



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
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APRIL-MAY 2026

GCE BUZZ

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Global Action Week for Education (GAWÉ) 2026 was held with the theme of Education Financing with the call to governments and decision-makers to -

HOLD THE FLAME HIGH!

The campaign called for debt justice, progressive taxation, and reform of the global financial system.

The following pages present to you several events and initiatives taken by the GCE membership and partners to celebrate GAWÉ 2026.

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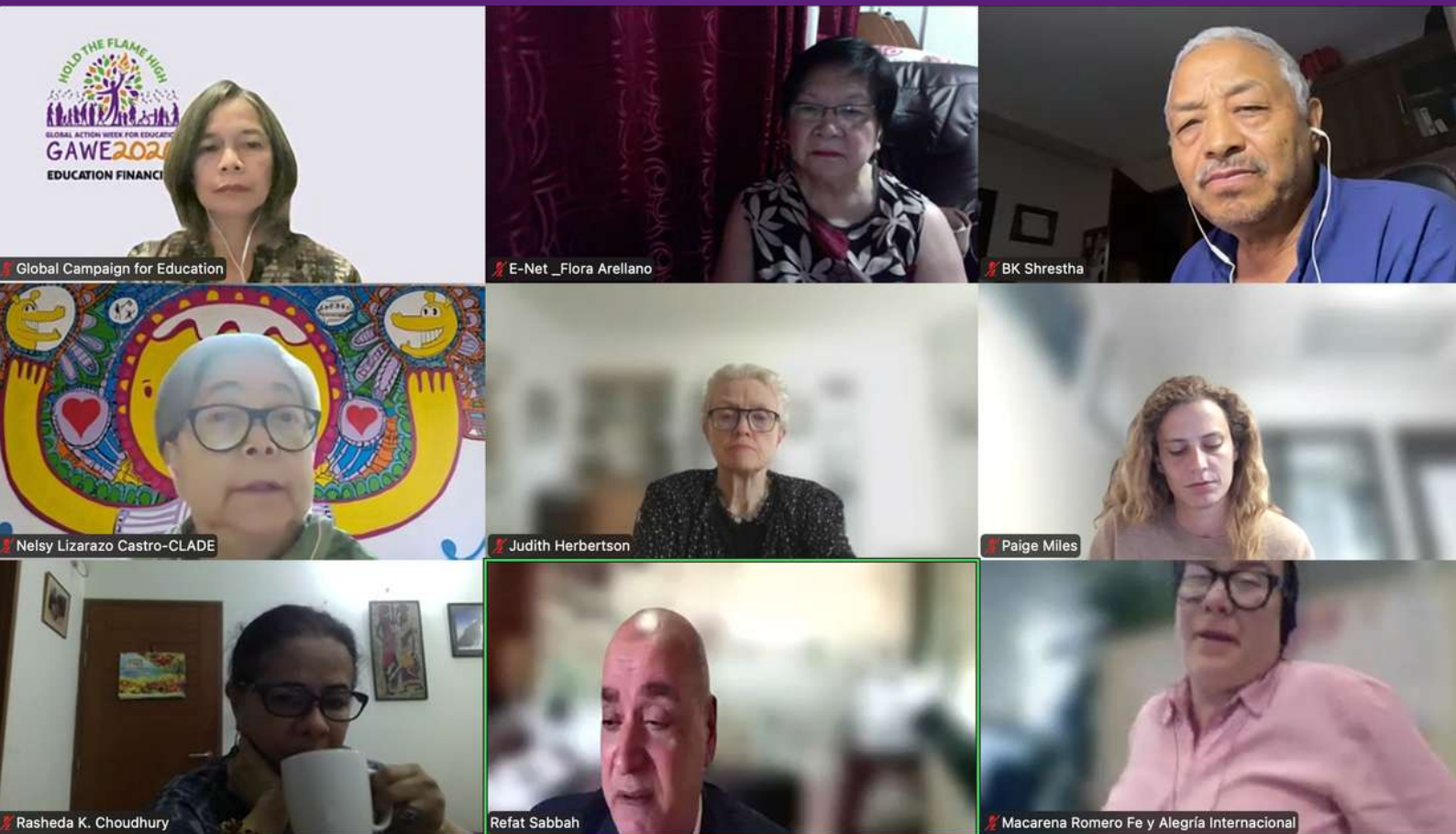


Hold the Flame High: Global Education Movement Unites at the Virtual Launch of GAWÉ 2026

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) opened the 24th Global Action Week for Education (GAWÉ 2026) with a virtual launch on 20 April 2026, bringing together hundreds of activists, youth, teachers' unions, coalitions, donors, and UN partners from across all regions. Held under the theme of education financing and the rallying call "Hold the Flame High for Education," the launch underlined that in a time of wars, debt crises, austerity, and climate breakdown, defending public education budgets has become both an emergency and a justice issue, not a technical debate.

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Opening the event, GCE Campaigns and Communications Manager Cecilia ‘Thea’ Soriano reminded participants that GAWÉ has been a space of shared struggle and solidarity for 24 years, and that this year’s campaign is about standing “strong in demanding the financing of quality public education for all” amid intersecting global crises. GCE President Refat Sabbah stressed that a nearly US\$97 billion annual financing gap and the reality that 41% of countries still fail to meet minimum education spending benchmarks are the result of political and economic choices, not inevitability, as many governments now spend more on debt repayment and military budgets than on education.

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Talking: Grant Kasowanjete



GCE Global Coordinator Grant Kasowanjete set out the four pillars guiding GAWWE 2026: accountability for SDG 4 and post-Transforming Education Summit pledges; defending and financing quality public education against privatisation and “false solutions”; transforming the global financial system through international tax justice and debt cancellation; and mass public mobilisation led by GCE’s 130 member organisations and their constituencies.

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Speakers from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Education International, Transparency International, and youth networks reinforced these pillars, highlighting how austerity, shrinking fiscal space, and corruption are undermining teachers, excluding marginalised learners, and weakening already fragile systems, especially in conflict-affected and low-income countries.

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Case for Investment

GPE's case for investment outlines GPE's impact

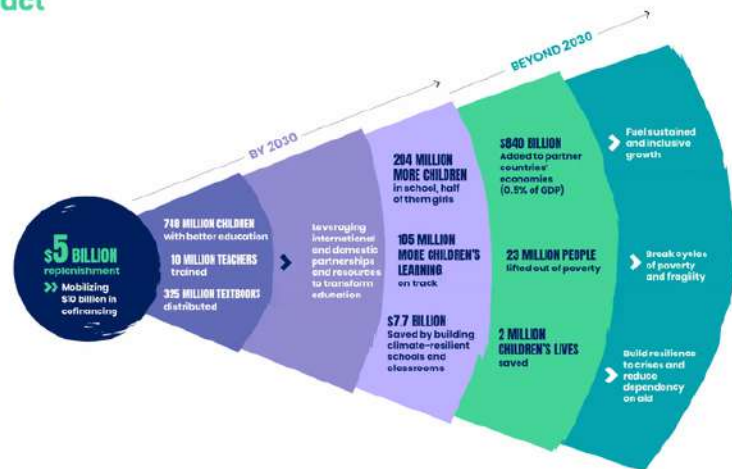
The case for investment covers the benefits of investing in education, the cost of inaction, and why GPE is a critical investment.

With a \$5 billion replenishment, GPE will mobilize \$10 billion in cofinancing for a combined **\$15 billion investment by 2030**.

Across more than **90 partner countries**, this will:

- Reach nearly 750 million children with better education
- Train 10 million teachers
- Distribute 325 million textbooks

Download the full and summary versions on GPE's website [here](#)



The Global Partnership for Education underlined that its mission is to support sustainable financing for public education and drive long term systems transformation so that domestic and international resources can deliver lasting gains for learners most at risk of being left behind.

The United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office framed its new operating model as a paradigm shift in education financing, moving from a narrow focus on aid volumes towards leveraging public and private finance, system support, and innovative instruments to end long term aid dependency while still protecting the right to quality public education for those most at risk of exclusion

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Youth leaders from Latin America and the Asia-Pacific emphasised that education financing is a question of justice, not charity, and called for sustained investment in inclusive and gender-transformative public education that dismantles structural barriers facing girls, Indigenous and Afro-descendant youth, learners with disabilities and those living in poverty or remote areas. Regional solidarity messages from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab region, Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America, and the international NGO constituency converged around three demands: fund education, not war; resolve the debt crisis and expand fiscal space for public services; and secure both progressive domestic resources and predictable, equitable international financing, including official development assistance, as a matter of global justice and reparation for historical injustices.

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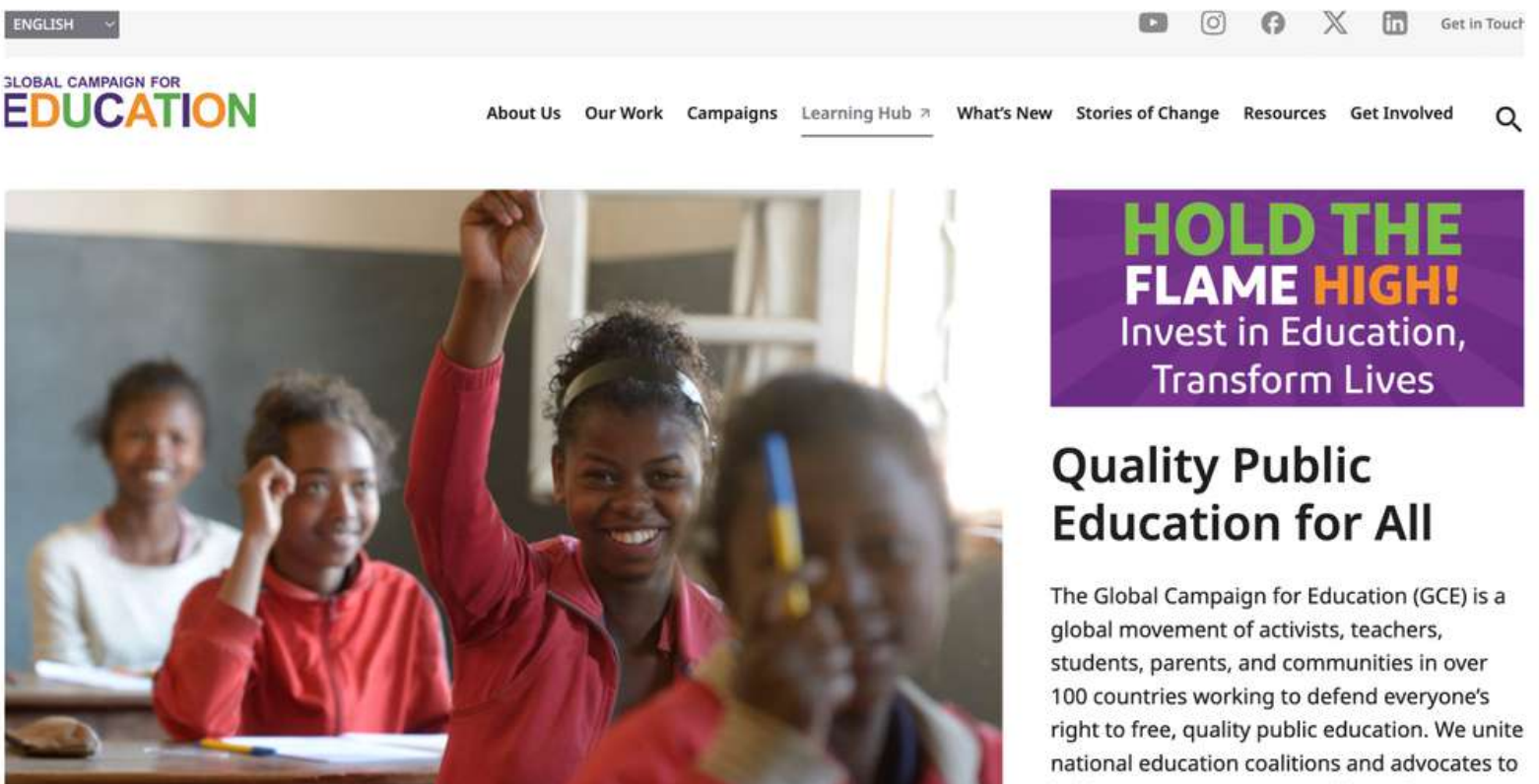
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GAWÉ 2026 was also positioned as a key civil society contribution to the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education's call for inputs on international financial architecture, debt and education, reinforcing demands for tax justice, debt cancellation, and a rights based, feminist overhaul of global financing rules so that states can expand fiscal space for public education instead of diverting scarce resources to debt service.



