

Global Campaign for Education – Norway

Submission to the Education Commission Consultation, May 2016

This submission from Global Campaign for Education (GCE)-Norway is based on several activities organised by the network in April 2016:

- A meeting with the Norwegian member of the Education Commission, Kristin Clemet
- A breakfast seminar about financing of education, organised by GCE-Norway during the GCE Fund the Future Global Action Week on Education.
- An internal meeting in GCE-Norway to summarise and discuss our input to the Commission

GCE-Norway has 13 member organisations: The Atlas Alliance, The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, The Norwegian Refugee Council, HEI, The Norwegian Association of Disabled, Plan Norway, Save the Children Norway, Norwegian Students’ and Academics’ International Assistance Fund (SAIH), Skolenes Landsforbund, SOS Children’s Villages, the Strømme Foundation, UNICEF and Union of Education Norway.

The following ten GCE-Norway members have contributed to this submission, by participation at one or more of the meetings listed above: The Atlas Alliance, The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, The Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan Norway, Save the Children Norway, Norwegian Students’ and Academics’ International Assistance Fund (SAIH), Skolenes Landsforbund, SOS Children’s Villages, the Strømme Foundation, and Union of Education Norway.

Please note that the recommendations in this submission reflect a pooling of contributions, and do not reflect the policies of all contributing organisations.

Main discussion points

Three rights based principles for education financing

All financing of education need to build upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We call on the Education Commission to

- Develop a set of principles that all education financing should respect, and that actors involved in education financing –public or private – can sign on to. The principles should build upon the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child and include the following:
 1. No financing of education should compromise with children’s right to free primary education;
 2. All actors involved in financing education will follow national and other government standards and regulations for the education sector;
 3. All actors involved in financing education should support the government in its role as regulator and guarantor for quality and equity in education.

Equity

The Education Commission can be instrumental in ensuring progress towards quality education for *every one*, by strongly promoting equity and inclusion as core values and objectives of every initiative

Global Campaign for Education – Norway’s submission to the Education Commission Consultation. May 2016. Contact person: Øygunn Sundsbø Brynildsen oygunn.sundsbo.brynildsen@reddbarna.no

to finance education. The promise of leaving no-one behind is bold and important, and should be at the centre of the Education Commission’s analysis and recommendations for action. We call on the Education Commission to:

- Call on all actors that finance education to put equity at the core of their values and actions;
- Present actionable recommendations on how developing countries can allocate education budgets equitably, i.e. in such a way that it facilitates inclusion and learning for the most marginalised groups of children and youth;
- Present actionable recommendations regarding collection and analysis of disaggregated data for the purpose of inclusion and equity;
- Highlight the importance of financing, collecting and analysing sufficiently disaggregated reliable data for identifying and including the most marginalised groups and individuals. Data must be disaggregated at minimum gender, age, disability and geography;
- Underscore the crucial role of qualified teachers in the provision of inclusive education, and share good examples of teacher training approaches that has enabled inclusive education and learning for disadvantaged children;
- Gather research to rectify the reasons for qualified teacher absenteeism and the general lack of enough qualified teachers, and present actionable recommendations to overcome these challenges.

Education in a continuum of contexts

While the willingness to finance education in emergency situations has increased, it is a great challenge that policy making, financing and practical implementation of education in emergencies and education in non-emergency situations are largely operating in silos. For example, the humanitarian system is not fit for handling protracted crises. The Education Commission is well placed to bridge efforts to finance education in peaceful development contexts, and contexts affected by emergencies. We call on the Education Commission to:

- Promote a holistic view on education in a continuum of contexts. While recognising that inclusive quality education looks different in different contexts, ensure a holistic perspective in the narrative about education financing, in policy dialogues and in institutional approaches to education financing;
- Promote and encourage disaster risk reduction initiatives;
- Promote long-term planning and interventions also in emergencies by recommending multi year pledges and financing agreements to education in crises;
- In your recommendations, underline the importance of the humanitarian system relating to national systems, and the importance of financial and institutional support build and strengthen national education systems in tandem with emergency support;
- Promote and encourage flexibility in financing mechanisms so that education projects can adjust to the circumstances in the case of crises. Flexibility is of particular importance in the early phases, prior to humanitarian support. For example, in the case of drought.

