regional and national constituencies
- Effectively integrate youth and students in policy development and advocacy action at all levels
- Carry out the annual global reflection of strategy rollout and adapt operational plans where needed

Together with our members, we will develop an operational plan to guide the detailed strategy implementation. This plan will set clear targets based on member commitments to each strategic objective and action. The results of annual reflections on strategy progress and review of operational plans will support the board in adopting strategic direction and the secretariat to lead on implementation.

# Theory of Change

**Impact**  
Governments and the international community guarantee and enable free, inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all.

**Mission**  
Promoting and defending free, public quality education as a basic human right and mobilizing public pressure



We are making the best possible contributions of our movement to promote the right to education

**and**

We are fulfilling our mission

**Because**

We drive the needed change in policies, decisions, and budgets related to our global priorities at all levels

**and**

We grow effectively in credibility, reputation, influence, and power

**then**

All members and constituencies make their best contribution to and demonstrate leadership in the global movement and its joint advocacy and campaign action while making use and contributing to global resources, learning, monitoring and quality membership growth

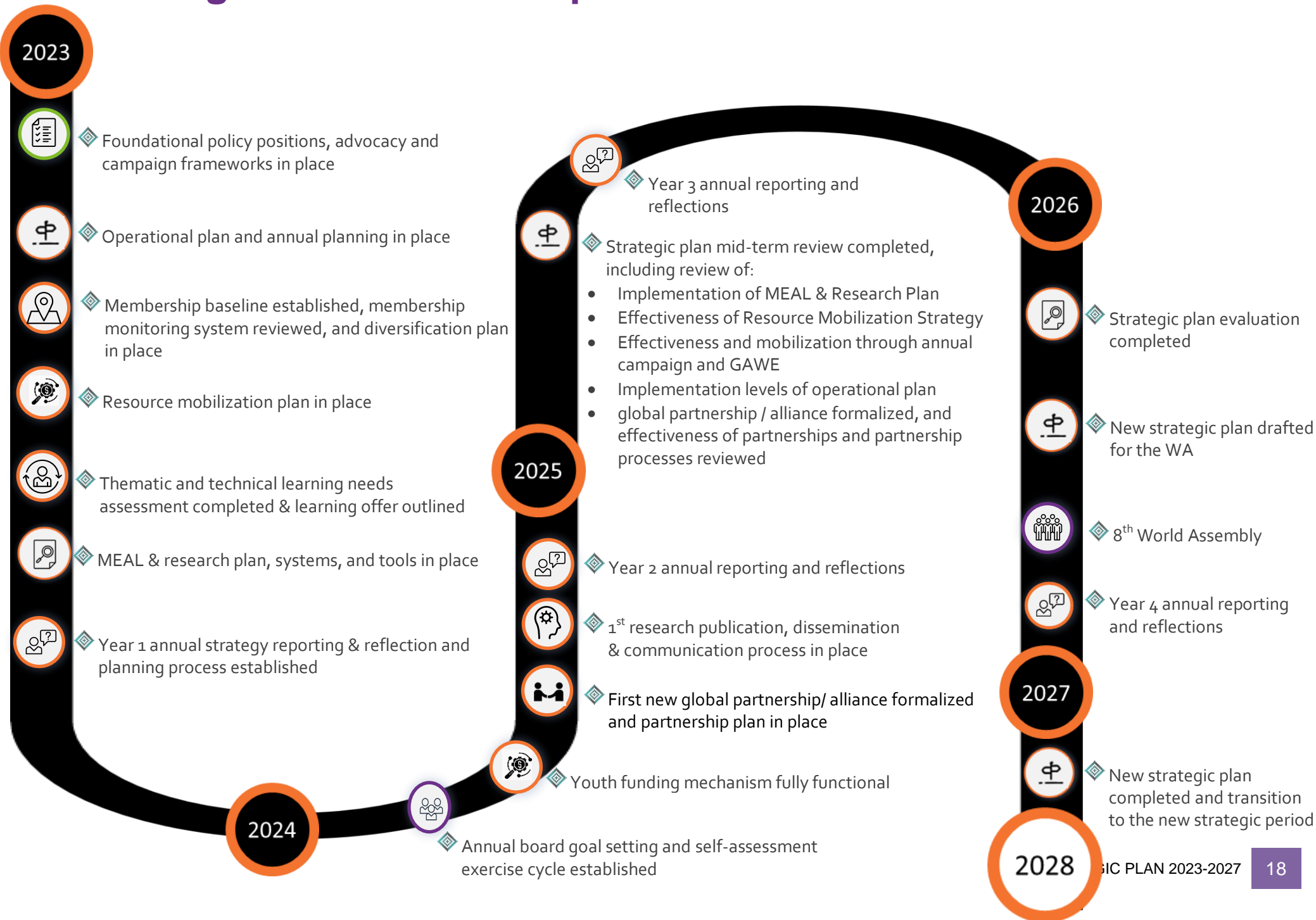
**and if**

The secretariat provides effective coordination and quality support to members, which enable all constituencies to advocate and campaign effectively and conjointly at all levels