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The launch also showcased tools for action throughout the week of 20-25 April, including GCE's new multilingual, accessibility-oriented website - now a central hub for GAWE 2026 materials, an Education Financing Observatory, a learning hub, and youth advocacy resources - positioning the campaign as both a political moment and a long-term organising space.

Closing the event, GCE invited participants to use GAWE 2026 to intensify national and regional advocacy, “knock on all doors of power”, and keep the flame of public education burning high beyond this week until no child, youth, or adult learner is left behind.

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Youth at the heart of Global Action Week for Education (GAWÉ) 2026

Young activists from across the world came together virtually on 23 April for the Global Action Week for Education (GAWÉ) 2026 youth webinar.

The event formed part of GCE's 24th annual global campaign to advance the right to education for all. Under the 2026 theme on education financing, young speakers addressed how shrinking education budgets, debt, austerity, and an unfair global financial system are undermining progress towards SDG 4 and widening inequalities. Throughout the session, participants reaffirmed that underfunding is not simply a resource gap, but a structural injustice rooted in political choices and failed priorities.

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Moderated by GCE's Phumza Luthango, the webinar brought together youth leaders from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as contributions coordinated through GCE's Youth Action Group and regional partners. Key interventions included:

- Jon Kafuko of Youth for Tax Justice Network highlighted how international tax rules, illicit financial flows, and weak global tax governance drain billions that could be used to fund quality public education, and called for strong youth participation in the UN Tax Convention process.
- Maryam Bello of Telika Youth Organisation spoke on financing education for gender equality in Africa and stressed that “the financing gap is a gender gap”. She urged governments to invest in gender-transformative education that reflects girls' realities, livelihoods, and dignity rather than treating them as instruments of economic growth.



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- Israel Quirino of the CLADE youth group (Latin America) linked education financing to climate justice and demanded progressive, fair tax systems, and global measures against tax evasion so that resources can be redirected to resilient, public education systems that respond to the climate emergency.
- Amarazyia Tumurbaata of the Mongolian Youth Council shared experiences from the “Know Your Budget, Track Your Budget” campaign and demonstrating how corruption, delayed capital projects, and weak budget transparency directly translate into overcrowded classrooms and restricted access to education.
- Nawal AI Sayed of ACES youth spoke from an Arab-region perspective on education in times of war and crisis, and insisted that “the problem is not lack of resources, but priorities” as military spending is favoured over education in public budgets.



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Visual arts, poetry, and youth-produced videos from GCE coalitions and youth networks illustrated the human impact of global financial pressures on learners, teachers, and communities, and showed how creative expression is being used as an advocacy tool towards UN human rights processes.

Throughout the event, young speakers echoed GAWÉ 2026's four core objectives: accountability to SDG 4; increased and just financing for quality public education; deep global financial reform; and broad public mobilisation to defend education as a public good.

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They called on governments to:

- Reach and exceed international benchmarks for education spending and protect education budgets from austerity and debt-driven cuts.
- Champion international tax justice and debt cancellation so that countries have the fiscal space to fund inclusive, gender-transformative, and climate-just public education systems.
- Treat education financing as a long-term investment in rights, peace, and equality, rather than a discretionary cost that can be postponed in times of crisis.

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The webinar also encouraged youth to engage actively in national budget processes, global tax negotiations, and the replenishment of key global education funds, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait through research, campaigning, and direct advocacy with parliamentarians and embassies.

GCE and its youth members will continue to hold the flame high for education, keeping pressure on decision-makers to fund education, not war; public good, not private profit.

You can view the full video recording of the webinar on GCE's YouTube channel [HERE](#).

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CAPACITY BUILDING WEBINAR
FOR GLOBAL ACTION WEEK
FOR EDUCATION (GAWE) 2026

GAWE Learning Workshop on Education Financing

9 APRIL 2026
2:00-3:30PM SAST



Scan to register



Holding the Flame High: Inside the GAWE 2026 Learning Workshop on Education Financing

Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2026 is shaping up to be one of GCE's most politically sharp mobilisations, as activists, educators, and youth leaders prepare to “hold the flame high” for education from 20-25 April 2026.

At a virtual GAWE 2026 learning workshop held on 9 April, Cecilia “Thea” Soriano, GCE's Campaigns and Communications Manager, opened the session by situating GAWE 2026 within a worsening crisis of education financing driven by wars, climate change, shrinking aid, and growing privatisation pressures.

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Thea underlined that SDG 4 is suffering from chronic underfunding. There is an annual USD 97 billion shortfall, 41% of countries fail to meet international benchmarks on education spending, and many low-income countries now spend more on debt repayments than on education. She framed GAWE 2026 around four priorities: (1) exposing the crisis of education financing, (2) demanding increased domestic and ODA investments in quality public education for all, (3) seizing political openings such as the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation and a prospective UN Convention on Sovereign Debt, and (4) linking financing to broader goals of human rights, peace, gender equality, inclusion, and sustainable development.



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Why Domestic Resource Mobilisation Matters

In the first thematic segment, Thea introduced a discussion on why domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) is the cornerstone of sustainable education financing and how “innovative” mechanisms can threaten public education when they prioritise profit over rights. She stressed that fair and progressive tax systems are the lifeblood of public education, yet many governments rely on regressive taxes, tolerate tax abuse, and struggle with weak administration and corruption, all under a global financial architecture tilted towards richer countries.

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Campaigns to Sustainably Finance Education

A panel on tax and debt campaigns brought together Ashina Mtsumi, TaxEd Alliance Coordinator; and Catherine Mithia, Policy Research and Advocacy Officer at the UN Convention Sovereign Debt Management.

Ashina showed how many low- and middle-income countries collect less than 15% of GDP in tax – far below the roughly 30% needed to adequately fund rights and public services – and debunked the myth that generous tax holidays are necessary to attract investors, pointing instead to the enormous annual losses from corporate tax abuse and offshore evasion. She urged coalitions to end harmful tax incentives, reform taxation of extractive industries, renegotiate unfair tax treaties, and push for progressive, gender-responsive tax systems, while engaging actively in the negotiations towards a UN tax convention.

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Catherine explained how rising and increasingly commercial debt – often contracted at interest rates two to four times those paid by high-income countries – is crowding out education, with many governments now spending more on debt servicing than on schooling. She highlighted the damaging effects of austerity conditions tied to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank loans, which frequently freeze or cut public spending in sectors such as education and health, and called on coalitions to back a UN Convention on Sovereign Debt that would establish transparent, timely, and rights-based mechanisms for debt resolution.

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Case for Investment

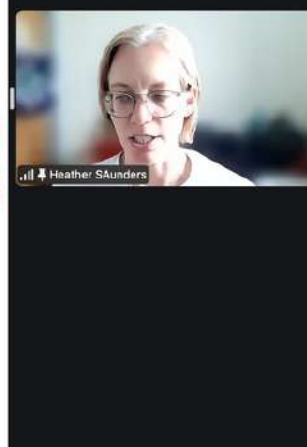
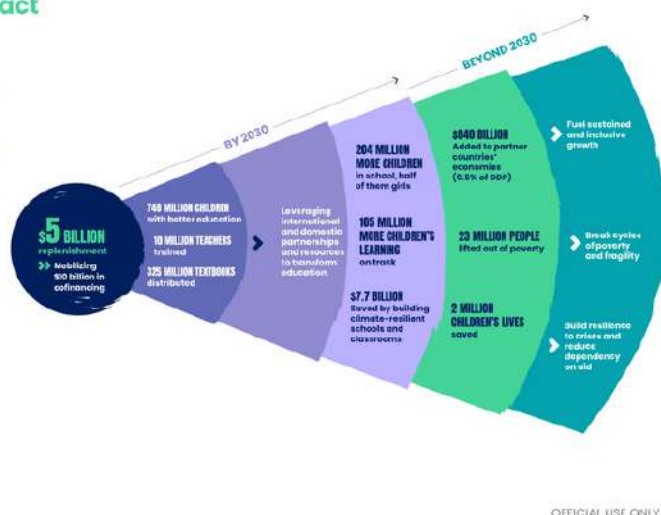
GPE's case for investment outlines GPE's impact

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GPE Replenishment and ODA: Why Multilateralism Still Matters

The next session turned to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) replenishment campaign and the central role of aid in a “Leave No One Behind” education agenda. Heather Saunders, Deputy Team Lead for Global Advocacy at GPE, and Edwin Ikhuoria, Senior Partnership Specialist in GPE’s Global Advocacy Team, gave an overview of the replenishment process, explaining that GPE is seeking 5 billion dollars up to 2030, with the potential to mobilise an additional 10 billion in co-financing and support hundreds of millions of learners and millions of teachers. They also shared updates on domestic resource mobilisation and country pledges, and encouraged coalitions to see GAVE 2026 as a moment to connect national budget advocacy with calls for donors to increase and better target ODA for education.

