



Educate *to* Empower

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)
Annual Review 2018



UNGEI!
United Nations Girls'
Education Initiative

Acknowledgements

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Message from the UNGEI Chair

Around the world, upwards of 130 million girls are not attending school. Girls are one and a half times more likely to be excluded from school than boys, and girls with disabilities, girls from the poorest families, girls living in rural areas, and girls living in situations of crisis and conflict are among the most marginalised in terms of accessing and thriving in education. UNGEI's mission is to change this—through partnership, policy dialogue, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing—and usher in a new reality, one where every girl and boy can learn and thrive equally in a safe and high-quality educational environment.

In 2018, girls' education and gender equality seized the world's attention in an unprecedented way. During the Global Partnership for Education's financing conference in Dakar, Senegal in February, donor countries committed \$2.3 billion to education over the next three years and developing countries made pledges of \$110 billion for 2018-2020. Following its June Summit in Canada, the G7 announced a global commitment of \$2.9 billion to support girls' education in crisis situations and issued a declaration emphasising the importance of providing education to children in crisis settings, particularly girls. At the United Nations General Assembly in September, world leaders announced a commitment to ensure 12 years of quality education for all by 2030, with a particular focus on eliminating barriers to girls' education.

This surge in global attention may seem sudden, but it is due in large part to many years of dedicated advocacy, policy dialogue, and awareness-raising by activists, teachers, young people, community leaders, and education-focused organisations, and partnerships like UNGEI. For nearly two decades, UNGEI has been instrumental in bringing girls' education and gender equality in education to the forefront of the global agenda. The power of this message stems from the depth and diversity of the UNGEI network, with partners representing non-governmental organisations, youth movements, teachers' unions, donor countries, and many others, and hailing from all regions of the world.

UNGEI's Steering Committee plays an important leadership role, helping connect the members of the Global Advisory Committee to the Secretariat and ensuring accountability as we work collectively to achieve UNGEI's strategic objectives. Plan International is pleased to have had the opportunity to chair the committee in 2018, as we deeply value the collaborative advantage of UNGEI. Together, the members of the Steering Committee took decisions on the implementation of UNGEI's strategic objectives, invested more resources into meaningful youth engagement, and made considered decisions which have bolstered UNGEI's contributions to global policy-making.

As I look ahead to 2019 and beyond, I am struck by the tremendous opportunity and responsibility to make good on the ground-breaking achievements and commitments of the past year. I am inspired by young activists such as Fatu from Sierra Leone and Abigail from Ghana (pictured with me below) who are looking to build greater solidarity with UNGEI and work together to ensure that rhetoric and commitments become actions and results. UNGEI and its global network of partners remain dedicated to achieving a shared vision of a world where every girl and boy is empowered through quality education to realise their full potential and contribute to building societies where gender equality becomes a reality.



Yona Nestel
Chair, UNGEI Steering Committee
Senior Education Policy
and Advocacy Advisor,
Plan International

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Introduction

By Nora Fyles, UNGEI Director

The UNGEI 2018 Annual Review is an opportunity to highlight the efforts, achievements, and learnings of UNGEI and its partners in 2018, while capturing the global trends and developments in girls' education and gender equality in education. In developing this review, we have reflected on both the challenges and successes of the year and looked at accomplishments through the lens of what we planned to achieve, as laid out in UNGEI's Strategic Directions (2018-2023). We also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the generous support of UNGEI's donors—the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), Dubai Cares, Global Affairs Canada, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Plan International, the Republic of Estonia, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The review begins with an overview of the UNGEI partnership—why we exist, who we are, and what we do—as well as a description of UNGEI's Strategic Directions (2018-2023), a five-year plan to accelerate progress toward achieving our mission and vision. Following an overview of key global events and milestones related to supporting girls' education and gender equality in education in 2018, we delve more deeply into the ways in which UNGEI has pursued each of its strategic directions, including promoting gender-responsive education systems, advancing gender-responsive teaching, learning, and learning spaces, strengthening capacity for gender-transformative governance and leadership, and ending school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). Along the way, we highlight the stories and amplify the voices of individuals, organisations, and partnerships that are making a difference and driving change in each strategic domain. Finally, we discuss some of the challenges that remain in advancing our agenda, as well as priorities for 2019 and beyond.

First and foremost, UNGEI is a partnership of organisations that share a belief in the power of collective action to achieve gender equality in and through education. The strength, diversity, and global reach of this partnership enabled the many breakthroughs for girls' education and gender equality in education we witnessed in 2018, from unprecedented funding commitments to high-level recognition of issues like the importance of ensuring education in crisis situations and reaching the most marginalised learners, particularly girls. It is also what will enable the partnership to lead the effort to capitalise on the tremendous momentum generated in 2018 in order to accelerate progress in the coming years.



UNGEI: Education, Empowerment, Equality

In 2015, the international community committed to an ambitious plan to advance global peace and prosperity: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is built around the sustainable development goals (SDGs or Global Goals), which address everything from ending poverty and hunger to improving health, reducing inequality, and tackling climate change. SDG 4 aims to ensure “inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” while SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Education 2030 Framework for Action lays out a path for achieving the SDG 4 targets, calling on governments and partners to eliminate gender bias and discrimination and put in place gender-sensitive policies, planning, and learning environments.