**and if**

The GCE board provides enabling strategic oversight and effectively represents and communicates decisions with all constituencies

# High-level milestone plan



# Operational Milestone Deliverables

Year	Quarter	Category	Milestone / Deliverable
2023	1	Advocacy	Foundational policy positions, advocacy and campaign frameworks in place
	1	Operations	Operational plan in place
	1	MEAL	Membership baseline established and membership monitoring system reviewed
	1	Operations	Member diversification plan in place
	1	MEAL	MEAL plan, systems, and tools in place
	2	Advocacy	Annual campaign launched
	2	Advocacy	Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2023 launched
	3	Operations	Resource mobilization plan in place
	3	Operations	Thematic and technical learning needs assessment completed & learning offer outlined
2024	4	MEAL	First annual strategic plan reporting, reflection and planning exercise carried out
	1	Governance	First annual board goal setting and self-assessment exercise carried out
	1	Operations	Youth funding mechanism fully functional
	2	Advocacy	Policy position paper to support annual campaign in place
	2	Advocacy	Annual campaign launched
	2	Advocacy	GAWE 2024 launched
	3	Advocacy	First new global partnership/alliance formalized
	4	Advocacy	First research published and second research initiated
2025	4	MEAL	Second annual strategic plan reporting, reflection and planning exercise carried out
	1	Governance	Second annual board self-assessment and goal setting exercise carried out
	2	Advocacy	Policy position paper to support campaign in place
	2	Advocacy	Annual campaign launched
	2	Advocacy	GAWE 2025 launched
	3	Advocacy	Second global partnership/alliance formalized
	3	MEAL	Strategic plan mid-term-review
	4	Advocacy	Second research published and third research initiated
2026	4	MEAL	Third annual strategic plan reporting, reflection and planning exercise carried out
	1	Governance	Third annual board self-assessment and goal setting exercise carried out
	2	Advocacy	Policy position paper to support annual campaign in place
	2	Advocacy	Annual campaign launched
	2	MEAL	Strategic plan evaluation completed
	2	Advocacy	GAWE 2026 launched
	3	Advocacy	Third global partnership/alliance formalized
	4	Advocacy	Third research published and fourth research initiated
	4	Operations	New strategic plan design drafted
2027	4	MEAL	Fourth annual strategic plan reporting, reflection and planning exercise carried out
	4	Governance	8 <sup>th</sup> World Assembly
	1	Operation	New strategic plan design completed
	2	Operation	Transition to a new strategic period

## Summary of deliverables per category/function:

Operations	Advocacy	MEAL	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Operational plan</li> <li>• 1 Resource Mobilization strategy</li> <li>• 1 Member diversification plan</li> <li>• 1 thematic learning needs assessment</li> <li>• 1 learning offer designed</li> <li>• Youth funding mechanisms operationalized</li> <li>• 1 new strategic plan designed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 foundational policy positions</li> <li>• 3 policy positions to support annual campaigning</li> <li>• 1 Advocacy framework</li> <li>• 1 Campaign plan</li> <li>• 4 Annual campaigns</li> <li>• 4 GAWE</li> <li>• 3 formal global partnerships/alliances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Membership baseline</li> <li>• 1 Membership monitoring system review</li> <li>• 1 MEAL and research plan</li> <li>• Research system &amp; tools</li> <li>• 4 research/analysis publications</li> <li>• 4 annual reports</li> <li>• 1 strategic plan midterm review</li> <li>• 1 strategic plan evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 board self-evaluation &amp; planning exercises</li> <li>• 1 World Assembly</li> </ul>

# Monitoring and evaluation

Upon adoption of the 2022-2027 strategic plan, the GCE Secretariat will develop a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework to provide an overview of GCE will track and evaluate the progress and success on its strategic objectives. The MEL framework will set out arrangements for *what* information will be gathered from GCE members, the Secretariat, as well as board members, *how, when and by whom* to ensure specific areas of progress and intended results as outlined on the Theory of Change (TOC) and Indicative List of Indicators are tracked, measured, and assessed towards GCE’s 2023-2027 strategic objectives.

The strategic plan monitoring and evaluation will comprise of:

1. **Annual reporting** during which all constituencies – including the secretariat and board will:
  - Report on activities implemented against the strategic actions they signed up for and outputs and outcomes achieved.
  - Assess the progress of the strategy across all coalitions, members, and the secretariat and help to identify potential needs for adapting the strategy
  - **Reflect and plan exercises** with all members using the results of the member survey as a basis for discussion and annual action planning.
2. **A mid-term review** of strategic plan implementation in year 3.
3. **A strategy evaluation** to measure strategic plan results and help inform the new strategic plan in 2026 ahead of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Assembly.