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A practical strategies segment featured Cheikh Mbow, Executive Director of COSYDEP–Senegal, Joseph Wasikhongo, National Coordinator of Elimu Yetu – Kenya and Joseph Nhan-O’Reilly, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the International Parliamentary Network for Education (GCE-UK). They reflected on previous replenishment cycles, stressing tactics such as coordinated letters and meetings with ministers of education and finance, mobilising parliamentarians, citizen’s mobilisations, leveraging media, and aligning civil society actions with key diplomatic moments to secure stronger pledges.



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Children, Youth, and Creative Advocacy

Youth participation and intergenerational organising were highlighted in a segment led by Israel Quirino, Project Officer and Youth Engagement focal point at the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE). Israel linked GAWE 2026 to the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education's call for inputs on international financial architecture, debt, and the right to education, inviting coalitions to hold sessions where children and young people can explore these themes and submit drawings, poems, stories, or videos. The aim is to ensure that those most affected by austerity and underfunded schools shape the narrative and political demands of the campaign.

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HOLD THE FLAME HIGH! Invest in Education, Transform Lives

Communications: Telling a Shared Story

In the final session, GCE's Communications and Media Officer, Medha Soni, outlined a campaign strategy built around three pillars – education financing as a political choice, defence of quality public education, and a justice centred framing linking education to tax, debt, peace, and inequality – and a six day narrative presented through posters and social media strategies. Each day will focus on a specific angle, from broad investment messages and ODA/GPE to early childhood education, teachers, tax and debt justice, and the closing call to “Fund education, not war.” Coalitions will be able to use a shared visual identity and multilingual materials, along with common hashtags such as #HoldTheFlameHigh, #GAWE2026, #EducationFinancing, #RightToEducation and #MultiplyPossibility, while tailoring content and actions to their own contexts.

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As GAWE 2026 approaches, the workshop emphasised that education financing is not a technical detail but a political choice that will determine whether the promise of education for all is realised or deferred yet again. Through coordinated advocacy on tax and debt, strong public mobilisation, and strategic use of global platforms like the GPE replenishment, GCE members and allies aim to ensure that, this April and beyond, the flame for the right to education burns brighter.



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One last push to finance SDG 4: Civil society urges bold reforms to fund the right to education

The world is far off track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, with progress slowing, stalling, or even reversing in many countries amid overlapping crises of poverty, inequality, climate vulnerability, conflict, and waning multilateralism. On its current trajectory, the world will not achieve any of the 17 SDGs, and education is among the most at risk. Projections show that only 17% of SDG 4 targets will likely be reached, with significant regression on SDG 4.5, which commits governments to eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access to all levels of education. This means the promise to “leave no one behind” is already being broken for millions of learners, especially girls, children in poverty, learners with disabilities, and those in conflict-affected and remote areas



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**Financing for
Development**

High-level FFD Week
20 - 24 April, 2026
UN Headquarters in New York



United Nations

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Social



Against this backdrop, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and partners convened a virtual side event to the 2026 ECOSOC Financing for Development (FfD) Forum, titled ‘One last push to finance SDG 4: Inclusive, Equitable and Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All - Education as a Critical Enabler for Peace, Social Justice and all other SDGs’. Held on 22 April 2026 during Global Action Week for Education (GAWE), the event called on world leaders to reform the global financial architecture and invest boldly in public education as a political and ethical obligation, not an optional cost.

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Education as a political choice and a peace imperative

Opening the event, GCE President Refat Sabbah stressed that education financing “*is not merely a technical or financial matter; it is a political decision that reflects state priorities and values.*” When governments decide where to allocate scarce resources, they are in reality choosing between people or “instruments of control,” and between investing in the future or managing permanent crisis. Cuts to education do not just mean fewer schools or teachers; they reproduce poverty, widen social inequalities, and weaken the resilience societies.

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GCE and its members reiterated their belief that education is a critical enabler of peace, social cohesion, gender justice and all other SDGs, building more inclusive and peaceful societies, challenging discrimination, and breaking cycles of violence. UN Secretary-General António Guterres' own warning to the 2026 FfD Forum, that governments are spending more “on instruments of death than the foundations of development and peace”, framed the discussion on the stark trade-offs between rising military budgets and underfunded public services.

GCE Global Coordinator Grant Kasowanjete highlighted that more than 260 million children remain out of school, largely because of inequitable financing, and stressed that education budgets must be designed to confront inequality, ensure quality, and withstand economic shocks. He argued that every unit of currency invested in education reduces future costs in unemployment, crime and poor health, making equitable, sustainable, and efficient financing central to any development strategy.

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Broken promises and structural barriers to SDG 4

Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

Vernor Muñoz presented GCE's monitoring of the Transforming Education Summit (TES) education financing track, warning that TES has become “another example of promises made and broken.” He noted that children in low-income countries receive just a fraction of what is spent per learner in wealthy OECD nations, and that UNICEF projects a sharp decline in education funding by 2026, which could push the number of out-of-school children from 272 million to 278 million.

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Vernor located the education financing crisis in deeper structural injustices such as persistent colonial power relations reproduced through debt conditionalities, austerity, and an international financial architecture that deprives countries in the Global South of the resources they need for strong public education systems. International financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF continue to promote austerity and social spending cuts, while corporate tax avoidance and evasion drain revenues that could fund schools, teachers, and students. At the same time, military spending is surging, with defence investments vastly outpacing capital investment in education, emphasising that today's funding gaps are the product of deliberate political and economic choices.

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Regional realities: Austerity, debt, and privatisation

Speakers from the Asia-Pacific, the Arab region, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean detailed how global dynamics translate into concrete national and regional crises for education financing.

- In the Asia-Pacific, ASPBAE's Rene Raya described a region that is economically dynamic yet still home to half the world's poorest people and the largest concentration of youth and adult illiterates, with persistent gender disparities and high numbers of out-of-school children and youth. Despite growth, many countries in South and Southeast Asia are among the lowest spenders on education relative to GDP, and the Asia-Pacific has become the most privatised education region globally, as public underinvestment opens space for commercial providers.

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- In Sri Lanka, Shantha Kulathunge of the Coalition for Education Development (CED Sri Lanka) showed how economic mismanagement, tax giveaways, and a severe debt crisis triggered IMF-backed austerity, pushing the country to default and forcing deep cuts in social spending, including education. Education's share of GDP is about 2%, far below the 6% demanded by civil society, and a new Public Financial Management Act caps primary expenditure at 13% of GDP, effectively locking in low education spending for years to come.
- From the Arab region, Kamal Messaoui of the Tunisia National Education Coalition highlighted the twin pressures of chronic under-financing and war, leading to severe setbacks in public education, huge numbers of children out of school, and growing privatisation, as private actors step into weakened public systems. Conflicts in places such as Gaza, Lebanon and Sudan are exacerbating fiscal crises and eroding states' ability to guarantee the right to education.

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- Speaking on Africa, Tahirou Traoré of the Coalition Nationale pour l'Éducation Pour Tous du Burkina Faso (CN-EPT/BF) emphasised that many African countries are failing to meet the commitment to allocate at least 20% of national budgets or 4-6% of GDP to education, even as debt service consumes an ever-larger share of public resources. A large proportion of African countries spend more on servicing debt than on education or health, while low tax-to-GDP ratios and massive losses from tax evasion undermine domestic resource mobilisation.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, CLADE's Israel Quirino connected education financing to tax justice, illustrating how regressive tax systems and tax avoidance by the super-rich deprive states of the resources needed for quality public education. He noted that a modest progressive tax on individuals with over one million dollars in assets could generate billions annually, enough to fund education for millions of students, while in Honduras, losses from tax evasion and avoidance far exceed current education spending.

Together, these testimonies showed how austerity, debt distress, regressive tax regimes, and privatisation are widening the financing gap and pushing the most marginalised learners further behind.

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Changing the rules: Tax justice, debt relief, and global reform

A central theme of the side event was the urgent need to overhaul the global financial and tax architecture so that education and other essential public services can be sustainably financed. Speakers from the TaxEd Alliance, Tax Justice Network, and national education coalitions highlighted the emerging UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation (“UN Tax Convention”) as a historic opportunity to shift tax rule making from exclusive clubs towards a more inclusive, UN led process.

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Ucizi Ngulube of the TaxEd Alliance explained how countries like Zambia face a double squeeze of falling education budgets, rising debt servicing, and huge revenue losses from tax incentives and profit-shifting by multinational corporations, often encouraged by international financial institutions in the name of investment and private-sector-led growth. Civil society is therefore pushing for progressive domestic resource mobilisation, resistance to regressive taxes such as VAT hikes, and stronger safeguards against austerity conditions that undermine social spending.

Bernice Mpere-Gyeke from the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition shared reflections from the UN Tax Convention negotiations in Nairobi, stressing that tax justice is central to education equity and that developing countries must have a stronger voice in designing global tax rules. She underlined the need for fair allocation of taxing rights, attention to digital economies, and action on illicit financial flows, as well as the critical role of national education coalitions in linking global tax debates to concrete demands for increased, equitable education budgets at home.

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The event also took note of new initiatives like the Borrowers' Platform launched during the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, while cautioning that coordination and capacity-building will not be enough without deeper reforms, including a UN Convention on Sovereign Debt to secure fair, transparent, and rights-based approaches to debt cancellation and restructuring.



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A shared agenda for action

To summarise the discussions, Cecilia “Thea” Soriano of GCE reiterated the common agenda and actions calling on governments and the international community to:

- Reform the international financial architecture so that it is participatory, inclusive, and transformative, guided by sustainable development and human rights rather than narrow fiscal targets.
- Address structural drivers of the education financing gap, including tax abuse, illicit financial flows, pervasive corruption, and declining development assistance.
- Strengthen public investment in essential services - especially public education, health and social protection - through equitable, inclusive, and sustainable financing, grounded in tax justice and robust domestic resource mobilisation.

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- Set specific targets and ring-fence resources for the most marginalised and excluded groups, including those in rural, remote, and conflict-affected areas, as well as learners facing gender, disability or socio-economic discrimination.
- Ensure transparent, inclusive, and gender-responsive public budgeting, with strong accountability and active participation of civil society, teachers' unions, youth, and communities.

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- Scrutinise so-called “innovative” financing schemes and public-private partnerships to ensure they strengthen rather than undermine public systems, uphold human rights, and avoid corporate capture of education.
- Meet longstanding commitments on Official Development Assistance (ODA), with donor countries allocating at least 0.7% of GNI to ODA and giving adequate priority to education, health, climate action and social protection.