Since 2000, great strides have been made in global education and in reducing gender disparity in access to education. The number of out-of-school children worldwide has nearly halved and more girls are going to school than ever before. At the global level, gender parity (the female-to-male ratio) has been achieved at all levels, except post-secondary education. However, at the regional and country levels the picture is more complex. Only 66 percent of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education, 45 percent in lower secondary, and 25 percent in upper secondary.¹

Despite progress, 264 million children and youth remain out of school and 5 million more girls are out of school at primary level. Fifteen million primary school-aged girls will never enter primary school, compared to about 10 million boys.² While at the

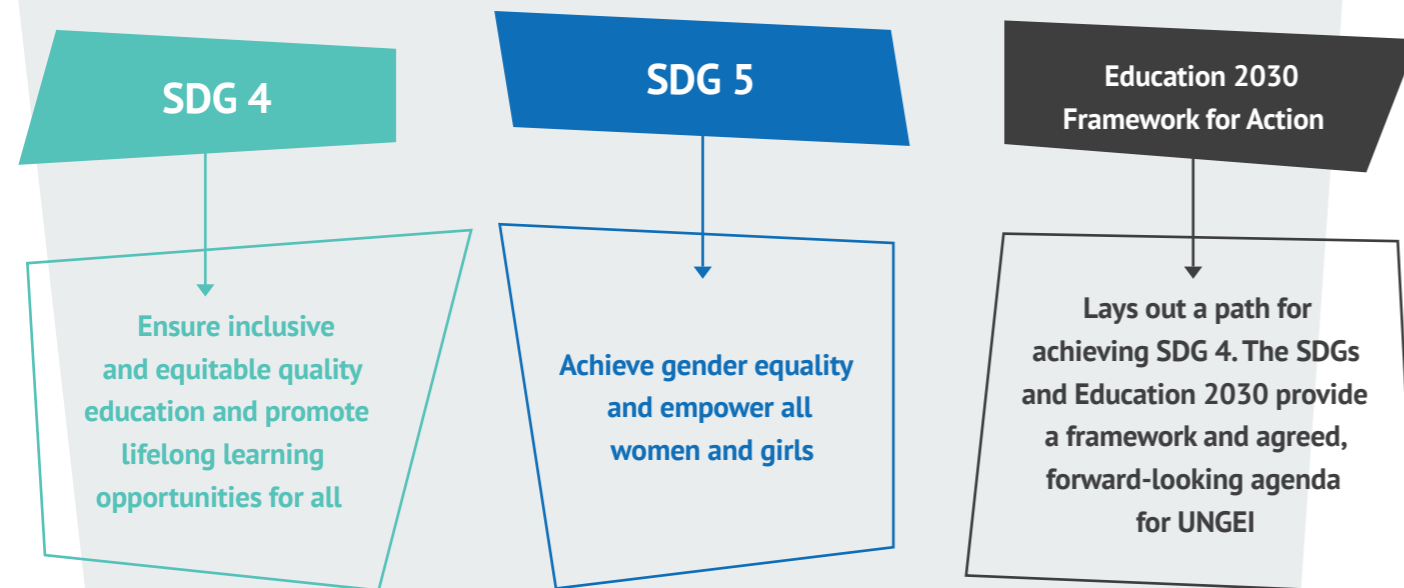
primary level it is girls who are more likely to be out of school, boys are more likely to be out of school at the secondary level in some countries.

Where girls are most marginalised in education, multiple compounding barriers can prevent access to school or lead to drop out. Poverty, which underpins many barriers, can exacerbate gender norms that devalue education for girls, especially as they become adolescents with expectations around contributions to the family economy through labour or household chores and the pressure to get married. Living in a rural area, having a disability or being a member of an ethnic minority can also pose major obstacles,

particularly for girls. For example, only about a quarter of rural girls in Nigeria, Pakistan, and Yemen finish lower secondary school compared with nearly half of rural boys.

Children living in conflict and crisis situations also face multiple barriers in accessing and succeeding in education. In this context, girls face unique and disproportionate challenges and are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys. Gender-based violence in and around schools deters children and young people, especially girls, from attending and learning in schools.

Education and gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



The UNGEI partnership

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) is a partnership of organisations working collaboratively to advance gender equality in and through education. Drawing from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNGEI's vision is a world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, and a world in which every woman and girl enjoys gender equality and all legal, social, and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. As a diverse network of partners from around the world, UNGEI amplifies the voices of girls and women where they are silenced and holds the international community to account for global commitments to girls' education and gender equality as laid out in the SDGs, Education for All agenda, Beijing Platform for Action, and other agreements.



UNGEI works to realise this vision by pursuing two goals: **gender equality in and through education** and the **empowerment of women and girls**. Gender equality in and through education goes beyond parity of access to include what happens in schools for boys and girls to benefit equally from education. The empowerment of women and girls involves addressing unequal structures and power relations by changing the harmful gender norms in schools, homes, and communities that limit the ability of women and girls to make choices about their own lives and fulfil their potential. It also creates opportunities for men and boys to challenge negative masculinities, which are harmful both to themselves and others.



