



**Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030's international representative and
SDG 4 Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee's CSO representative Global
Campaign for Education President, Refat Sabbah speech on the occasion of the
2022 International Day of Education: Changing Course, Transforming Education**

As the entire world commemorates the fourth International Day of Education, it is important for us all to remember what the ultimate purpose of education as a **Basic Human Right** is, and the following key elements that will support the achievement of SDG4:

1. **Financing:** the struggle to provide public education systems with adequate and predictable funding is central to sustaining progress in schooling and, even more so, to guarantee the right to education and lifelong learning. We therefore call on all governments to ensure that education is adequately financed
2. **Equality:** in recent decades, the world has seen significant progress in schooling processes, especially at the primary and secondary education levels. However, these achievements have not been universalized and many countries and regions continue to suffer the brunt of inequality and inequity in school access, which have greatly been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and climate change. Certainly, the educational opportunities for early childhood and in general for youth and adults, seriously contrast with the relative advances that have been achieved with other populations. Girls and women, especially those living in rural areas, people with disabilities, people affected by emergencies, LGBTQI+ communities and migrants and refugees, are consistently excluded and discriminated against and left behind by education policies. Therefore, the Global Campaign for Education will continue advocate for the total removal of all obstacles and barriers that tends to enforce exclusion of others from attaining. Today as we commemorate the International Day of Education, this fight takes on greater significance and is a reason to renew these efforts.
3. **Quality of Education:** advances in schooling have not been followed by an improvement in education quality or in efficiency so that educational content meets the aims set by the international human rights law. On the contrary, we observe a serious deterioration in learning processes: there are more children in the classroom, but they do not necessarily learn well, nor do they learn what they should. The curricular and didactic weakening has many causes, for which it is inadmissible that teachers be pointed out as those responsible for the learning crisis.
4. **Educational policies:** we are concerned with the utilitarian turn of education policies which due to corporate pressure, have emptied the curriculum of essential contents, to give way primarily to the development of pseudo-pragmatic skills of a market driven syllabus, in effect "building human capital". Education must go beyond responding to the needs of the market and should offer people a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve their potential and live decent lives.
5. **Transformative Education:** these utilitarian tendencies lack the potential to change the social and political structures that fuel inequality, unequal societies and oppression. For this reason, the Global Campaign for Education reaffirms its conviction about the transformative nature of education, as set by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Transforming education needs, above all, **that education be transformative!** The holistic approach to learning, in which philosophy, art, music and human rights are central, also strengthens



people's productive skills while building values of solidarity and empathy that allow them to build full and happy lives. Education must be transformative by nature. Transformation is not a mission that can be added artificially to education, as if it were a fashion or a casual trend. Knowledge is socially meaningful only when it is aimed at dismantling injustice, exclusion and violence.

6. **Human Rights:** we call on States to deal with the contents of education in order to advance in the eradication of hate, prejudice, racism, xenophobia, sexism and all forms of violence, exclusion and discrimination. For this, public policies must be promoted to implement human rights education, comprehensive sexuality education and structural changes in which scientific and technical education coexist and feed on artistic, philosophical and socio-community education.

None of this will be possible if governments do not comply with all of their education-related obligations, including the provision of a progressive budget to free public education systems and if increasing opportunities for training and support are not offered to teachers, who should always be part of decision making.

Finally, I would like to express my deep concern about the situation of the right to education in emergency contexts. Conflict, climate change, disasters, poverty and now, COVID-19 pandemic, are just some of the drivers of the growing number of emergency situations all over the world. Emergencies are becoming more complex and last longer than ever before, and many of them end up becoming protracted and cyclical crises. This has a devastating impact a growing number of people all over the world, and particularly on the right to education of millions of peopleⁱ. I come from Palestine, and I know it well.

However, education is also one of the most underfunded areas of humanitarian aid: just 2,4 % of global humanitarian funding is allocated to education. This needs to change. We must muster a strong political will to guarantee the right to quality, inclusive and transformative education for everyone also – and even more – in emergency contexts.

This is why the Global Campaign for Education will be launching a global campaign on education in emergencies in a global online event which will take place on March 1st 2022. We want to shed light on the situation of the right to education in emergencies. We would like the voices of people affected to be heard. I would like to invite you to join us on the **Protect Education in Emergencies Now!** #ProtectEiENow campaign and help us to put pressure on States so that the human right to education is guaranteed for all, in all circumstances. Please stay tuned and support us on this effort!

ⁱ Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 127 million primary and secondary school-age children and young people living in crisis-affected countries were out of school in 2019. Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). (2020). 20 Years of INEE: Achievements and Challenges in Education in Emergencies. New York, NY. <https://inee.org/resources/20-years-of-inee>