

GAWE MANIFESTO 2026

IN A WORLD ON FIRE, EDUCATION DOES NOT FALTER

On this Global Action Week for Education (GAWE), the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) reclaims that even though the world is in turmoil, conflicts are intensifying and climate change shows no sign of abating, **education cannot falter**. We are speaking out to highlight that the right to education for millions of people is under threat. Education must not be treated as a secondary service, a luxury or a privilege. **It is a fundamental right that is essential for human development.**

A right that is weakened when it is needed the most:

- Urgent educational support is needed for at least **234 million children and young people affected by crises**, to ensure they do not get left behind.
- In conflict-affected regions, **54% of girls do not attend school**, which is double the global average. Moreover, girls are 2.5 times more likely than boys not to attend school.
- One billion children (half of the world's children) live in 33 countries at extremely high risk from the impacts of climate change.
- **One in four people worldwide does not have access to the internet**, despite the fact that the EdTech market is expected to be worth over \$285 billion by 2027.

Faced with this reality, **we call for action and commitment to the right to education** as foundation for a equitable social transformation.

1 No more cuts, decisive funding: education for everyone

As states increase their defense budgets, more than a third of them do not even meet the minimum target for investment in education (4% of GDP). In the Global South, resources that should be used to build classrooms and buy books and pencils are used to pay external debts that perpetuate colonialist logic.

We demand that:

- **Aid reaches the most classrooms that need it the most** through compliance with the commitment to allocate 0.7% of Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance and ensuring that 20% of this is earmarked for education, and that 10% of this amount is allocated to Education in Emergencies.
- Aid funds go directly to local organisations, giving priority to those led by women and young people, who have the best understanding of their own circumstances and needs.
- Initiatives that ensure that countries in the Global South do not have to repay historic and unjust debts are supported. We are campaigning for these funds to be released and used to **improve conditions for teachers and provide decent schools for all students.**

2 Learning without fear: safe schools, refuges that protect and foster resilience

Schools must be free from violence and equipped to protect children. **They must be safe places** that incorporate mental health services, psychosocial support and essential nutrition, which are key to ensuring that the most vulnerable children remain in education.

We demand that:

- **Schools are never targeted as military objectives**, and that the **Safe Schools Declaration** is implemented.
- Investment is made in specific training for teachers in crisis management, disaster risk management and peace education.
- Safe infrastructure is guaranteed, including access to water, sanitation and menstrual hygiene facilities, to close the gaps.

3 Digital education that counts

We demand that digital education be recognised as a right. Technology has the potential to keep education alive when schools close or disappear. We do not accept any form of digitalisation that deepens inequality, causes stress or mistrust, or becomes a business opportunity for large corporations. Technology in the classroom must be public, safe and promote digital sovereignty. Effective digital education requires investment in infrastructure and, above all, teacher training and high-quality content that promotes genuine critical digital literacy.

We demand:

- The promotion of critical digital literacy and teacher training in technical and educational skills so that teachers can take the lead in bridging the digital divide.
- The recognition of access to the internet as a universal human right, ensuring it is free and of high quality, and the provision of devices for both students and teachers.
- The development of multimodal strategies that integrate radio, television and online/offline platforms, adapted to emergency situations where electricity, connectivity or resources are

limited.

- The use of free software and open resources. It is time to limit the transfer of public funds to transnational corporations and strengthen the independence of our education systems.

4 Shattering the glass ceiling: we call for transformative education that promotes gender equality.

We cannot accept that girls continue to spend between 30% and 50% more time on household chores than boys. This limits their opportunities to learn, play and dream. Education must be used to break the glass ceiling by tackling the stereotypes that steer girls away from STEM careers and boys away from care professions. We call for transformative education that ensures gender equality in every classroom and throughout the education system.

We demand that:

- Gender equality be placed at the heart of all education policies, with budgets allocated in a way that allows us to measure the real impact on the lives of girls and young women.
- Prejudice be eliminated from the curriculum and textbooks, ensuring that teacher training enables teachers to challenge unequal power relations.
- Comprehensive sex education (CSE) be developed and expanded to prevent violence, reduce teenage pregnancies and enable young people to make informed decisions about their wellbeing and their bodies.

A call to action

Reimagining education for a world in crisis means understanding that learning is the bridge to global justice. We cannot allow a person's place of birth or the crises they face to determine whether or not they have the right to a quality education.

Now is the time for governments, families, teachers, the education community and the international community to work together. We must challenge power relations and build education systems based on guaranteeing human rights, respect and inclusion. Because education is the right that upholds all other rights, we demand commitment, funding and action now!

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