UNGEI's Strategic Directions (2018-2023)

In 2017, UNGEI published its strategic directions for 2018-2023, outlining four priority areas of activity to accelerate progress toward gender equality in and through education:

1. Catalysing systemic change by promoting and supporting **gender-responsive education plans and policies** to ensure education systems are effective, supportive, and inclusive learning spaces for girls and boys.
2. Promoting **gender-responsive teaching and learning** in schools, as well as non-formal learning spaces.
3. Strengthening capacity for **gender-transformative governance, leadership, teaching, and learning** in education.
4. Breaking barriers by advancing the **elimination of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)**.

UNGEI works in four main ways to achieve its goals:

1. **Engaging in policy dialogue**, together with its partners, at all levels to ensure policies and costed plans advance girls' education and gender equality;
2. **Identifying and sharing good practices** for educating and empowering girls and working with partners to develop evidence and tools and build capacity for gender integration;
3. **Advocating** for the rights of all girls and young women to quality education, particularly the most marginalised; and
4. **Leveraging the power of partnership** to share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources for advancing gender equality in education while fostering mutual support and accountability.

“UNGEI is a strong, agenda-setting partnership... moving the needle on questions that go beyond discussions about girls to how gender equality can be advanced through education and the potential that education has to transform power relations and gender norms.”

Alex Munive
Head of Gender and Inclusion,
Plan International

UNGEI's Approach



In addition to the primary modes of working, UNGEI recognises that a number of key cross-cutting factors are critical for driving the change needed to achieve its goals. Namely: **engaging men and boys** as full and committed partners in and beneficiaries of gender equality; **ensuring sufficient financing for education**, including gender equality in education and girls' education; **recognising the rights and potential of young people** as stakeholders and agents of change; and effectively addressing the challenges of **ensuring the right to education for girls and boys in conflict, crisis, and emergency situations**.

This review highlights achievements of the UNGEI partnership and individual partners toward each strategic objective, as well as efforts to address the critical cross-cutting factors driving change towards a shared vision. It also provides insights into how global and regional actors, including UNGEI partners and others, are coming together to build mutual accountability for the gender and education commitments set out in the Education 2030 Agenda.

Gender Equality and Girls' Education in the Spotlight in 2018: An overview

The first year of implementing the UNGEI Strategic Directions (2018-2023) was also a year in which girls' education and gender equality received unprecedented attention on the global stage, leading to significant political and financial commitments for both. In February, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Financing Conference** took place in Dakar, Senegal—the largest education financing event ever organised. Collectively, donor countries committed \$2.5 billion and developing countries pledged \$110 billion of their national budgets to education for 2018-2020.

On International Women's Day, UNGEI, the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, and the Malala Fund co-hosted an event to launch the GEM Report's **2018 Gender Review**, an important document for capturing the latest data around global progress toward gender equality in education.

Later in March, as part of the 62nd session of the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**, UNGEI, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Education International co-hosted a panel addressing the particular challenges faced by schoolgirls and women teachers in rural communities to advance gender equality in education.

At the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)** in London in April, leaders of the 53 Commonwealth countries renewed their commitment to ensuring 12 years of quality education for all children, particularly disadvantaged girls and other marginalised groups, and launched the **Platform for Girls' Education** to galvanise political will and elevate good practice in girls' education.

Also taking place in April, the **Pan-African High-level Conference on Education (PACE)** led to the release of the **Nairobi Declaration and Call to Action on Education**, setting out a collective vision for meeting the education commitments of the 2063 Agenda for the Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At PACE, education ministers and other government representatives also committed to implementing a **Gender Equality Strategy** as a guiding framework for member states to integrate gender perspectives into the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025.

In the run up to and during the **G7 Summit** in Canada in June, UNGEI partners led advocacy around girls' education and gender equality. Subsequently, in the **Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries**, G7 leaders committed to close the gap in access to education during conflict and crisis, pledging a \$2.9 billion investment over three years.

At the 73rd session of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in September, world leaders issued a joint statement—**12 Years to Break Barriers and Leave no Girl Behind: Countdown 2030**—committing to ensuring 12 years of quality education for all girls by 2030.

As 2018 drew to a close, representatives of UNGEI partner organisations gathered in Ottawa, Canada for the **UNGEI Global Advisory Committee (GAC)** meeting to discuss the many achievements, milestones, and challenges of the first year of implementing the UNGEI Strategic Directions (2018-2023).



Our Global Movement: Key advocacy moments and achievements in 2018

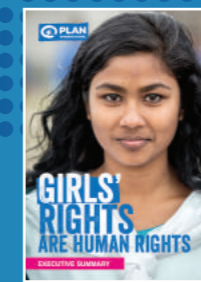
Pathbreaking Publications Released in 2018



Making tax work for girls' education: ActionAid (January 2018) Using evidence collected in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Nepal, ActionAid shows how and why governments can reduce harmful tax incentives (mostly to corporations) in order to invest more in girls' education. Available [here](#).



Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education: GEM Report Gender Review 2018 (March 2018) Produced with UNICEF's support, this review looks at the causes of slow progress towards gender equality in education, and how to address them. Available [here](#).



Girls' rights are human rights: Plan International (March 2018) An in-depth study of the status of girls in international law, this publication sheds light on gaps and trends and makes recommendations for strengthening and advancing girls' rights. Available [here](#).



Missed opportunities: The high cost of not educating girls: World Bank (July 2018) This report shows that limited educational opportunities for girls and barriers to completing 12 years of education cost countries between \$15 trillion and \$30 trillion dollars in lost lifetime productivity and earnings. Available [here](#).