## Key Indicators

While targets agreed upon with members will define a final menu of indicators, here is an initial set of indicators that will build the foundation for measuring results.

### Indicative List of Key Indicators by Objective:

Step up our influence through advocacy & campaigning	Diversify and grow our membership, network, and reputation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # and % of members who represented GCE in key events by age, gender, constituency, and level</li> <li>• # and % of stakeholders by type and location who consider GCE to credibly represent the voice of civil society on education</li> <li>• # and % of stakeholders by type and location who consider GCE to credibly represent the voice of civil society on education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # and % of coalitions per level and constituency which increased the number of members</li> <li>• # and % of coalitions per level and constituency which consolidated their membership</li> <li>• # and % of coalitions which diversified their membership (composition of membership by member category (youth, students, SOGIESC, women-led, women’s rights, other sector organizations, activists)</li> <li>• # and % of members who forged new alliances/partnerships or engaged in joint action with non-GCE movements, organizations or activists</li> </ul>

### Grow our collective ability to influence

- # and % of members type, level and constituency who report having used knowledge/skills gained through GCE facilitated learning
- Level of member satisfaction with GCE facilitated learning opportunities by member category and constituency
- # and % of member actions that have been informed by lessons learnt
- # and % of members by category, level and constituency who report having received support or acquired learning and resources with help of other GCE members
- Level of member engagement in critical communities of practice/ communication platforms (youth engagement, advocacy)
- # and % of members by type, level and constituency who report having used information provided by GCE for their work
- # members by type, level, and constituency who used GCE policies/tools/evidence as part of advocacy & campaign efforts

### Strengthen our sustainability & accountability

- Level of resources mobilized by/for member and constituency in support of a) youth and students initiatives and representation
- advocacy and campaigning
- research
- capacity development on key priority areas
- adequate resourcing of secretariat (core positions and support)
- Level of implementation and effectiveness of support structures for youth and student participation at all levels
- Level of implementation of global strategy monitoring process
- Level of establishment and implementation of board goals



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# Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Level	Mitigation Measure
Inadequate funding undermines the achievement of strategic objectives	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out a donor mapping and develop a fundraising and donor engagement plan</li> <li>Monitor donor trends and calls and communicate them within the movement</li> </ul>
Members do not pay their membership fees, undermining the GCE's sustainability	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a rigorous arrears process</li> <li>Regularly update member contact names, including for financial matters</li> <li>Make support to projects conditional to payment of fees</li> </ul>
Members overstretch and/or lack of engagement results in insufficient strategy progress and impact	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct realistic operational planning</li> <li>Promote alignment between regional chapter strategies and GCE's global strategy</li> <li>Put a simple but sound strategy M&amp;E process in place</li> </ul>
Disunity amongst members due to conflicting positions, priorities and interests weakens internal cohesion and undermines advocacy effectiveness	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that policy positions are developed with members to negotiate common positions that work for the majority of members</li> <li>Ensure that the foundational policy positions and member criteria spell out clearly non-negotiable positions for the movement</li> </ul>
New and competing education movements claim and overtake GCEs position and space as THE voice of CS	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued scanning of the external actor environment</li> <li>Active engagement with competitors to identify and negotiate niche and seek complementarity</li> <li>Ensure advocacy and operational excellence to remain competitive</li> </ul>
The external political and safety and security situation as well as economic downturn deters public, media and donor attention away from education	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct ongoing media monitoring and use incidences to draw media attention on their impact on education</li> <li>Build strong relationship with key media and produce attractive and sharp information/media materials to land media publications</li> <li>Use members and their networks to mobilize through social media</li> </ul>
Increased mass mobilization and increased engagement with activists leads to fall-out of members with government and undermines reputation and ability to influence	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct careful risk mitigation planning for all campaign and advocacy action and when engaging with new partners/ building alliances</li> <li>Offer training on risk management in advocacy and campaigning, particularly for environments affected by shrinking/closed civil space</li> </ul>
Members come to harm from their engagement in GCE campaigns, advocacy, and solidarity action	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct careful risk mitigation planning for all campaign and advocacy action and when engaging with new partners/ building alliances</li> <li>Offer training on risk management in advocacy and campaigning, particularly for environments affected by shrinking/closed civil space</li> <li>Promote the systematic use of child/youth safeguarding measures as part of campaign/advocacy/action planning and implementation</li> </ul>
High staff turnover at secretariat level undermines the effective delivery of support and ultimately also of strategy	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully plan workload and identify most valued services to ensure focus on the right things and avoid stretch</li> <li>Implement resource mobilization strategy</li> <li>Identify core staffing structure and outsource non-essential work to temporary staff/consultants</li> </ul>