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As GCE's Global Action Week for Education 2026 rallies under the banner “Hold the Flame High,” civil society is signalling that time is running out to deliver on SDG 4, but that one last concerted push, grounded in tax justice, debt justice, and courageous political choices, can still secure the right to inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all.

You can view the full video of the virtual side event [HERE](#).

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GCE Launches First-Ever Podcast on Education Financing for GAWE 2026

GCE's inaugural podcast episode, 'Hold the Flame High: GCE Voices on Education Financing', brought together speakers from across the movement to unpack the global crisis in education funding and outline justice-based solutions during Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2026.



Hold the Flame High: GCE Voices on Education Financing

GCE Podcast



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Hosted by Cecilia “Thea” Soriano, GCE’s Campaigns and Communications Manager, the episode featured Refat Sabbah, GCE President and General Secretary of the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), Solange Akpo from ANCEFA (Africa education coalition), René Raya from ASPBAE (Asia-Pacific education network), Israel Quirino from CLADE (Latin America and the Caribbean education network), and Crispin Williams, GCE Board Member, representing ENACE (Europe and North America education coalition). It also included Dennis Sinyolo from Education International, youth leader Abideen Olasupo from the GCE Youth Constituency, and GCE Global Coordinator Grant Kasowanjete.

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Across the conversation, speakers described how debt, austerity, shrinking aid, and regressive tax systems are eroding public education budgets, with many countries still falling short of the 4-6% of GDP and 15-20% of public expenditure benchmarks for education. They highlighted the scale of the global teacher shortage, the disproportionate impact on conflict-affected and marginalised communities, and the political choices that drive underfunding, even as military spending and debt repayments rise.

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The episode also showcased concrete advocacy strategies already shifting debates on education financing such as tax-justice and domestic resource-mobilisation campaigns in the Asia-Pacific, regional frameworks for sustainable public education financing in Latin America and the Caribbean, union-led efforts to resist austerity and privatisation, and youth-led storytelling and budget monitoring in Nigeria. Grant Kasowanjete linked these struggles to GCE’s global calls for adequate public financing, strong regulation of private actors, gender-transformative and equitable funding, progressive tax reform, and fair sovereign debt processes.

The podcast closed with appeals from each speaker to governments and international donors, urging them to “hold the flame high” for inclusive, well-financed public education, not only during GAWÉ 2026, but across all policy and financing arenas where the right to education is at stake.

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Armenia puts education financing in focus during GAWWE 2026

As part of the 2026 Global Action Week for Education (GAWWE) on education financing, a roundtable discussion took place in Vanadzor at the “Real School” educational centre. The event was organised by the Armenian and Artsakh coalitions and brought together civil society representatives, educators, journalists, legal professionals, students, and other key actors from the education sector.



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April-May 2026



Discussions focussed on insufficient education financing in Armenia and the challenges faced by schools in small rural communities. A central concern raised at the roundtable was the government's policy of "optimising" rural schools, which in practice has meant closing some local schools and bussing children daily to larger institutions. Participants also discussed the issue of children who have dropped out of school, examining how funding gaps and school closures can deepen exclusion and inequality in education.

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April-May 2026



Participants identified concrete solutions and formulated demands to be addressed to the Government of Armenia. They focused on practical steps and policy recommendations to improve access to, and the quality of, education, especially in small and remote communities, and to ensure the continuity and sustainability of local schooling.

The event concluded with plenary discussion to refine and consolidate these proposals into a unified list of demands. Participants emphasised the importance of joint efforts by government, civil society, and education professionals to strengthen education financing and guarantee equal access to quality education for all children in Armenia.

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DEMANDS OF THE ARMENIAN AND ARTSAKH COALITIONS OF THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, AND THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Based on the roundtable discussion held on April 23, 2026, in the city of Vanadzor, Republic of Armenia, and on behalf of the participants, the Armenian and Artsakh coalitions of the Global Campaign for Education urge the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia, and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Armenia to:

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April-May 2026



- Allocate at least 4-6% of the gross domestic product and/or 15-20% of the state budget of the Republic of Armenia to the education sector.
- Prohibit the consolidation of general education schools based solely on economic considerations, as this may pose a threat to the comprehensive development of rural communities, especially border communities.
- Suspend the implementation of the 300 Schools “Program for ensuring access to quality educational services” and return it to broad public discussion in order to introduce changes that serve the interests of the comprehensive development of border and small communities.

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- Take decisive measures to ensure the inclusion of all children in the Republic of Armenia, without discrimination, in the system of compulsory general education and to finally resolve this issue.
- Implement a tax policy in the field of business and economic activity based on the principles of equality and justice.
- Prohibit the granting of tax privileges to individual businesses and economic operators, as this undermines the constitutional principles of freedom of economic activity and free economic competition (Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia) and leads to significant budgetary losses.

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- Renovate and furnish all shelters in educational institutions throughout the Republic of Armenia, and first and foremost in border communities, ensuring that they are equipped with all basic utilities and sanitary-hygienic conditions; and in communities where shelters do not exist, construct new ones.

Vanadzor, Armenia

23 April 2026

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

GAWÉ 2026: Latin America and the Caribbean mobilises for fair and sustainable education financing

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, civil society, students, educators and young people joined forces during the 2026 Global Action Week for Education (GAWÉ) to demand sufficient, sustainable, and equitable public financing for education.

our story 5h
red.clade



La educa
es un de
no un ne



 Redclade.org

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

O ESTADO DA EDUCAÇÃO E O SUBFINANCIAMENTO, FALSA PRIVATIZANTES E CAMINHOS

NOITE 2 | 19/05 | 19H ÀS 22H



Andressa Pellanda

Coordenadora geral da Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação |
Doutora em Ciências (IRI/USP) |
Membro do DDEP/FE/USP



Nelsy Lizarazo

Coordenadora geral da Campanha Latino-americana pelo Direito à Educação (CLADE)



Campanha Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación

Under the call to “*mantener la llama en alto*” (keep the flame high), the region placed the urgency of financing public education at the centre of the political agenda, in a context marked by economic austerity, armed conflicts, and deepening inequalities.

A global education crisis driven by underfunding

GAWE 2026 took place just four years before the deadline for the 2030 Agenda, at a time when the world is off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on education. More than 272 million children and young people remain out of school, and progress in learning outcomes, early childhood education, and technical and vocational training is stagnating. The world is also facing a severe teacher crisis, with an estimated 50 million additional teachers needed by 2030 to ensure the right to quality education for all.

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#SAME2026

Desde el 20 al 25 de abril

Tatiana Cardona, integrante de la Federación Internacional de Fe y Alegría parte de la membresía CLADE, también intervino con un llamado a la priorización presupuestaria para que los Estados garanticen el Derecho Humano a la Educación.

Financing lies at the heart of this crisis. Low- and lower-middle-income countries face an annual education financing gap of 97 billion US dollars, while four in ten countries have failed to meet international benchmarks of allocating between 4% and 6% of GDP and/or 15% to 20% of public budgets to education. At the same time, official development assistance for education is declining, while global military expenditure has reached an historic 2.443 trillion US dollars in 2023, exposing a deeply troubling misalignment of international priorities.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

**NO MUNDO:
AS SOLUÇÕES
POSSÍVEIS**



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION

Giovanna Modé

Assessora de incidência política da
Campanha Mundial pela Educação
(CME) | Pesquisadora e doutora em
educação pela FE-USP



Julia Dietrich

Doutoranda em Educação pela
FE-USP | Membro do DEEP/FE/USP

Latin America and the Caribbean: inequality, debt and austerity

In Latin America and the Caribbean, these global trends intersect with a regional reality of extreme inequality, regressive tax systems, rising debt, and fiscal constraints that limit the capacities of states to guarantee strong public education systems. In many countries, debt servicing has equalled or surpassed education budgets, while austerity measures have eroded public systems and widened social divides.

The advance of privatisation and market-based approaches have exacerbated inequalities in education and disproportionately affected historically excluded populations, including women and girls, Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, migrants, and people living in poverty. As a result, the region is falling behind on key SDG 4 targets, especially those relating to teachers, quality education, and lifelong learning.

GCE BUZZ

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ECONOMIA QUE CUIDA DA TERRA E DA GENTE: INVESTIR EM EDUCAÇÃO NO FUTURO E NO PRESENTE

**CURSO GRATUITO DA
SEMANA DE AÇÃO MUNDIAL 2026**

CLADE's call: financed public education to transform the region

The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) joined the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) in making GAWÉ 2026 a strategic moment for global and regional advocacy. CLADE's regional position highlighted that education is an enabling human right on which the realisation of all other rights depends, and warned that the existing financing crisis threatens the achievement of SDG 4.

Civil society organisations within CLADE stressed the urgency of strengthening public systems through fair and sufficient fiscal policies that guarantee free, public, quality education. They called on states to meet and exceed international benchmarks by investing at least 4%-6% of GDP and 15%-20% of public spending in education, protecting education budgets from austerity measures, regulating private actors, and ensuring decent working conditions for teachers.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



Justice in taxation and international financing

For CLADE, fiscal justice is a structural condition for sustainable education financing. In a region where tax systems are highly regressive and tax evasion and avoidance are estimated at 6.7% of regional GDP, CLADE advocated for progressive, equitable, and transparent taxation in which those with greater wealth contribute more. This includes transforming tax systems, strengthening tax administrations, improving information on taxpayers, and guaranteeing transparency and accountability to citizens.

GAW2026 also underlined the responsibility of the international community. The campaign denounced the sustained reduction in development assistance for education and called for reform of the international financial architecture, action on unjust debt burdens, and fulfilment of the long-standing commitment to allocate 0.7% of gross national income to development aid.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



Regional dialogue: ‘Finance Education, Transform the Region’

As part of GAWE 2026, CLADE convened the regional event “Finance Education, Transform the Region: Latin American and Caribbean Dialogue” on 24 April 2026. The dialogue brought together social organisations, youth movements, teachers’ unions, and decision-makers to examine the impacts of underfunding, debt, austerity, and privatisation on education systems, and to generate shared proposals for fiscal justice, debt relief, and increased public investment in education.

Through this initiative, CLADE sought to strengthen regional mobilisation, showcase voices from communities and movements, and position public education as a cornerstone of equality, social justice, democracy, and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

Students mobilise across Spain to defend the right to digital education in emergencies

Thousands of children, adolescents, and educators across Spain came together during Global Action Week for Education (GAWÉ) 2026 to advocate for equitable access to digital education, especially in times of crisis.



GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



Led by the Spanish Coalition of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE Spain), mobilisations took place in more than 10 cities, highlighting the urgent need to guarantee digital learning as a fundamental right during emergencies. Participants called on policymakers and the wider public to ensure that no learner is left behind when crises disrupt access to education.