Steps to success, 2012-17: DFID GEC report (Oct 2018) This report is a practical exploration of the meaning of success within the first phase of the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC), aiming to determine what worked for GEC projects to get girls into school, keep them there, and improve their learning, as well as ensuring lasting change. Available [here](#).

Promoting Gender-responsive Education Systems

While voicing support for girls' education and gender equality in education may be done with the best intentions, without careful planning and adequate financing, lofty goals for increasing girls' education access and attainment are unlikely to be realised. Thus, in recognising the importance of gender equality to achieving education for all, the Incheon Declaration and SDG4–Education 2030 Framework for Action commits countries to supporting “gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments.”

UNGEI's strategic focus on promoting and supporting gender-responsive education plans and policies reflects an awareness that ensuring education systems are gender-responsive by design is one of the best ways of increasing gender equality in education. It also recognises that national governments, development partners, and civil society need training, tools, support, and the opportunity to collaborate across sectors in order to engage in effective, gender-responsive planning and policy implementation.

Increasing capacity for gender-responsive planning and policy implementation

In 2017, UNGEI and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) published the Guidance for Developing Gender-responsive Education Sector Plans— the first tool of its kind to equip education policymakers, planners, and practitioners to look at every aspect of the education system through a gender equality lens, identifying gender barriers and ensuring strategies and policies are in place to address them. With financial and technical support from GPE, Plan International, and UNICEF, UNGEI then began facilitating **Gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP) workshops** to strengthen the capacity of education ministry staff, local education groups, and other stakeholders to integrate gender throughout the education sector planning process.

The first phase of regional workshops took place in Tanzania and Nepal in 2017 and Togo in May 2018.

Following country and partner demand for capacity building, a second phase of the GRESP initiative was launched in September 2018. Phase II includes a series of regional workshops, the first of which was held in November in Kenya for the Eastern and Southern Africa region. In addition to the workshops, Phase II includes elements to build sustainability, awareness, and demand for the initiative, such as:

- Developing a GRESP workshop materials package and facilitator's manual to enable other institutions to plan and deliver GRESP workshops;
- Creating a communications strategy to raise awareness of GRESP as a mechanism to help countries meet global, regional, and national education commitments;
- Establishing a systematic follow-up process with participating countries;
- Documenting lessons learned and recommendations to inform improvements to the GRESP approach; and
- Implementing an independent review to strengthen the evidence base on the effectiveness of the GRESP approach.

Participant in Tanzania GRESP workshop

“I have to say that the training has been a big eye opener and I am applying it in my daily work and supporting colleagues to mainstream gender in their programmes and sectors.”

GRESP in Numbers (2017-2018)

4

workshops

8

technical partners engaged

25

countries represented

140+

participants

Though the GRESP initiative was less than two years old at the end of 2018, with modest funding and scope, strong progress has been made at the national, regional, and global levels. In 2018, a number of countries have produced education sector plans that show greater attention to gender issues.

The Zanzibar Education Development Plan II (2017/2018-2021/2022) states that “all programmes will be viewed through a gender lens and an inclusive education lens.” The document highlights the contribution of GRESP training to the development of the plan, noting that Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) staff and members of civil society participated in training to explore the different areas where gender needs to be taken into account in the education sector and to consider the strategies and tools available to respond to these issues.

The plan mandates that curriculum be reviewed and updated on a continual basis to reflect “gender-sensitive content,” that the MoEVT carry out a gender analysis with the support of civil society partners and prepare tools to ensure that gender-related issues are taken into account during programme development and implementation, and that all new learning materials undergo a gender review. It also calls for research to be conducted on the gender balance of the teaching force and whether interventions are needed to improve gender balance in the profession.

As Tizie Maphalala, UNGEI Regional Focal Point for Eastern and Southern Africa and UNICEF Education

Specialist, explained, representatives from different ministries, not just education ministries, took part in the GRESP workshops. This enabled those in the education sector to collaborate with representatives from ministries and departments responsible for water, gender, and other areas relevant to education and bring their respective expertise and resources to bear on the planning process.

In addition to working to make education sector plans more gender-responsive and forging cross-

“...The GRESP training was an opportunity for country teams to come together as multisectoral teams... In post-workshop plans they were really going to explore those partnerships.”

Tizie Maphalala
UNGEI Regional Focal Point,
UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa

sectoral partnerships, workshop participants have taken steps to share what they learned with others in the education sector and to focus attention on gender issues during education planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This includes holding national GRESP workshops. UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia drew on GRESP guidance to inform the education section of a new toolkit to help UNICEF

country offices better integrate gender into their programming.

UNICEF Afghanistan facilitated the delivery of customised GRESP training for the Afghanistan Girls' Education Working Group and the planning wing of the Ministry of Education. Knowledge sharing and training of Education for All Coalition members on GRESP were carried out in Sierra Leone. In Balochistan, Pakistan, the Policy Planning and Implementation Unit of the Education Department, in collaboration with partners, conducted a two-day workshop on GRESP for government officials. The workshop helped the department prepare key government officials who are now engaged in the development of a new education sector plan. Plans for national workshops were also initiated in Central African Republic and Togo.

