Summary Report

The Global Action Week - 2017

Accountability for SDG4 and Citizen Participation

1. Introduction

The theme for GCE’s Global Action Week for Education in 2017 will focus on ensuring accountability for SDG4, and active citizen participation – with a particular emphasis on reminding governments and people that democratic governance is a cornerstone of the SDGs, and that credible roadmaps are needed to deliver quality, inclusive, free and public education – which are at the heart of SDG4. We are at a critical point in ensuring delivery of the Education 2030 agenda. One round of regional and national meetings has been undertaken in 2016 that explored how to adapt and contextualise the agreed agenda. 2017 will herald the first full year in which governments will be reporting back on the SDGs, which provides scope for evaluating the extent of their focus on the implementation of the agenda and progress made.

Global Action Week for Education 2017 this year focused on holding governments and the international community to account for delivering on the full SDG4 agenda, ensuring citizen participation – asking governments to “keep your promises”. In this context, the overall aims of GAWE 2017 are to ensure that governments:

- Develop, fund and implement credible plans for the implementation of the full SDG 4 agenda.
- Recognise the criticality of strengthening public systems and state capacities to ensure that education is free, quality, and equitable.
- Ensure that there are credible, transparent mechanisms for participation of civil society in the monitoring and accountability processes for the agenda.

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2. ACEA Secretariat & Member National Coalitions

Arab Campaign for Education for All¹ is an independent, non-profit coalition, consisting of 9 education coalitions in the Middle East and three coalitions in east Europe. ACEA seeks to unite and mobilize the efforts of civil societies to ensure the accomplishment of the goals of Education for All. ACEA is committed to achieve its mission in the framework of objectivity, transparency, accountability, and equality following democratic standards in all plans and procedures in line with the Global Campaign for Education for All “GCE” and its commitments to Sustainable Development Goals (mainly fourth goal on education as key instrument of achievement of all sustainable goals) and the Incheon Declaration.

National coalitions for Education for all are non-profit organizations that are registered as networks or coalitions in their respective countries. Coalitions are formed of several member civil society organizations and syndicates that work in the field of right to education and sustainable development goals. Member organizations represent categories of persons with disabilities and minorities and also include civil society organizations catering for the promotion of women and girls rights and empowerment.

3. GAWE Activities at the Policy Level

To address the topic of accountability to Education, ACEA secretariat implemented several activities to increase awareness to SDG4 at regional level and address the GAWE 2017 theme of accountability to SDG4.

Towards this end, ACEA secretariat developed a position paper which summarized the critical education problems of the region. The position paper focused on financing education and highlighted the very low percent of education budget allocated from both general government budgets and GDP (below the recommended global standard). The position paper also addressed issues of importance to the region such as education in emergency and education budgets within humanitarian response plans. The paper also outlined the

¹ http://www.arabcampaignforeducation.org

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main challenges facing civil society when working with education financing including lack of transparency of education budgets and shrinking space available for CSOs to implement accountability projects for SDG4. The paper also outlined the opportunities that civil society can benefit from in their advocacy work for increase SDG4 budgets. The paper presented key messages for advocacy. The paper was presented in the launching event of GAWE in Amman Jordan.

ACEA also disseminated a policy brief on Education in Emergencies in the Arab World. The brief discussed main challenges to financing education in the humanitarian context. The paper addressed right to education for refugees, IDPs and persons with disability. It also highlighted status of education gender equality in the education sector. The paper was presented and discussed in the launching event of GAWE in Amman Jordan.

Two launching events were held in Amman and Ramallah. The theme of both events was accountability to SDG4 and role of citizens. The events brought all education stakeholders together to discuss how education budget could be increased to meet the huge challenges in the region. The event was attended by representatives of major international education organizations. Also it was attended by Ms. Hanan Al Hrub, the winner of International Teacher Prize for the year 2016. She gave a motivating speech on the importance of engaging all citizens in promoting SDG4.

A panel of experts presented thematic papers for discussion including papers on education in emergency, financing education, and role of citizens and civil society in promotion of continuous learning.

The event highlighted the current opportunities for civil society to engage and influence financing decisions. Different stakeholders wrote direct messages on accountability to SDG4 and messages were posted and shared with the media. For example, the event in Amman, representatives of Ministry of Planning discussed the 2017 Voluntary National Review of Jordan on the SDGs and a debate was fostered on the role of civil society on monitoring government spending on achieving SDG4.
Photo: Messages from GAWE event participants to regional states on accountability to SDG4.