Throughout the week, students and educators emphasised that education, and access to digital tools that enable it, is foundational to all other rights. They underscored its role in shaping a future grounded in dignity, opportunity, and resilience.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



A series of events brought this message to life across the country. These included:

- The participation of 120 children in the Galician Parliament
- A demonstration involving 400 children in Tudela
- An event with over 200 students at the Parliament of Navarre
- A batucada and gymkhana in central Valencia, alongside an advocacy event at Les Corts
- A central gathering in Melilla with more than 400 participants

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



In addition, academic forums were held in A Coruña, Valencia, and Valladolid, enabling deeper dialogue on digital education in emergency contexts. Education materials were widely distributed and used across cities, including Santander, Burgos, León, Salamanca, Valladolid, Valencia, Melilla, Santiago de Compostela, Ourense, Lugo, Pamplona, Tudela, A Coruña, Pontevedra, Vigo, and Guadalcacín.

GCE Spain continues to raise awareness on the importance of digital education in emergencies through advocacy, public engagement, and support to education institutions using these resources. The coalition remains committed to pushing for increased investment to safeguard the right to education, even in times of crisis.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



This initiative is supported by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) under the project “The Global Campaign for Education in defense of the right to education in emergency situations.” Read more:

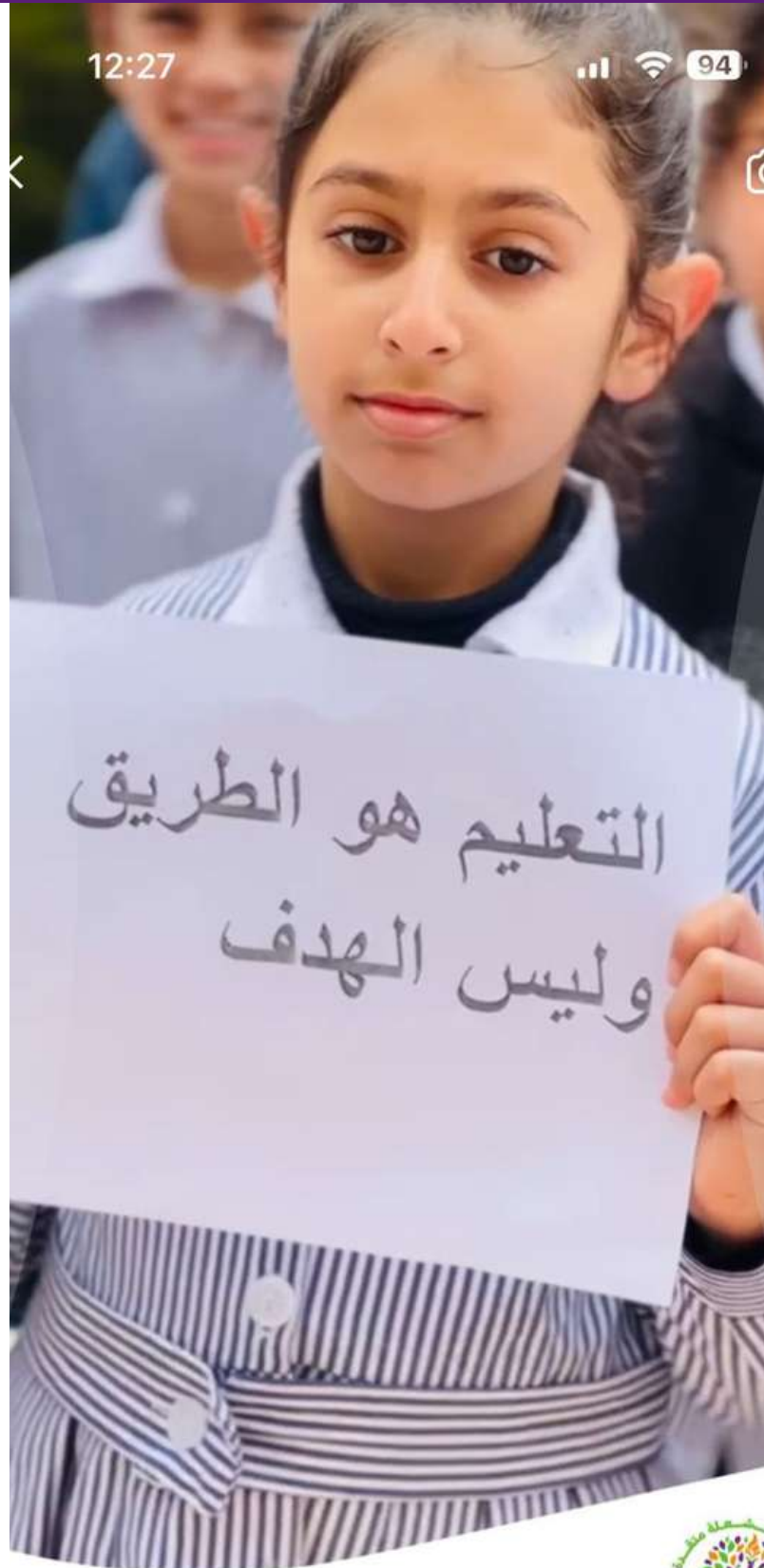
- Full news coverage (Spanish): <https://cme-espana.org/2026/05/11/la-semana-de-accion-mundial-por-la-educacion-moviliza-a-miles-de-personas-en-espana-por-una-educacion-digital-equitativa/>
- Full statement on Education in Emergencies (English): https://cme-espana.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/POSICIONAMIENTO-SAME-2026_INGLES.pdf
- GCE Spain website: <https://cme-espana.org/>

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

Spotlight on Advocacy and Education Financing in the Arab Region

Across April and May 2026, the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) and its member coalitions mobilised around Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2026, placing education financing, justice, and resilience at the center of regional advocacy. Under the shared slogans “Fund Education, Not War,” “Hold the Flame High,” and “Keep the Flame Burning,” coalitions convened webinars, conferences, roundtables, and local actions that brought together educators, youth, media actors, and civil society from across the Arab region and beyond.



GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



المحور الثالث: المناصرة في
سياقات الأزمات والطوارئ

د. وحيد جبران

منسق التعاونية الإقليمية
للتعليم في الطوارئ - فلسطين



المحور الثاني: تطور آليات المناصرة
- من الميدان إلى الفضاء الرقمي

أ. زهير عزعوزي

مستشار منظمات مجتمع مدني -
تونس



المحور الأول: المناصرة ودورها
في قضايا التعليم والتعلم

أ. كمال المشرقي

متخصص في آليات الحماية
الدولية - الأردن



التعقيب والاختتام

أ. ناهد سوسان

مديرة مؤسسة تربوية وناشطة
مجتمع مدني



المناقشة والتوصيات

أ. هناء فوزي رومان

خبير عربي وناشط مجتمع
مدني



تيسير اللقاء

أ. سهام عوّادي

ناشطة بالمجتمع المدني



المحور الرابع: توظيف الذكاء
الاصطناعي في المناصرة الرقمية

د. بيشر جدعون

رئيس جمعية تحديث وتطوير
التعليم، وخبير الالكسو في التربية
وتكنولوجيا التعليم - لبنان

Using AI, Media, and Knowledge for Advocacy

Aa regional webinar was held on “Advocacy and Artificial Intelligence,” exploring how AI and digital spaces can be leveraged for education advocacy in emergencies and pro-rights campaigns. This was followed by a webinar on “Educational Media in Times of Crisis,” which examined ethical, professional, and innovative approaches to educational content, misinformation, and digital communication during crises. ACEA also continued its interactive knowledge series on “The Development of Philosophy in Arab-Islamic Civilisation,” highlighting the philosophy of creativity and integrated knowledge systems through focus on Ibn Rushd, Al-Ghazali, and Al-Tusi, Muslim scholars and philosophers whose work shaped Islamic thought, especially debates on philosophy, theology, and knowledge.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

التعليم ليس أولوية مؤجلة بل حق لا يحتمل التأجيل

في وقت تتزايد فيه الأزمات، يبقى تمويل التعليم هو الطريق الوحيد نحو العدالة، والاستقرار، والمستقبل.

ضمن أسبوع العمل العالمي للتعليم 2026

تُطلق الحملة العربية للتعليم فعاليتها
يوم 25 نيسان/أبريل تحت شعار

مؤّلوا التعليم... لا للحرب
تمويل التعليم بدلاً من النزاعات

Global Action Week: Fund Education, Not War

On 25 April, ACEA formally launched regional activities for GAWE 2026 under the slogan “Fund Education, Not War,” calling for resources to be redirected from conflict to education as a path to justice, stability, and peace. A unified digital campaign, “Hold the Flame High,” showcased youth voices and awareness videos from across Arab countries, focusing on investing in teachers, early childhood education, tax justice, and inclusive, quality education for all. A regional launch conference under the slogan “Keep the Flame Burning” brought together leaders of education coalitions and networks to strengthen collective advocacy for financing education and guaranteeing the right to fair and inclusive learning.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

إدارة اللقاء



منى زامل

يشارك باللقاء



المحور الثالث: استراتيجيات
صمود الأنظمة التعليمية في
الأزمات ومدى فعاليتها في
المنطقة العربية
د. يوسف سلمان الرمي
رئيس شعبة التخطيط بمركز
البحوث والتطوير التربوي-
اليمن



المحور الثاني: الفجوات
والتحديات في صمود الأنظمة
التعليمية في الأزمات
د. سائدة عفونه
أكاديمية وباحثة تربوية
مختصة في التخطيط في
التعليم في ظل الحروب
والطوارئ - فلسطين



المحور الأول: مفهوم صمود
الأنظمة التعليمية في الأزمات
وأهميته ومقوماته
د. وحيد جبران
منسق تعاونية التعليم في
حالات الطوارئ الإقليمية



استعراض تجارب

وذلك يوم الأحد 26 نيسان / أبريل 2026

Resilient Systems and Fair Financing

Several thematic webinars deepened the focus on resilience and justice in education financing. A regional dialogue on “Resilience of Education Systems in Crises” examined foundations, challenges, and strategies for strengthening education systems in emergencies. The Moroccan Coalition for Education for All convened an online roundtable on “Fair Financing of Education: A Driver of Social Justice and Sustainable Development,” highlighting how equitable financing underpins social justice and the SDGs. Another regional webinar, “Learning for Decent Work,” explored transformations in adult learning and education, bridging gaps between adult skills and labour market needs, and promoting social inclusion and lifelong learning partnerships.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



أ. منير حسين
عضو مجلس إدارة
الائتلاف التربوي التونسي



د. رفعت صباح
رئيس
الحملة العالمية للتعليم



أ. كمال الميساوي
رئيس
الائتلاف التربوي التونسي



أ. شاهر جمعة البدوي
عن اللجنة القيادية للائتلاف
التربوي الفلسطيني
إعلامي وناشط تربوي



أ. حنان النفاتي
نائب رئيس
الائتلاف التربوي التونسي



د. المنصف الخميري
مستشار عام في الإعلام
والتوجيه المدرسي والجامعي

In early May, the Tunisian Educational Coalition, in cooperation with ACEA and the Regional Education Financing Cooperative, hosted a webinar on “The Reality of Education Financing in Arab Countries and Its Impact on the Quality of the Educational Process.” The Mauritanian Educational Coalition followed with a scientific webinar on “Education Financing in the Arab World: From International Commitments to National Priorities,” examining financing challenges, reform priorities, and the roles of governments, civil society, and the private sector.