Another success of the GRESP initiative is the increased engagement of partners. UNGEI led efforts to expand and deepen partnerships around GRESP in order to better support countries to take a more gender-responsive approach to sector analysis and planning. In 2018, Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), African Union's International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) engaged as technical partners, in addition to existing partners GPE, Plan, and UNICEF. Through a partnership agreement, IIEP is working with UNGEI to strengthen the education planning elements of the workshop and to integrate gender into its own country-level work. UNGEI is collaborating with FAWE to enhance the capacity of its national chapters to provide support to countries following the workshops.

Thanks to the work of UNGEI partners, the importance of GRESP is being recognised globally and regionally. In the Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls, and Women in Developing

Countries, G7 leaders highlighted their commitment to the integration of specific measures for girls' education throughout education sector plans of development partners.

During the **Pan-African High-level Conference on Education (PACE) in April 2018**, education ministers committed to ensuring that their education systems are gender-sensitive, responsive, and transformative. In addition, they endorsed and committed to implementing the Gender Equality Strategy (GES) of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa. AU/CIEFFA and FAWE are eager for all 55 African Union member states to benefit from capacity building on GRESP, which will help them deliver on their commitments.

As the GRESP movement gains momentum, UNGEI is reflecting on the many lessons learned during the implementation of the first workshops to improve the model and build a foundation for sustainability. These reflections will be aided by an independent review of the GRESP approach, launched in October 2018.

Countries that have participated in GRESP workshops



Driving change: Increasing investment in gender-responsive education

Bringing a gender lens to the call for investment in equitable, inclusive, quality education for all, UNGEI partners conducted research, advocacy, and public engagement around issues related to costing and financing girls' education.

In January, the Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre, University of Cambridge, published a landmark paper *Cost-effectiveness with equity: raising learning for marginalised girls through Camfed's programme in Tanzania*. The policy paper provides a cost-effectiveness analysis of a Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) programme designed to increase retention rates and learning outcomes of girls at high risk of dropping out of secondary school. Key messages emerging from the research were that, while it may cost more to reach the most marginalised, the impact per dollar spent provides greater value for money, with CAMFED's programme able to attain similar cost effectiveness outcomes to ones that do not include the aim of reaching the most marginalised. The analysis found that inclusive education systems will function for everyone if they function for the most marginalised.

Also in January, ActionAid published a series of reports and policy briefs setting out how and why governments should reduce tax incentives in order to invest more in girls' education. Building on a long-standing programme to support a rights-based approach to education, ActionAid went on to launch a Framework for Gender-Responsive Public Services. Recognising that education is one of many public services vital to progress in girls' and women's rights, the agenda was broadened to encourage citizen action. The framework helps citizens understand how publicly-funded services are governed, funded, and delivered, and the extent to which services are gender equitable and inclusive.

In parallel to this, UNGEI developed an issues paper exploring the evidence base for effectively and efficiently determining costing and financing for girls' education. Based on a broad review of evidence, the paper highlighted the need for more robust and systematic evidence around girls' education interventions, their costs, and the potential mechanisms to finance girls' education at scale.

To address this gap, UNGEI and the Malala Fund launched a one-year research project on costing and financing girls' education with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The study aims to provide policymakers and other stakeholders with tools and insights on costing, cost-effectiveness, and government budgeting and financing mechanisms as these relate to girls' education. The analysis will also contribute to evidence-based advocacy efforts at the national and global level to promote allocating funds to achieve commitments to gender equality in education.

World Bank: Investing in adolescent girls

In June 2018 the World Bank surpassed its five-year US\$2.5 billion adolescent girls' education commitment, having allocated approximately \$4 billion through nearly 30 education operations supporting adolescent girls between April 2016 and June 2018. In the first

half of 2018 alone the World Bank Board approved eight projects totalling \$849 million. These new projects included adolescent girls (aged 12-17) as direct beneficiaries with interventions ranging from cash transfers and tuition assistance to teacher training, girls' clubs, and infrastructure investments to ensure schools are gender-responsive learning environments. Projects were largely concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Accelerating investments in girls' education: Global Partnership for Education and UNGEI

Jane Davies is the Senior Education Specialist for Gender Equality at the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat. At the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee meeting in December, Jane shared her thoughts on GRESP, financing girls' education, and what's next for GPE and UNGEI.

If you had to choose one word to characterise UNGEI, what would it be?

For us, UNGEI is the 'go-to' partner for gender-responsive education sector planning. We appreciate this strategic partnership with UNGEI, and the expertise that they've brought to this very critical part of our work, as well as their convening of other partners to join what is now being called a 'movement'. It's ground-breaking work. Education sector planning is at the heart of what GPE does. So, if those plans and implementation programmes are gender-responsive, then we're going to see a big difference in results for girls' education and gender equality.

As you look back on 2018, what was a major milestone or achievement for GPE and UNGEI?

The big milestone for GPE this year was our financing conference in Dakar, which was the largest event of this kind ever. It resulted in pledges of \$2.5 billion from our donors, all of whom see girls' education and gender equality as a priority. Developing countries



pledged \$110 billion in domestic financing for education. Working together with UNGEI, we've got the potential to make sure those resources are used to ensure sector and implementation plans are gender-responsive and, most importantly, that this work leads to better support for girls and a mainstreaming of gender equality throughout education activities.