Photo: Ms. Hanan Al Hroub, winner of International Teach Prize, giving a speech in launching event.
In parallel, several meetings were held with policy makers to discuss the share of education in government budget in several countries. In Yemen, Sudan, Somalia and Palestine, coalitions were able to hold direct meetings with ministers of education, parliamentarians, and UN officials.

In Palestine, meetings with education sector decision makers and education donors were held in Ramallah, Jerusalem and Jenin. In the meetings education budgets were discussed and analysis briefs were presented to different stakeholders on the current domestic financing of education sector and the financing gaps.

Iraqi coalition held a 2 day workshop in the period 23-24\textsuperscript{th} of April with regional heads of education offices to discuss the share of education from government budget. The Iraqi coalition presented data on the current education challenges in Anbar region due to ISIS occupation and highlighted the increasing dropout rates of students. Another workshop was implemented in South of Iraq, Naseria Province with education stakeholders for the same purpose. The Iraqi coalition also presented a demand paper to the Iraqi parliament in which they outlined the major challenges mainly in areas controlled by ISIS and the challenges facing children in IDP camps. The main demand in the document was to raise the share of education budget to 20% which was a share granted before 2008.

In Moldova, the national coalition launched research results on inclusive education. The coalition discussed with representatives of the government education financing issues that influence inclusive education.

The Albanian Coalition organized a meeting in the Prime Minister Office premises, to discuss challenges in education sector in light of SDG4. In the meeting the coalition, presented its 15 year of Global Action Week in Albania, and launched the video “I Participate”. The meeting highlighted the need for increase investments in Education, and why quality education and qualified teachers matter in children’s lives and future.

The coalition in Albania also organized more than 12 youth consultation meetings that resulted in the issuing of the Education Manifesto, a document that contains the problems and solutions proposed by youth. The document was presented political parties, the Government and the next Parliament of Albania to work for. Youth forums committed to promote the political parties in which they are adhering, to address the priority issues of youth and the education problems.
In Egypt, the national coalition held a meeting with head of education regional office of Aswan and deputy minister of education. In the meeting, issues relevant to the SDG4 agenda were discussed. The national coalition submitted list of demands from civil society. The coalition also held a roundtable discussion with national civil society organization formulating recommendations for more effective monitoring of SDG4.

Photo: Meeting of Egyptian National Coalition with Deputy Minister of Education
4. GAWE Community based & Awareness Raising Activities

National coalitions in the region implemented several activities that engaged civil society and advocates as well as local communities and citizens. The following are some of these activities.

The Iraqi coalition participated in Irbil International Book Exhibition which coincided with GAWE and conducted four public meetings with the general public. The public meetings discussed the issue of financing education. In this occasion, the Iraqi coalition also distributed book gifts. Coalition members visited several IDP camps in cooperation with Serooh Organization for Development and Humanitarian action. In these visits data were collected on main reasons behind drop out of school children and challenges facing local education sector in IDP camps. The data was presented to the parliament demanding increased share of education rom government budget.
The Lebanese coalition implemented its annual GAWE launching event in Sayda governorate where at least 700 of the local population were in attendance in addition to representatives from several NGOs. The event was also attended by representatives of the local education office and Ministry of Education. The event highlighted the issues of education financing including the need of civil society to have access to transparent and reliable data on education budget.

Similarly activities were implemented in Nablus camps in Palestine with tens of children in a campaign titled ( Big Dream) which focused on right of children to education in displacement. The campaign engaged parents' councils and local NGOs and presented demands to government to address education needs by increasing domestic financing to education.
The Georgian Coalition for education in partnership with Georgian Institute of Debate and Education (GIDE) conducted a series of debates on different various education related topics. The Georgian coalition member: international School of Economics (new member organized a workshop with UNICEF and World Bank was held on May 10th. The main recommendations developed within the forum will be included in the National Strategy on Education and Science.

The Yemeni Coalition conducted public events in three major Yemeni cities, where Public speeches were given by coalition representatives on SDG4 and mobilizing communities and local councils to play a major role in monitoring spending on education and finding innovative ways to increase domestic financing in time of emergency. The Yemeni coalition also presented a petition for signature for general public addressed to government and international aid actors in Yemen. The main demand in the petition was to increase the share of education in international aid and to address the education crisis in most Yemeni governorates. The petition was signed by at least 22,000 persons in more than 3 governorates including school and university students, NGO representatives, media personnel and general public.

Youth Leadership development Foundation, a member of the Yemeni coalition worked with local Youth Initiatives through film presentations. Youth Initiative showed a film on investment in girls' education in two sessions.