GCE BUZZ

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Education Financing and the Role of Media and Teachers

The Regional Educational Media Cooperative and the Tunisian Educational Coalition organised a webinar on the role of educational media in promoting understanding of education financing and encouraging investment in knowledge and development. A two-day regional webinar, “Education Financing in the Arab World: Teachers’ Experiences during the Global Action Week,” brought together teachers from multiple countries to share how financing gaps affect schools, classrooms, learning continuity, and community resilience. Teachers also highlighted local initiatives and partnerships that are helping to address funding shortfalls in challenging political, economic, and displacement contexts.

العربية للتعليم للجميع - آكيا للمشاركة
إقليمية تحت عنوان: "تمويل التعليم في
ي: تجارب المعلمين خلال أسبوع العمل
ي تنظمها تعاونية المعلمين الإقليمية
ائتلافات التعليم في المنطقة العربية

يشارك باللقاء في اليوم الأول



أ. بلال محمد شحتو
مصر

الفجوة بين المدارس
(حكومي- خاص) / تأثير
التمويل على كثافة
الصفوف



أ. هند أشبيه أبوه
موريتانيا

أثر ضعف/تحسن التمويل
على البيئة الصفية وتوفر
الموارد التعليمية



أ. وفاء عطية اللوح
فلسطين

أثر الظروف السياسية على
تمويل التعليم / استدامة
العملية التعليمية (تجربة
من غزة)



أ. مريم حسن علي محمد
السودان

التحديات في ظل الأزمات
/ كيف يتكيف المعلم مع
نقص الموارد



أ. نوال زيناتية
مستشارة تعاونية
المعلمين الإقليمية

ميسرة الندوة

مايو 2026

فلسطين

مصلحة زوم

<https://us02w>

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



Global and Local Actions: From Dublin to Somalia

GAWE 2026 also saw engagement beyond the Arab region. In Dublin, at a conference organised by the Irish Network for Education Worldwide, ACEA's leadership represented by Refat Sabbah contributed to discussions on global education financing and coordination in support of multilateral funds such as Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), reaffirming that financing is a political decision reflecting national priorities. In Amman, Jordan, a major conference under the slogan "Keep the Flame Burning for Education" gathered government representatives, civil society organisations, educators, youth, and disability rights advocates to call for increased and sustainable public investment, budget transparency, youth participation, and fair resource distribution for inclusive education.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



At country level, GAWE 2026 activities continued in Lebanon and Somalia, with events in Tripoli, Akkar, and Sidon emphasising the urgency of prioritising education financing, supporting teachers, strengthening digital transformation, and reducing burdens on families. Field actions in Somalia raised community voices for the right to education and underlined that education is not optional but a fundamental right and a cornerstone of more just and stable societies.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



GCE at the First Education Worldwide Conference of the Irish Network for Education Worldwide (INEW)

As part of Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2026, Refat Sabbah, GCE President and Secretary General of the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), participated in the First-Ever Education Worldwide Conference hosted by the Irish Network for Education Worldwide (INEW) on 28 April 2026 in Dublin.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



The event brought together global leaders to discuss education financing, one of the most urgent challenges today. Representing GCE, Crispin Williams (Board Member) joined a panel alongside experts, including Laura Frigenti, CEO of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), to reflect on the current state of global education funding and the need for stronger international coordination, particularly in support of initiatives such as Education Cannot Wait and GPE.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



In his intervention, Refat stressed that, “Education financing is not a purely technical or financial matter; at its core, it is a political decision that reflects a state’s priorities and value system.” He emphasised that the real issue is not a lack of resources, but how they are allocated. Declining investment in education, he warned, deepens inequalities and weakens the resilience of societies.

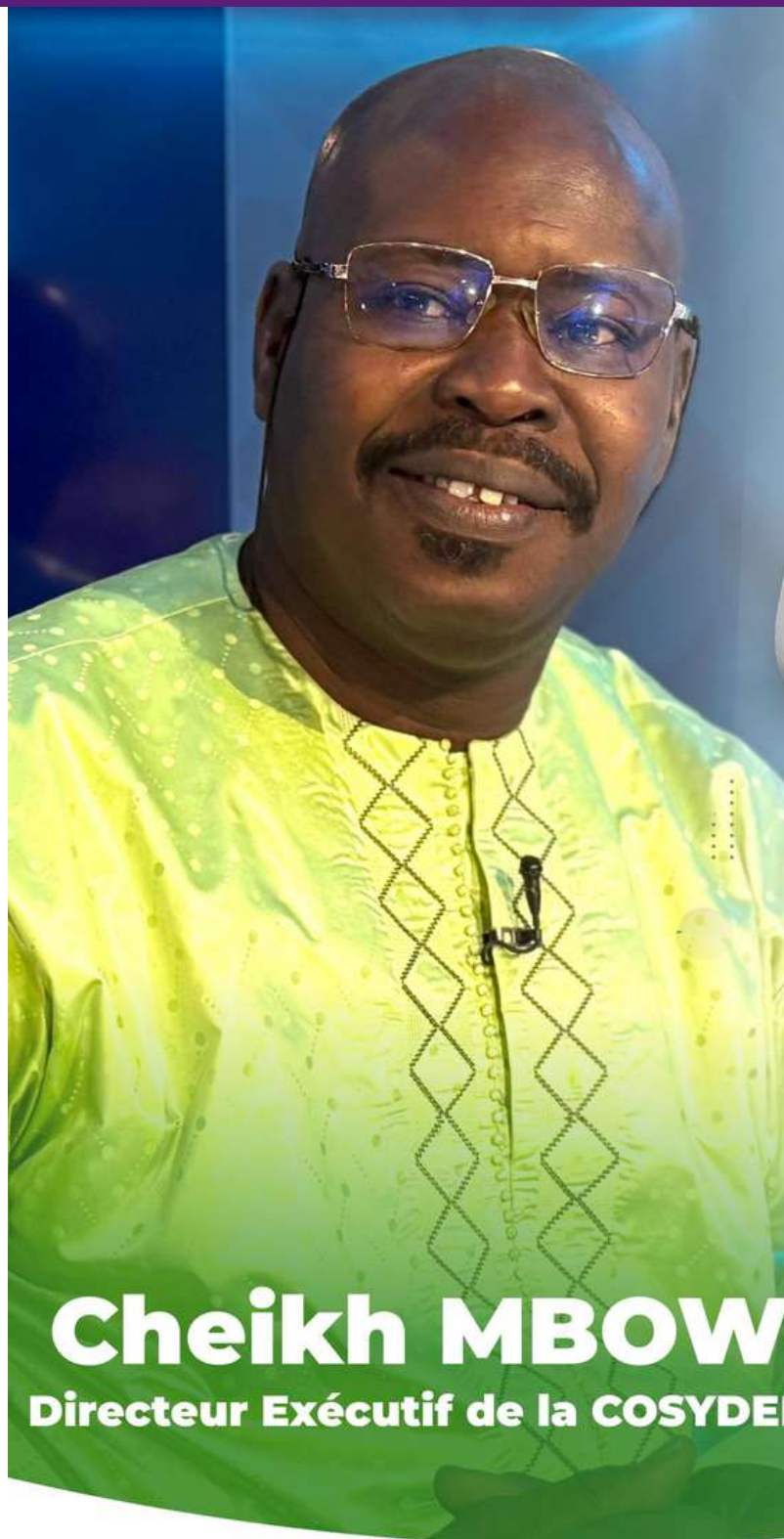
Refat concluded his intervention by reiterating that education must be recognised as a pillar of justice and dignity, and investing in it must not be delayed.

GCE BUZZ

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GAWE 2026: “Our Children Can’t Wait Any Longer” COSYDEP Calls for Equitable Education Financing

As part of the Global Week of Action for Education (GAWE 2026), COSYDEP, the national education coalition in Senegal, convened a panel discussion on the theme: ‘What effective approaches can influence education financing policies and practices?’



Cheikh MBOW
Directeur Exécutif de la COSYDEP



COSYDEP
Sénégal

**Semaine
pour l’Edu**

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

MARDI
28
AVRIL

14H00
17H00

Sur Meet

PANELISTES



Cheikh MBOW
Directeur Exécutif de la COSYDEP

MODÉRATEUR



Abdoulaye DIOP
CA COSYDEP



Jean Mathieu LAROCHE
UNICEF



Cheikh Diaw
COSYDEP sédhiou

Education : impact du sous-financement
(Stabilité et Qualité)



Abdourahmane Gueye
coordonnateur USEQ

Financement :
Pistes innovantes et durables



Adama Seck
COSYDEP Fatick

Enseignements et recommandations
(Revue sectorielle locale)

**Promouvoir la transparence pour une
meilleure gestion des ressources**

The virtual session brought together approximately 100 participants, including civil society actors, partner institutions such as UNICEF and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and local coordinators from across Senegal. Discussions underscored the tangible consequences of chronic underfunding, including teacher shortages, reliance on makeshift classrooms, persistent regional disparities, and limited access to quality education. In the Sédhiou region alone, over 400 teaching positions remained unfilled in 2025, while nearly 18% of classrooms continued to operate in temporary shelters.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