There is a great opportunity for building on the global 'perfect storm' of political commitment that we're seeing in every global event this year, whether it's education-related or more broadly under the G7 dialogue and at the UN General Assembly. Gender equality is a priority and the time to tackle it is now. UNGEI and GPE can continue to work together to support developing countries and make sure that every girl and boy is able to access quality education in their countries.

As you look to 2019, what's next for GPE?

We'll be launching our new Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) mechanism soon. KIX is a new way to connect expertise, innovation, and knowledge of GPE developing country partners to support better national policy dialogue and planning. This is going to be an exciting opportunity to mobilise new resources for accelerating gender equality in and through education.

For more information on KIX and GPE's girls' education and gender equality work, visit globalpartnership.org



Advancing Gender-responsive Teaching, Learning, and Learning Spaces

While gender-responsive education policies and plans are crucial to advancing girls' education and gender equality in education, how and what teachers teach in classrooms is equally important. Teachers play a primary role in making effective, supportive, and inclusive learning spaces a reality by ensuring that unequal treatment and harmful stereotypes and biases do not undermine the educational achievement of girls and boys.

For this reason, UNGEI's second strategic objective focuses on promoting gender-responsive teaching and learning in schools, as well as non-formal learning spaces. The emphasis is on supporting the development and use of gender-responsive pedagogy and classroom practices and eliminating gender bias in textbooks, curricula, and teaching and learning material; supporting research and advocacy efforts aimed at better understanding and addressing the needs of marginalised girls, including girls with disabilities; and promoting the use of gender-responsive teaching and learning approaches to address challenges specific to conditions of conflict and crisis.

Creating more inclusive classrooms through gender-responsive pedagogy

In December 2018, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) launched the second edition of **Gender-responsive pedagogy: A toolkit for teachers and school**. This indispensable resource equips teachers and administrators to create inclusive classrooms free from gender-bias. FAWE partnered with UNICEF's regional offices in West and Central Africa (WCARO) and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), and UNGEI to update and relaunch the toolkit, incorporating new best practices and the latest research on gender-responsive education in the African context. Both

What is gender-responsive pedagogy?

Gender-responsive pedagogy equips teachers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to empower them to respond adequately to the learning needs of girls and boys through using gender-aware classroom processes and practices. It develops teaching practices that foster equal treatment and participation of girls and boys in the classroom and the wider school community.

Source: FAWE

UNICEF WCARO and ESARO are pilot-testing the toolkit.

In August, FAWE and Creative Arts Institute (CAI) facilitated a **Gender-responsive Pedagogy Review and Validation Workshop** in Nairobi, Kenya. Forty participants, representing Ministry of Education teacher development departments and teacher training colleges from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia provided critical feedback on the toolkit to ensure its optimisation for teacher training and to enhance classroom practice in different and often challenging African contexts. The toolkit has been finalised and partners are planning training of trainers workshops for tutors at teacher training institutes, to strengthen the capacity of a critical mass of professionals to put gender-responsive pedagogy into practice.

A Skilled 'GirlForce'

Today's generation of girls will enter a world of work that is being transformed by innovation and automation. Educated and skilled workers are in great demand, but roughly a quarter of young people—most of them female—are currently neither employed nor in education or training. Of the one billion young people, including 600 million adolescent girls, that will enter the workforce in the next decade, more than 90 percent of those living in developing countries will work in the informal sector where low or no pay, abuse, and exploitation are common.

To help expand existing learning opportunities and chart new pathways for skills development, in April 2018 UNICEF initiated the **Generation Unlimited (GenU)** partnership. Its goal is to ensure every young person aged 10-24 years is in some form of school, learning, training, or age-appropriate employment by 2030. Within the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDG) framework, and the UN Youth Strategy 2030, GenU will contribute to results related to education and learning, skills, fostering decent work opportunities, youth entrepreneurship, and equipping a movement of young people as changemakers.

In parallel to this, under the theme **With Her: A Skilled GirlForce**, International Day of the Girl 2018 marked the beginning of a year-long effort led by UNICEF to bring together partners and stakeholders to advocate for and draw attention and investments to the most pressing needs and opportunities for girls to attain skills for employability. Coinciding with the launch of the campaign, in the report **GirlForce: Skills, education and training for girls now**, UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) highlighted barriers girls face in entering the world of work, opportunities for alternative learning pathways for skills training, and needed investments to help drive the economic empowerment of young women.



Connecting girls to STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

More girls are in school today than ever before, but they do not always have the same opportunities as boys. Biases, social norms, and expectations often hold them back, influencing the quality of the education they receive and the subjects they study. Girls and women are particularly under-represented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, and consequently in STEM careers. Worldwide, women represent only 35 percent of students pursuing STEM fields in higher education.

For the past several years, the UN Ivy STEM Connect Programme has been collaborating closely with UNGEI and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) to increase the interest, participation, and confidence of girls in STEM subjects in Tanzania, Rwanda, and Senegal. The programme uses a peer-to-peer learning approach that connects US Ivy League undergraduates, AIMS graduate students, and secondary school students once a week via Skype. It has involved nearly 200 students, including roughly 115 secondary students, 48 university graduate students, and 36 undergraduates. Each year students have the opportunity to complete and present a cross-collaborative science project. Projects in 2018 included constructing a waterwheel to demonstrate hydropower and building a balloon-powered car to exhibit energy conservation. Throughout 2018, UNGEI provided advisory and administrative support for the programme, including funding the development of a workbook series to standardise lessons and equip participants to facilitate peer-to-peer STEM learning approaches that build confidence and skills.

