

## 'My Education, My Right(s)' – Investing in 260 million children out of school worldwide

Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2019

24 April - 1 May 2019



Each year, the Global Action Week (of the [Global Campaign for Education](#), GCE) takes place in April. This year's theme was '*My Education, My Right(s)*' and the focus was on making the right to inclusive, equitable, quality, free public education a reality. By encompassing the full realisation of the SDG4 agenda, this annual week of action calls attention to the urgent need to invest in the future of the over 260 million out-of-school children around the world.

The theme blended different approaches that were adapted by GCE members around the world - A focus on children and youth with disabilities, calling for accessible and inclusive school infrastructures and materials, teachers training including for teachers with disabilities; A focus on gender disparities, and LGBTI rights; A focus on vulnerable, disadvantaged and poor communities (including child labourers); A focus on indigenous people; A focus on migrants/ refugees and students in the conflict zone; A focus on teachers as per the World Teacher's Day 2018 slogan '*The right to education is the right to a qualified teacher*'.

GAWE 2019 attempted to merge global and local connections through interpersonal experiences. By wielding the power of storytelling as a tool to create a network of narratives, the [Global Campaign for Education](#) (GCE) movement strengthens its commitment to human rights. '*My Education, My Right(s)*' was a call to action rising up from the voices of individuals, and disseminating across a united front. The focus on personal stories empowers advocates at all levels of activism to engage with a range of issues barring access to quality education globally.

The aim of Global Action Week (GAW) for Education 2019 was to come together to call on governments to make the right to an inclusive, equitable, quality, free public education a reality. Some of the specific calls to governments were -

- Achieve the whole range of SDG 4 targets and not only what is being measured - national indicators shall be the minimum targets. Strengthen data collection systems.

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- Substantially increase national education budgets to achieve the SDG 4 targets. Locate additional funds - for example, by expanding the tax base and ensuring corporations contribute their fair share of tax.
- Link education and training for decent work at local levels to job opportunities (adopting a pro-poor approach).
- Ensure quality teaching and training and adequate welfare of teaching and non-teaching personnel in schools.

ASPBAE member, [E-Net Philippines](#), spearheaded consultations and events in the Philippines during GAWE 2019 based on the

theme for this year. Learners, the youth, teachers, and educators led the GAWE campaign. Their demands included –

- Increase budgets for more targeted education programmes for indigenous youth, children and youth with disabilities, Muslim youth, child/youth laborers, rural and urban poor youth, and other marginalised youth.
- Encourage young people to stay in or return to school by providing scholarships (especially at the tertiary level), meals and transportation subsidies, funding, and expanding different modes of attending school such as night schools and open high schools.
- Ensure significant financial allocations for expanding the coverage of ALS-EST (Alternative Learning System-Education and Skills Training).
- Install appropriate community-based TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) in more communities that are suited to the unique needs and situations at the local level.
- Provide effective and age-appropriate continuing education on sexuality and reproductive health within schools and non-formal education.
- Strengthen coordination of agencies to ensure productive exit points for Senior High and ALS graduates.

E-Net Philippines also organised several consultations during the week. Some of them included a consultation on children and youth with disabilities where participants discussed SDG 4 and inclusive education, and the importance of including the perspective of children and youth with disabilities in achieving the SDGs and SDG 4. They demanded the implementation of the UNCRPD-compliant ([UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)) inclusive education for children and youth with disabilities.



The E-Net Philippines' GAWE campaign included calls for increase budgets for more targeted education programmes for indigenous youth, children and youth with disabilities and installing appropriate community-based TVET.

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A forum on the 'Role of Teachers in Achieving SDG 4' highlighted the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) and educators in meeting SDG 4. The demand of the teaching sector was to, "fully implement the [Philippine Magna Carta for Public School Teachers](#) and provide clear mechanisms for the participation of teachers in the SDG 4 implementation architecture".

A 'Muslim Children and Youth Consultation' raised awareness on SDG 4, discussed the components of a balanced education for Muslims, and incorporating a young Muslim perspective on achieving SDG 4. The demands that emerged from this consultation were to, "develop and implement a quality culture-based education for Muslim children and youth, operationalise the balanced-education framework, and ensure a

learn-and-earn education for out-of-school youth", among others.

Lastly, a 'Forum on Children and Youth in a Hazardous Environment' highlighted SDG 4, the situation of child laborers in the Philippines, government interventions, and a youth perspective in achieving SDG 4. The demand from this forum was - "Making inclusive, equitable, and quality education a reality for children and youth engaged in sugar plantation, and expansion of the Alternative Learning System-Education and Skills Training (ALS-EST) programme".

ASPBAE member in Pakistan, [Bunyad Foundation](#), arranged a programme at Bunyad Sukura School (Kahanpur) including school teachers, students, and the media. Some of the issues highlighted at the events included the education scenario in Pakistan.

The total number of out-of-school children in Pakistan face enormous challenges. Access to education varies greatly by location, gender, and wealth. More than half of all out-of-school children are girls and children from poor households who are more likely to be out of school compared to their counterparts in high-income families.

The majority of children in rural and urban slum areas from low income families and attend public schools that lack appropriate facilities, are faced with an acute shortage or absence of teachers, and non-availability of suitable learning materials.



Bunyad presented a Charter of Demands to the local government asking for, amongst other things, more schools for girls and functional basic facilities in schools.

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According a survey conducted by the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE, 26% of government primary schools do not have electricity or access to clean drinking water and 53% do not have functioning toilets. Addressing these challenges, Bunyad's Shaheen Attiq-Ur-Rahman, emphasised that, *"Education must be our top priority. It is our prime responsibility to educate our future generation without any gender discrimination."*

Bunyad presented a Charter of Demands to local government officials asking for more schools for girls, functional basic facilities in schools, more female teachers in schools, school transportation for girls, and enrolment and retention out-of-school children, especially girls, amongst others.

Several success stories were shared by women and girls who benefitted from a public school education as well as from local initiatives, such as the Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC).

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