**La reddition des comptes est
indispensable pour une bonne
gestion des ressources**

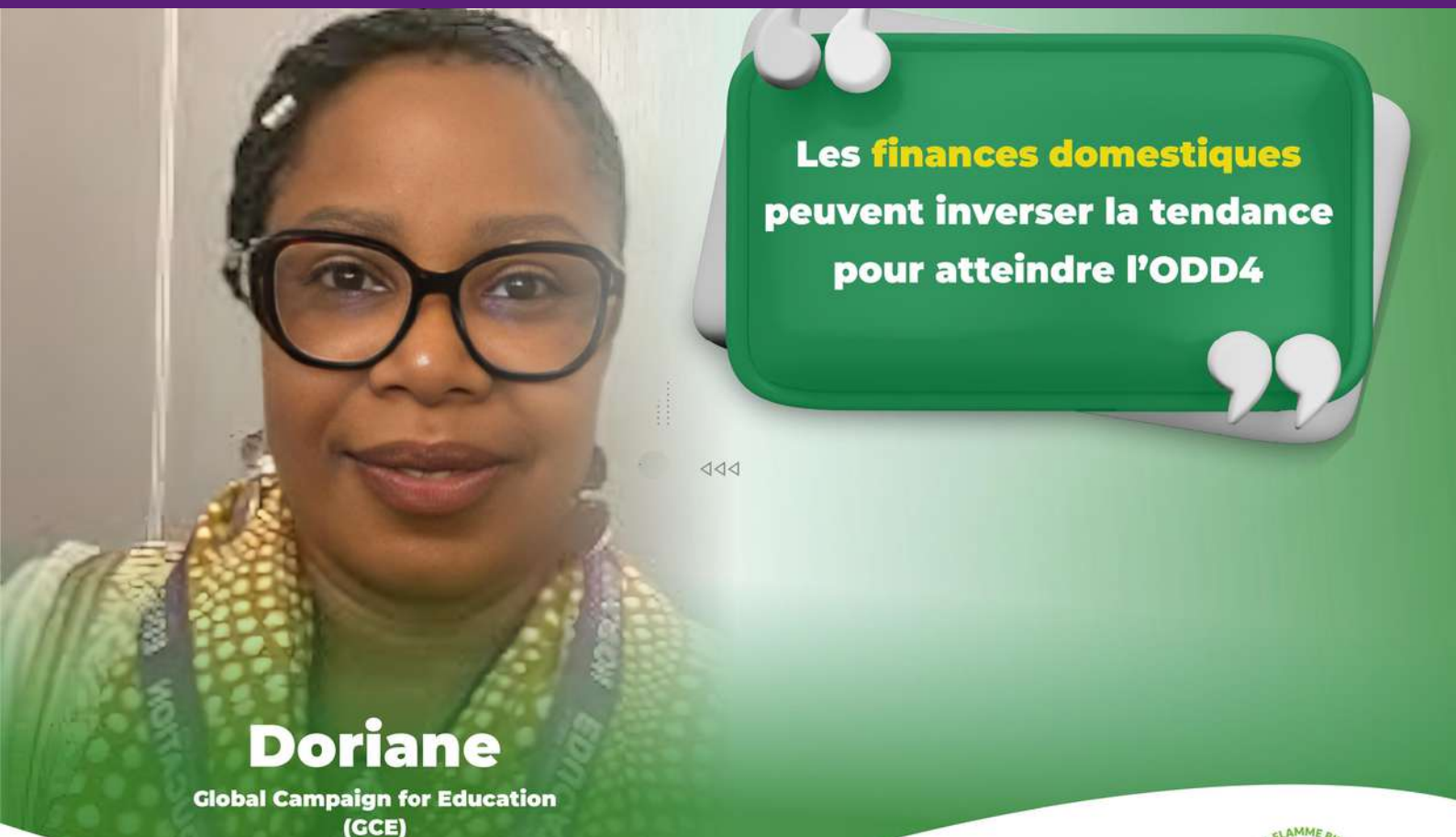
Omar NIANG

Highlighting the urgency of the situation, Oumar Niang, Chairman of COSYDEP's Board of Directors, stated, "Our children, who represent the future of this country, can no longer wait for budgets to be adjusted by chance. They need political will translated into concrete financial action."

Echoing this call, GCE's Doriane Tchamanbe emphasised the importance of strengthening national-level advocacy to identify and advance context-specific, sustainable financing approaches for education.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026



Participants collectively called for increased public investment in education, alongside innovative strategies to mobilise domestic resources, particularly through taxation and revenues from extractive industries. The need for greater transparency in the management of education funds was also strongly emphasised, with citizen oversight and accountability identified as critical mechanisms to ensure that investments effectively reach and benefit learners.

The discussion concluded with a unified call to action - Education is a fundamental right that demands strong political commitment, equitable resource allocation, and an empowered civil society to hold decision-makers accountable to their commitments.

GCE BUZZ

April-May 2026

Launch of GAWE 2026 in Burkina Faso

On 5 May 2026, the National Coalition for Education for All of Burkina Faso (CN-EPT/BF) launched the 2026 Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) in Ouagadougou.

GAW 2026 in Burkina Faso takes place against the backdrop of the replenishment campaign of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for the 2026-2030 period. Within this international dynamic, national actors are seeking to mobilise greater and more sustainable resources to support education systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.



GCE BUZZ

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In Burkina Faso, GAWE has become an important space for bringing together public authorities, civil society, teachers' unions, communities, and technical partners around key issues of access, quality, and financing. The campaign's focus this year on sustainable financing highlights the need to move towards more predictable, domestically driven, and equity-oriented investments in education.

With less than five years to go to the 2030 deadline for Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the promise of inclusive and equitable quality education is still far from being realised for many children in Burkina Faso. This year, GAWE unfolds in a complex context of overlapping crises and constrained public budgets, but also in the wake of renewed international debates on the future of education financing. As countries and donors prepare for the next GPE replenishment, Burkinabè actors are using GAWE as a national platform to assess progress in implementing the Education and Training Sector Plan 2017-2030, in line with SDG 4.

GCE BUZZ

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Despite significant budgetary efforts by the state, the education sector continues to face major challenges. Completion rates remain low at several levels of schooling, while many children, particularly girls, rural learners, displaced children, and those living with disabilities, still struggle to enter, remain, and succeed in school. Opportunities in technical and vocational education are too limited, even though young people urgently need pathways into decent work and livelihoods. As CN-EPT/BF's coordinator, Tahirou Traoré, underlined at the launch, these figures represent children who walk long distances only to find overcrowded classrooms, young people who abandon their studies for lack of support, and families who continue to see education as a fragile promise rather than a guaranteed right.

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For CN-EPT/BF, GAWE 2026 is a call to deepen political dialogue and to increase domestic, sustainable financing for education. The coalition stresses that education must be treated as a long-term public investment, capable of driving social cohesion, economic transformation, and resilience in the face of multiple crises. The campaign in Burkina Faso therefore aims to promote concrete solutions to improve governance, transparency, and the efficiency of education spending, while ensuring that resources are directed first to the most marginalised learners.

Activities planned as part of GAWE 2026 will run from May to July across the country's 13 regions, involving a wide range of education stakeholders. Through debates, public events, media actions, and community-level initiatives, organisers hope to generate collective commitment to an education system that is accessible, inclusive, and responsive to Burkina Faso's realities.

Click to read articles (in French) about CN-EPT/BF and GAWE 2026 on the following digital news platforms - [Nouvelles Infos](#) and [Burkina24](#).

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TENMET leads GAWE 2026 advocacy push

The Tanzania Education Network (TENMET) has been commemorating the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) for the past 18 years. In 2026, its GAWE activities once again brought together education stakeholders, government representatives, media institutions and communities to amplify citizens' voices on the right to education and the urgent need for sustainable financing.

GAWE has become a key global moment for coordinated advocacy, and in Tanzania it provided TENMET and its members with a platform to influence policy, spotlight barriers to access and equity, and connect local realities with global SDG 4 commitments. Throughout the week, events highlighted challenges in education financing, the importance of stakeholder collaboration, and the role of communities in strengthening education systems.

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Strong media visibility for education financing

To maximise visibility and public engagement, TENMET worked closely with a wide range of media outlets, from national newspapers and online news sites to blogs, radio, and social media channels. Coverage spanned opening day events, field visits, and closing activities, ensuring that key messages on education financing and local solutions reached audiences across Tanzania.

The campaign generated extensive online content, including news articles, feature stories, photo essays, reels and posts documenting GAWÉ activities and community perspectives. TENMET's own social media channels alone reached around 53,000 people, significantly boosting the visibility of education advocacy messages and the network's institutional profile.

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Documenting impact and next steps

All media outputs from the five-day campaign were systematically documented and archived in a dedicated digital media folder to support accountability, learning and future advocacy. This archive includes online publications, social media content and digital documentation of GAWE events, serving as an important resource for monitoring reach and impact over time.

Overall, GAWE 2026 in Tanzania achieved strong digital media visibility and contributed to raising public awareness of the pressures on education funding and the importance of collaborative solutions. TENMET's Communications and Media Unit recommends continued strategic engagement with journalists and media houses, as well as ongoing investment in digital archiving, to further strengthen education advocacy and support sustainable education financing in the years ahead.

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GCE joins 12th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and its members actively contributed to the 12th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD), held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28-30 April 2026 with the theme, ‘Turning the Tide: Transformative and Coordinated Actions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063’.

Taking place with less than five years to the 2030 deadline, the forum underlined how slowly Africa is progressing on 12 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and even regressing on five, raising the stakes for action on education and wider social justice.



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This year's ARFSD showcased Uganda as a standout example of SDG follow-through, having implemented most of the ARFSD 11 declaration and used a high-level national SDG forum to take stock of progress across all ministries and departments. Uganda has increased its tax-to-GDP ratio from 12.5% in 2022 to 14.2% in 2024/25 and prioritised in-country value addition of minerals to create jobs, illustrating how domestic policies can drive more equitable development.

Throughout the discussions, delegates highlighted unsustainable debt levels and illicit financial flows as major obstacles to sustainable development. Domestic resource mobilisation emerged as a central theme, with calls for progressive digitalised taxation, digital public administration, and innovative financing to support a just digital and green transition.

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GCE's engagement and alliances

GCE, ANCEFA, and Africa National Education Coalitions (NECs) used the forum to deepen collaboration with key stakeholders engaged in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes, which are the official UN reviews where governments report on their progress towards the SDGs. VNRs are country-led reports presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), and they are a key moment for civil society to influence how progress is assessed.

In a meeting with the focal point for Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (the UN contact responsible for coordinating civil society participation in these processes) NECs were urged to link with national civil society organisation (CSO) platforms, which bring together different NGOs and movements at country level. This would allow NEC Spotlight reports (their detailed assessments of education and SDG implementation) to feed into broader civil society shadow reports on the SDGs, which offer an independent check on the official narratives of governments.

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Where national civil society platforms are weak or inactive, national education coalitions were encouraged to step up and coordinate civil society contributions, with the possibility of them UN getting support for their representatives to present these messages at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). National education coalitions at ARFSD also met with their country delegations to agree how to bring education and equity more strongly into the ongoing Voluntary National Review processes, which cover all the SDGs and will be validated in the coming weeks.