Another game-changing STEM programme in Africa is underway thanks to UNESCO. In 2018, UNESCO trained 120 teacher educators, teachers, and school administrators from 12 francophone African countries in gender-responsive STEM pedagogy. This effort was supported by the Government of Japan and undertaken in partnership with the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation (IFEFF), the African Union's International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), Microsoft, the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA), and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Additional support came from Senegal's Ministry of National Education and its Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation. The programme established a corps of master trainers to support local capacity development, and a second master trainers programme is planned for mid-2019 to build capacity of trainers in Anglophone African countries. The training draws on lessons learned from UNESCO's 2017 ground-breaking report, *Cracking the Code*, which highlighted the key factors linked to girls' participation, learning achievement, and continuation in STEM fields.

Promoting and sharing learning on addressing the needs of marginalised girls and girls with disabilities

Because children with disabilities are less likely to go to school, stay in school, and succeed, ensuring that all children are thriving in education requires careful attention to the needs and experiences of girls and boys with disabilities. As part of its Strategic Directions, UNGEI supports research and advocacy efforts aimed at better understanding and addressing the needs of marginalised girls, including girls with disabilities.

In July, the world's first Global Disability Summit was held in London. Hosted by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), in partnership with the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the Government of Kenya, the summit presented an opportunity to celebrate progress, share learning, spread awareness of critical areas of need, and mobilise global action around disability rights, including inclusive education. In line with DFID's

Only 10% of children with disabilities in developing countries go to school.

Source: UNICEF

vision for disability inclusion, the Summit's two cross-cutting themes were gender and humanitarian assistance.

In the lead up to the Summit UNGEI engaged inclusive education advocates, researchers, and partner organisations in a campaign highlighting the importance of a gender-responsive approach to addressing the educational marginalisation of children with disabilities. Teaming up with Leonard Cheshire and the REAL Centre, UNGEI made the case for moving beyond data to listen to the voices of girls with disabilities and thus better understand their needs.



Male mentors help girls with disabilities get the education they need



Charles and his niece Beatrice outside their family home in Kisumu, Kenya.

As part of the **16 Days of Activism** campaign, UNGEI joined forces with partner Leonard Cheshire, to highlight the importance of working with men and boys to break barriers to education for girls with disabilities. UNGEI's Sarah Winfield visited Leonard Cheshire **Male Mentorship Programme** participants in Kisumu, Kenya and documented this unique approach to advancing education for girls with disabilities in [The Male Mentors](#), a film released on International Day of Persons with Disabilities. She met Charles Omondi Ambuso and his niece Beatrice, pictured above, who has a hearing impairment and was orphaned at a young age. Charles contacted Leonard Cheshire to access support for Beatrice and became active in her school's parent support group and community outreach activities. He was later recruited to the Male Mentorship Programme, which is supported by DFID's Girls' Education Challenge and designed to encourage fathers and guardians of students enrolled in Leonard Cheshire partner schools to advocate for girls with disabilities. The programme equips participants with the knowledge and skills needed to help tackle challenges faced by girls and ultimately promote a more inclusive model of education.

Charles is one of more than 60 male mentors in Kisumu county and 250 across four counties in Kenya. Through the programme, the mentors are provided with training in parenting skills, tackling gender norms and stereotypes, addressing stigma and discrimination, and a range of other issues that make girls with disabilities particularly vulnerable in education. The mentors go on to organise their own meetings to strategize approaches and opportunities for sensitising the community around gender, disability, and education—taking steps to tackle the barriers that prevent so many girls from getting the education they need. With the support of Leonard Cheshire and Charles' unwavering belief in her, Beatrice is making progress at school and is a budding athlete. "Her disability will not hold her back," Charles says with pride.

Girls in rural areas also face particular challenges in accessing and progressing through school. Higher levels of poverty, long distances to school, fewer teachers (in particular women teachers), and fewer facilities such as water and sanitation are all common barriers faced by rural girls. In many parts of the world, schools are not safe and supportive teaching and learning environments, and school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) can be particularly prevalent in rural areas.

In March 2018, UNGEI partnered with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Education International (EI) to co-host a panel discussion during the 2018 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) entitled Agenda 2030 for All: Gender, learning and teaching in rural contexts. UNGEI chaired the panel, which examined approaches to advancing gender equality in education and addressing the particular challenges faced by schoolgirls and women teachers in rural communities. Currently, Norway is supporting UNICEF to deliver education to out-of-school and marginalised children in the Sahel. The three-year project has a strong focus on providing education for girls in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger and includes non-formal and alternative education approaches that give learning opportunities to children who are at risk of being excluded from education.

Helping girls at the extreme margins of society—those compelled to drop out of school or who never had the opportunity to enrol—get the education they need is a priority for many UNGEI partners. CARE reported reaching 3.7 million girls with accelerated and alternative education programmes across Afghanistan, India, Malawi, Nepal, Somalia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, enabling marginalised adolescents to acquire basic skills. Now in its second phase, VSO's Sisters for Sisters' Education project in Nepal has trained 320 'big sister' mentors to mentor, inspire, and motivate 1,283 'little sisters' to complete their education. The project, which is funded in part through DFID's Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) has also trained 152 teachers in gender-responsive teaching methods and works with communities to help them better support girls' education.