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In Somalia, multiple visits of national coalition members were conducted to universities and schools, multiple awareness activities in multiple cities targeting university and school students. The activities focused on the role of citizens in the achievement of SDG4.

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Photo: A police man signing a petition to government to increase share of education in government budget in Yemen

Photo: A group of students taking a group photo at the conclusion of GAWE open air activities.
In Sudan, several visits were conducted by national coalition members to local schools and activities were held with students, teachers and parent council members highlighting the role of citizens in SDG4 achievement. In the province of White Nile, a session of Child Parliament was dedicated to address SDG4 and the current education challenges.

![Photo: Child Parliament session held in White Nile province on SDG4](image)

The Albanian coalition organizes a march on children’s Right. Under the motto “Educated, Protected and Healthy Children, Time to Deliver” more that 20 CSOs participated in the march and delivered to the politicians and most important public institutions a document of CSOs demands for children’s rights. This event was attended by CSOs representatives, ombudsman, youth, parents and media.

![Photo: March for Children Education Rights in Albania](image)
5. GAWE Activities with the Media

National coalitions from the region conducted several media events in the occasion of GAWE 2017. The Somali coalition conducted a press conference and presented their demands on behalf of civil society, and the Iraqi coalition issues a public statement with GAWE 2017 objectives. Several TV interviews were conducted where coalitions in Jordan, Sudan, and Yemen. All member coalitions used social media campaigns to promote the GAWE poster and theme. Coalitions from East Europe translated posters in their local languages. Tamooz for Social Development NGO also disseminated a press release on behalf of the Iraqi coalition and highlighted the topics of education financing in Iraq.

The Palestinian coalition conducted a capacity building workshop for 31 media persons on accountability to SDG4. The workshop focused on the issue of domestic financing and innovative means to address the low education budget.

A live chat session was held by the secretariat of ACEA on Facebook, where a panel of speakers addressed issues of education financing. The session received active interaction from both attendees and online participants.

Photo: GAWE 2017 Posters in Albanian and Georgian languages.

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6. Pledges presented to ACEA Country Governments

All national coalitions presented pledges that are summarized in the following:

To National Governments:

- Develop credible and clear roadmaps for the implementation of the full SDG 4 agenda.
- Review education plans, budget proposals and spending for differential impact on girls and women, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, refugees and displaced persons and other disadvantaged groups, through gender and inclusion audits to address educational inequalities.
- Strengthen education governance frameworks and the overall public education system by allocating a minimum of 6% GDP and 20% of national budgets to education, of which at least 50% must be dedicated to basic education.
- Plan to provide for genuinely free education through abolishing user fees and other charges in primary and secondary education, and end support to so-called low-fee private schools.
- Prioritise hitherto ignored targets on early childhood education, youth, adults and postsecondary/technical and vocational education and training.
- Maximising revenue available for investment in education and to address inequality through building progressive and expanded domestic systems of taxation, reviewing tax and royalty agreements.
- Reversing rising privatisation of education through enhancing the scale and quality of public provisioning and improving capacities for planning, monitoring and implementation.
- Putting in place robust mechanisms for oversight and regulation of private sector players in line with the Human Rights Council resolution calling for regulation of the private sector.
- Put in place clear mechanisms for transparency and accountability to citizens to ensure delivery on the Education 2030 Agenda and the Right to Education in general.
- Providing a formal and structured space for meaningful active participation of civil society, including teacher unions and associations, as part of social dialogue around policy making, planning, budgeting and in monitoring progress and ensuring that
these mechanisms are responsive to and prioritize the participation from women, persons with disabilities and representatives from marginalized communities.

**To Donor Countries & UN Organizations:**

- Play their part to ensure domestic implementation of the universal SDG agenda and set out clear national plans to deliver 0.7% of GNP as ODA by 2020 and commit at least 15-20% of all ODA to education. At least half of education aid must go to basic education.
- Allot at least 4% of humanitarian aid to education and make bold pledges to finance education (in the GPE replenishment and to Education Cannot Wait), reversing the recent declines in spending on education.
- Ensure adequate financing for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to support implementation of the Education 2030 agenda.
- Build a more inclusive humanitarian system that recognises the need for sustained action for delivering

**To Private Sector**

- Transparently pay all applicable taxes in developing countries where they make a profit and refuse to accept tax
- Holidays/incentives, transfer pricing, aggressive tax avoidance and the use of tax havens, all of which can deprive
- Governments of funds to invest in education.
- Pledge financial contributions to the Global Partnership for Education during the 2017 replenishment.

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