GCE representatives took the opportunity to connect with strategic partners, including Transparency International country chapters preparing Spotlight reports, Sightsavers Africa on disability-inclusive VNRs, and the African Parliamentary Network on Illicit Financial Flows and Taxation (APNIFFT), which works with parliamentarians in Southern and Central Africa on tax justice and advocacy. These connections open new avenues for GCE members to influence policy debates on financing, equity, and the right to education.

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The ARFSD discussions also stressed the need to equip young people for industrialisation and digitisation by expanding tertiary education and investing in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). For GCE and its members, this reinforces the importance of advocating for inclusive, publicly-funded education systems that serve all learners, especially girls, learners with disabilities, and those affected by conflict and climate change.

The forum concluded with a set of follow-up actions that will shape GCE's advocacy in the coming years. Civil society, including GCE members, will be crucial in monitoring government implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration, which embeds follow-up to the Sevilla Commitment on Financing for Development and the Doha Political Declaration of the “World Social Summit”.

Looking forward, Ethiopia will host COP 32 in 2027, presenting a key moment for Africa to push for climate outcomes that match the adaptation and resilience needs of the continent and long-term development pathways.

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As part of the follow-up to this and the wider 2030 Agenda, the SDGs under global review in 2027 will include SDG 4 on education, SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production), SDG 15 (sustainable ecosystems) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), making it essential for GCE and its members to begin early strategising for both COP 32 and the 2027 SDG Summit.

Member State participation in this year's ARFSD was uneven, with some countries absent or represented only by technical staff, and Regional Economic Communities largely missing from the room. This presents a direct advocacy opportunity for GCE coalitions to engage their Ministries of Education and push for strong political representation at ARFSD 13 and the 2027 review of SDG 4.

GCE will now work with its members across Africa to build on the connections and commitments forged at ARFSD 12, ensuring that education justice, financing, and accountability remain at the heart of Africa's sustainable development agenda.

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How Civil Society is Shaping Inclusive Education in Burkina Faso

In just one year, the National Coalition for Education for All in Burkina Faso (CN-EPT/BF) has helped turn evidence into high-level political commitments for inclusive education, especially for girls, children with disabilities, and internally displaced learners. With a 2025 grant of USD 2,000 from GCE's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion initiative, the coalition led a project titled *“Advocacy for inclusive and equitable education that takes gender and disability into account”*, ensuring that the needs of vulnerable learners are no longer sidelined in sector plans and budgets.

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To maximise its impact, CN-EPT/BF built alliances with three key civil society partners - the National Coalition Against Child Marriage in Burkina (CONAMEB), the Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education (APENF), and the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations and Structures Active in Non-Formal Education (COSENF). Together, these organisations set out to document how far education policies and budgets in Burkina Faso really respond to the needs of vulnerable learners and to use that evidence to influence decision-makers.



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Their assessment revealed a stark gap between policy and reality. While official texts express strong commitments to inclusive education, implementation on the ground remains limited and uneven. The report noted important gains such as financial support for some learners with disabilities, ad hoc teacher training initiatives, and the construction of access ramps in certain schools. However, these advances coexist with serious shortcomings such as toilets that are not adapted or accessible, support schemes that fail to meet specific needs, and a chronic lack of funding for both the National Strategy for Education in Emergency Situations and the National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education.

Grounded in this evidence, the coalition formulated actionable recommendations. These included increasing resources for inclusive education, expanding teacher training, constructing adapted and accessible school infrastructure, and scaling up non-formal education alternatives for internally displaced learners, children with disabilities, and out-of-school children and adolescents. A central demand was for gender- and inclusion-sensitive budgeting in ministerial action plans, so that political commitments to inclusion are reflected in how public funds are actually allocated and spent.

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Once the report was validated, CN-EPT/BF shifted from analysis to direct advocacy. On 14 November 2025, the coalition convened a high-level meeting that brought together representatives of the Presidency of Burkina Faso, the Prime Minister's Office, members of parliament, senior officials from the education ministries, technical and financial partners, organisations of persons with disabilities, and other civil society actors. Participants welcomed the quality and relevance of the report, and the Presidency publicly committed to supporting the implementation of its recommendations, signalling renewed political will around inclusive education.

At the education sector board meeting on 27 February 2026, the Minister for Basic Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages announced that he had received direct instructions from the Head of Government to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education in Burkina Faso. He tasked the heads of the “Access, Quality, Non-Formal Education, Finance and Steering” programmes, as well as regional directors of education, with integrating this decision into their action plans and budgets from 2026 onwards. “It is no longer simply a matter of building access ramps in schools just to claim that they are inclusive”, he said, signalling a paradigm shift from symbolic, project-based measures towards systemic, rights-based change.

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For CN-EPT/BF and its allies, these announcements are a critical milestone, not the end point. The coalition continues to monitor closely whether promises made at the highest levels of government translate into sustained budget allocations, strengthened teacher training, and more accessible, gender-responsive learning environments for all vulnerable learners. The experience in Burkina Faso illustrates the power of coordinated, evidence-based civil society action, supported by targeted resources, to reshape national education debates and push governments to move from “ramps as tokens” to real inclusion for every learner.

Teachers on the Move: A Wake-Up Call for Cameroon's Schools

This article draws on recent analysis and testimonies published by CEFAN, the national education coalition in Cameroon. CEFAN's newsletter highlights a growing but often overlooked crisis: teachers are leaving the classroom in alarming numbers. Many are abandoning their posts or emigrating to countries such as Canada and others in search of better pay, safer working conditions and more predictable careers. This quiet exodus is steadily weakening the foundations of the education system.



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In many schools, especially in rural and crisis-affected areas, a single teacher is responsible for very large classes, sometimes with more than 70 or 80 pupils. When experienced teachers leave and are not replaced, some subjects are no longer taught regularly, and pupils lose not only expertise but also the continuity and support that are essential for learning. The impact is particularly severe for children who are already facing social and economic disadvantage, deepening existing inequalities between regions and communities.

The reasons for this exodus are multiple but interlinked. Salaries often do not keep pace with the rising cost of living, while delays in the payment of allowances and benefits erode trust. Working conditions remain difficult, with overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching materials and, in some regions, persistent insecurity that makes going to work a daily risk. At the same time, career progression is uncertain and slow, leaving many teachers feeling that their efforts and qualifications are not properly recognised. While authorities have stepped up controls and audits to verify staff presence and address irregularities, these measures alone cannot restore confidence in the profession or persuade teachers to remain in their posts.

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It is therefore time for a new deal with teachers. If Cameroon is to reverse this trend, it needs more than stopgap measures. Teaching must be treated as a profession worthy of decent pay, predictable career paths and secure benefits. Salaries should be aligned with the real cost of living, and arrears and allowances paid transparently and on time. Posting teachers to remote or insecure areas must go hand in hand with appropriate support, including housing, hardship allowances, safety measures and opportunities for professional development.

A new deal also means giving teachers the tools to do their jobs: smaller classes where possible, adequate materials, continuous training and supportive school leadership. Teachers are more likely to stay when they feel effective, respected and part of a broader national project. Above all, it requires listening to teachers themselves. They know, from the inside, where the system fails and what needs to change. Constructive social dialogue between government, unions, communities and teachers should be seen not as a threat, but as a resource for building reforms that can truly work. Retaining teachers is not just a technical issue; it is a strategic choice about the kind of future Cameroon wants to build for its children.

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GCE Launches New Online Course on Gender-Transformative Education (GTE)

On 21 May 2026, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) brought together its members and partners to launch Learning for Advocacy and Influence on Gender Transformative Education (GTE), a new online course for civil society advocates and coalitions. The course is designed to translate commitments on gender equality and social inclusion into concrete action in classrooms, communities, and policy arenas.



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Grounded in practical application, it equips participants to analyse education systems, identify barriers to inclusion, and develop actionable advocacy strategies. It also addresses the realities of working in diverse and often challenging contexts, including humanitarian settings where existing inequalities are frequently intensified. By strengthening skills in advocacy and policy engagement, the course seeks to build collective power and drive systemic change towards truly gender transformative education.

Why gender transformative education, and why now?

GCE Gender Lead, Susmita Choudhury, highlighted that 273 million children and young people remain out of school, with 133 million excluded due to intersecting factors such as gender, poverty, disability, location, and displacement. Children with disabilities face particularly unsupportive learning environments, weakening their foundational skills.

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These inequalities stem from systemic discrimination, harmful norms, and chronic underfunding. Conflict and crises intensify exclusion, with girls often the first to leave school and the last to return. While many countries have progressive policies, weak implementation, limited capacity, poor coordination, and a widening global education financing gap mean commitments rarely reach the most marginalised learners.

GCE members already work to influence policy, hold governments to account, and advocate for equitable financing. What they need, Susmita noted, are practical tools, structured learning, and a shared framework to push for truly gender transformative education systems. The new course has been developed to meet that need.

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A practical, interactive course for advocates

GCE Knowledge Exchange and Learning Lead, Phumza Luthango, described the course as intentionally practical and co-created with civil society.

The six modules blend foundations with hands-on tools:

- Updated concepts on gender equality and social inclusion in and through education.
- In-depth exploration of gender-transformative education (GTE) and gender, social equality, and inclusion (GSEI), and how coalitions integrate these into advocacy.
- Disability inclusion and education in crises, emergencies and fragile contexts.
- Education financing and gender-responsive, inclusive budgeting, enabling advocates to assess whether resources reflect policy promises.
- A detailed Malawi case study and a school social audit to connect national plans with local realities.
- A final, action-focused module that supports participants to apply learning in their own advocacy.

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The course uses interactive exercises, case studies, quizzes, and multimedia instead of static text. Participants categorise examples, match concepts, and complete knowledge checks before short quizzes. Five modules include graded assessments (80% pass mark, up to three attempts), with a final module focused on application.

Around 20 short videos, many created for the course, feature dynamic captions, mobile-friendly formats, and real-world examples from GCE members. A video, *Small changes, big impact*, highlights initiatives in Burundi and South Sudan, showing how everyday actions can reduce dropout rates and strengthen inclusion in fragile contexts.

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Challenging norms and enabling reflection

A main aim of the course is to help advocates recognise and challenge harmful gender norms, including their own internalised biases. During the launch, participants reflected on stereotypes they grew up with and how these shape expectations about who studies, who cares, who earns, and who leads.

Within the course, reflective exercises and playful “flip card” activities surface sub-conscious assumptions embedded in everyday situations - from who clears up after gatherings to who stays home with a sick child. These elements are ungraded and designed to encourage honest self-reflection and dialogue, reinforcing that gender transformative education requires changes in mindsets as well as in policies and budgets.

You can see what the participants of the GTE launch had to say about gender stereotypes [HERE](#). The course provides a suite of downloadable tools and templates that participants can adapt to their contexts, including: