

Education in an interconnected world: Ensuring inclusive and equitable development

Global Education Meeting (GEM)

3-5 December 2018, Brussels, Belgium



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The 2018 Global Education Meeting (GEM) reviewed progress towards the global education targets and commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Meeting brought the global community together to take stock of progress and identify strategic priority areas requiring political guidance and intervention for the effective achievement of the global Education 2030 Agenda. The [Brussels Declaration](#) was adopted at the conclusion of the Meeting. ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, Peter-Clinton Foese, participated in the GEM.

The targeted outcomes of the Meeting were as follows -

- Assessment of current progress towards the implementation of SDG 4-Education 2030 targets and commitments at global, regional, and national levels, and identification of bottlenecks impeding progress.
- Identification of recommendations for strategic areas requiring political guidance and/or intervention for the effective achievement of the global Education 2030 Agenda.
- Agreement on key policy messages to input into the global 2019 HLPF Review and UN General Assembly 2019.
- Strengthening of coordinated support for implementation of SDG 4-Education 2030.

This high-level gathering was a milestone in the assessment of education policies, strategies, and challenges in preparation for the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The 2019 HLPF will review in-depth the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) focusing on Education (SDG 4). The 2019 HLPF theme, *'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'*, framed the discussions at the GEM. Focus was given to the inter-linkages between SDG 4 and Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action) and 16 (peace, justice, and strong Institutions), paying particular attention to the issue of migration, displacement, and refugees.

The Global Education Meeting was informed by the outcomes of five regional Education 2030 consultations undertaken throughout 2018 (Pan-Africa High-Level Conference on Education in April; Asia-Pacific Education 2030 Consultation in July; Latin American and Caribbean Ministerial Conference in July; Europe and North American Education 2030 consultation in October; and Arab Ministerial Meeting in November), as well as by Voluntary National Reports. The meeting drew on the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report to be launched on 20 November 2018. In addition to its continued assessment of progress towards education targets in the SDG agenda, the Report examined the multifaceted processes and dynamics that link both voluntary and involuntary migration and education.



ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan (centre), and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, Peter-Clinton Foese (R), participated in the GEM. Also seen here is CAMPE's Rasheda Choudhury (L).

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The Global Education Meeting gathered some 300 participants including UN agencies and affiliated organisations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, regional organisations, the teaching profession, civil society organisations, the private sector, foundations, as well as youth and student representatives, among others.

During the meeting, there was a greater articulation of lifelong learning, youth and adult education, and non-formal adult education than in previous SDG 4-Education 2030-related global meetings. This can be attributed to several factors, including - (1) different regional consultations convened in preparation for the GEM called for the need to pay greater attention to the full SDG 4 agenda and all its targets; (2) with the [Global Education Monitoring Report](#) (GEMR), which was shared in the meeting as a core resource focusing on migration, the importance of education for the integration of migrants and refugees was prominent as was the need for validation, accreditation, and recognition of prior learning. This underscored the importance for governments to put in place lifelong learning systems and within this, the education of adults.

Nevertheless, civil society organisations (CSOs) had to push for better language on adult education and lifelong learning in the final Outcomes Document. However, this was aided by strong references to these during the plenary discussions. Almost all CSO advocacies made it through the Outcomes Document - a greater focus on gender, youth, adult literacy, equity, training and skills beyond a focus on work.

ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, chaired a session on '*CSO perspectives, bottlenecks, and ways forward in SDG 4 implementation*'. The session was convened by the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030. The session observed that CSOs advancing Education 2030 are fairly well-organised and are able to operate at local, national, regional, and global policy spaces, even in coordinated ways. This needs to be preserved and supported, especially in the context of shrinking democratic space, the criminalisation of protest, and defence of human rights.



President of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), Camilla Croso, participating in the GEM in Brussels.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions in the session:

- The need to institutionalise meaningful civil society participation in the whole SDG-SDG 4 process – designing, implementation, and evaluation - including broad-based consultations of education stakeholders, CSOs, and academia.
- Official recognition and status should be given to CSO-generated data or spotlight reports prepared to feed into the Voluntary National Review (VNR) and HLPF processes, including the review session of HLPF and the VNR reporting system planned for the UN General Assembly in September 2019.

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- Constant capacity building on advocacy for CSOs working at national, regional, and global levels.
- Increase youth representative participation in education policy debate and decision-making spaces, at all levels.
- Increase efforts to synergize VNR and human rights monitoring processes, further tapping into Geneva-based architecture, processes, and human rights recommendations.
- Increase efforts to reach out to other social movements and civil society networks and academia advancing other SDGs so that education gains a wider set of advocates in the wider SDG processes.



ASPBAE Executive Council Member, Peter-Clinton Foese, spoke about the importance of youth-led action research for young women's empowerment.

ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, Peter-Clinton Foese, addressed the GEM as a youth representative and spoke about the importance of youth-led action research for young women's empowerment. Click [here](#) for a video of his presentation.

The meeting was convened by UNESCO, in consultation with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and hosted by Belgium. The three-day event comprised a Senior Officials' meeting with a Forum of parallel sessions organised by participating governments and a Ministerial segment.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 24 January the International Day of Education

This write-up draws from a report prepared by ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and from information available on the [UNESCO website](#).

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