- Ensure additionality in financing: discourage donors from making “double pledges” where the same money is pledged with overlapping purposes (for example first at the Syria pledging conference, then to the Education Cannot Wait Platform). Discourage donors from drawing on financing of education in development contexts to finance education in emergencies, and vice versa.

Sustainable financing

While exploring new sources of financing education can be good and necessary, “innovative” financing does not automatically provide *more* financing, nor financing which is long term beneficial and sustainable. Several sectors and interest groups are looking for innovative sources for financing; and there is a competition for resources and financing mechanisms. We call on the Education Commission to think long-term and be strategic about *sustainable* financing, by:

- Placing domestic resource mobilisation on the top of the list of existing and potential funding sources. Highlight domestic resources as the most sustainable way of financing education, and underline the responsibilities of all stakeholders in promoting domestic resource mobilisation and sound financial management, and in curbing illicit financial flows. Underline that donor governments, international organisations and private sector actors need to promote financial transparency and international cooperation if illicit financial flows are to be curbed;
- Encouraging donors and potential new donors to include education as a priority in their longer-term financing strategies;
- Build recommendations around existing financing mechanisms, including promoting a scaled-up and reinforced GPE. This must be a higher priority than promoting new funds and mechanisms for education financing.

Accountability and public control

Education is the responsibility of the government, and strong public institutions are needed to deliver on the promise of inclusive quality education for all. We fear that the large increase in the number of private and commercial actors in education will weaken governments’ capacity to build and regulate education systems.

We call the Education Commission and its members to

- Ascertain that free, equitable and inclusive quality education for all, and the commitment to reach the goals enshrined in SDG 4, by necessity is a public responsibility;
- In all their communication –in relation to the Commission and in other settings – be clear that education is the responsibility of the government; that the government should be supported in its role as guarantor of quality and equity in education, and that any none-state actor operating within the education system must follow standards and regulations set by the government, and operate with political and financial transparency;
- Discourage commercialisation of education and call on all actors in the educational sector that generate economic surplus to ensure that all economic surplus goes back to the

educational sector (i.e. children, teachers, infrastructure, learning materials etc.), and not to private profit;

- Encourage support to building strong education systems, empowering governments to set and enforce standards for quality and equity in education;
- Promote transparency in education and financial management systems on national, local and school levels, in order to facilitate participation from local communities, children, parents and teachers in decision making and monitoring of education policies and financing;
- Ensure that the prime agents for implementation of educational policies - teachers - are understood as key to accomplishing quality education for all. This means that there has to be platforms for social dialogue between government, employers and teachers’ unions who have the legitimate mandate through ILO conventions to negotiate and interact on behalf of the teaching profession, and that co-determination is de facto.

Technology

Existing and new technology can and must play an important role in efforts to provide quality education for all. We must however have a realistic view to what challenges can and cannot be overcome by technology. In the eagerness to support the development of new technology, we fear that donors may draw focus and financing away from what they and we know works: Building education systems, strengthening institutions for quality and equity in education and financial management, and investing in qualified teachers –who will be the ones to unleash the potential of new technologies in the classrooms or other learning spaces. We call on the Education Commission to:

- Balance the focus on technological development versus long-term investments in education systems and professional teacher development. The latter is the fundament to ensure quality and inclusion and to make use of technological developments.

Follow-up

It will be important to continue the momentum created by the Education Commission. We call on the Commission to:

- Develop an Action Plan, focussed on actions to finance quality education and learning for the most marginalised;
- Continue the Commission or establish a High Level Advocacy Group for education. The mandate of the Commission or Advocacy Group should be to create continued momentum for education financing towards 2030, with a specific focus on the most marginalised groups of people in a continuum of contexts– from humanitarian situations to long-term development contexts;
- Collaborate with the Global Education Monitoring Report to develop an annual status report for education financing to track 1) the degree of success in ensuring equitable education financing, and 2) the degree to which financing has succeeded in supporting, reinforcing and strengthening public institutions for quality and equity in education.