

## **Gender Equality at the Heart of Education Financing: Insights for GAWE 2026**

The **Global Action Week for Education 2026 (GAWE 2026)** marks the 24<sup>th</sup> annual global campaign being organised by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to advance the right to education. The theme for GAWE 2026 is education financing, with a call to governments and decision-makers to “Hold the Flame High” emphasizing urgent need to protect, prioritise and ensure public investment in education.

GAWE 2026 is a powerful reminder that education cannot be sidelined. Strong political will, increased public financing, and a firm commitment to equity are essential to safeguarding the right to education. This note serves as a tool to underscore the centrality of gender equality within education financing debates, highlighting the need for targeted, equitable, and accountable investments that advance gender justice.

### **Gender equality in Education**

Education is fundamental to building lasting peace, realizing sustainable development and driving innovations for the future. Yet, the global and national commitments to education have remained stagnant. Gender equality is deeply connected with the right to education. Historically and structurally, girls and marginalised groups face barriers such as poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, and discriminatory norms that limit access to and completion of education.

### **Gender Transformative Education**

Beyond access, GAWE 2026 underscores the need for gender-transformative education, which goes further than simply achieving gender parity. It actively challenges and changes harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and power imbalances promoting critical thinking about gender roles and equality. Such approach is essential for building more just and inclusive societies.

### **Gender Responsive Education Budget:**

Another critical lens for assessing education financing under GAWE 2026 is whether national budgets truly reflect principles of equity, inclusion, and gender justice. An equitable education budget examines how resources are distributed across population that includes girls, children with disabilities, minority communities, learners in rural and/or remote areas, those affected by conflict and emergencies. To ensure equitable allocation of budget requires a robust data system which is disaggregated across gender, disability, income, location.

A weakened data systems limits the ability of the Government to design responsive budgets. To address the structural inequalities across education systems, Gender Responsive Budgeting is critical which enables governments to analyse spending in education, identify resource gaps, redirect funding to those marginalized and ensure accountability for gender equality commitments.

### **Safe, Inclusive, Learning Environment**

Equity in education financing also depends on investments in safe and inclusive learning environments. It is ensured through gender segregated and accessible facilities, disability friendly infrastructure and learning materials, inclusive curricula and teachers training and prevention of school related gender-based violence.

### **Investing in Girls Education and STEM**

Research have shown that investing in girls education has long term impacts including improved health outcomes, increased economic participation and earnings and intergenerational benefits.

Targeted investments promoting girls participation in STEM, challenge gender stereotypes, expands economic opportunities therefore increasing women's decision making power within household and communities.

---