In June, the UK announced an additional \$250 million in funding to the second phase of the GEC. While GEC initially targeted primary school-aged children, the second phase mainly aims to ensure the girls continue on to secondary and tertiary education and training in order to complete 12 years of quality education. The second phase also includes an important focus on supporting marginalised adolescent girls who have never attended or who have dropped out of school a second chance to learn through catch-up classes and vital skills training – the 'Leave No Girl Behind' window.



“To fight for my people and to have a voice” – Indigenous women’s rights in Brazil

Participating in the UNGEI co-hosted CSW side event Agenda 2030 for all, Taily Terena, a youth activist with the indigenous women’s rights organisation ECMIA recounted her experience of growing up in an indigenous community in rural Brazil. Highlighting problems of language, curricula ill-suited to the cultural context, and teacher retention she spoke at length about the challenges that girls from indigenous communities face in getting the education they need.



“But for [indigenous] girls the problem would start when they turn into women—when they get their period, the age to help at home. Sometimes you’re not able to go to school because you need to help your family with domestic activities, and boys don’t need to do that. The problem gets worse as you get older, because in my community we don’t have high schools. You have to go to another community or to the city to get a secondary education. Sometimes for a girl this is impossible if you don’t have the support of your family, or if you don’t have the money to stay in the city. And even if in spite of all these problems someone decides to go to school in the city, you face violence in the form of discrimination against indigenous people.

The biggest challenge for me is that when you choose to have an education, to go to university, you are giving up the culture, giving up on having a family, as traditionally girls from my community get married early, have a husband, have a child. You need to choose what you want from your life. It’s not that I am giving up on these things, but I am prioritising my studies, because it opens doors. Later I want to have a child and have my home, but also fight for my people and to have a voice.”



Driving change: Ensuring education in crisis and conflict

Crisis and instability tear apart the fabric of everyday life, including the ability to safely attend school. Currently, conflict, natural disasters, and other crises are keeping 75 million children and young people from education. Girls are particularly marginalised in these situations. They are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys⁴ and, in 2014, there were three times more attacks on girls’ schools than boys’ schools.⁵ In addition to falling behind or missing out entirely on education, girls and boys who are out of school are more vulnerable to violence, trafficking, child labour, early marriage and other rights violations.

One of UNGEI’s priorities in advancing education for all is to support the work of partners in crisis and conflict-affected contexts. Not only do children and young people have a right to education in crisis and conflict, but education can promote gender equality, stability, and peace. Research shows that greater equality between men and women decreases the likelihood of conflict by as much as 37 percent.⁶ Though funding for education has been neglected by humanitarian donors in the past (only 2 percent is earmarked for education⁷), recognition of the importance of education in crisis and conflict situations is growing, as are the critical financial commitments needed to make an impact.

Advocacy and awareness-raising by a consortium of civil society organisations, including a number of UNGEI partners, leading up to and during the G7 Summit in Charlevoix, Canada in June helped draw attention to the issue of girls’ education in crisis situations. A coalition including World Vision Canada, Plan International Canada, Save the Children Canada, UNICEF Canada, Right to Play, and RESULTS Canada was a driving force in this year-long campaign.

Advocacy efforts included a social media campaign and [website](#) to highlight the importance of education in crisis and conflict situations, particularly for girls. Using the hashtag #MyG7, host nation Canada asked people to weigh in on the issues most important to them.

Plan International Canada worked with Global Affairs Canada and NGO partners to ensure young women advocates were included in the G7 Whistler Ministerial Meetings, which took place prior to the G7 Summit. Six adolescent girls from around the world met with G7 leaders to share their experiences, ideas, and demands for action. These young women were not the only youth making their voices heard to world leaders in the run-up to the G7. Fatuma Omar Ismail, who grew up in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp after her family fled civil war in Somalia, is now a graduate of the University of Toronto. As a dedicated education advocate, Fatuma started a petition to make girls’ education in crisis a priority at the Summit, gaining more than 160,000 signatures.

Following the Whistler Ministerial Meetings, G7 finance and development ministers issued the **Whistler Declaration on Unlocking the Power of Adolescent Girls for Sustainable Development**, which supports the rights, needs, and potential of adolescent girls and emphasises the critical role they can play in development. During the June summit, leaders of the G7 issued the **Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries** emphasising the importance of providing education to children in crisis settings, especially girls, and committing \$2.9 billion to support girls’ education in emergencies. Between 1st July, when the World Bank began tracking the pledge, and 31st December 2018, eight eligible projects across the three Human Development Global Practices of Education, Health, and Social Protection were approved, totalling \$446 million. These eight include projects in Afghanistan, Chad, Mali, and Yemen, among other countries.

In addition to advocacy and awareness-raising, UNGEI, with support from Dubai Cares, also engages with partners to provide technical advice and practical tools to ensure education plans and policies are informed by sound gender and conflict analysis. Throughout 2018, UNGEI served as co-convenor of the **Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Gender Task Team**. Together with the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE, UNGEI worked to re-invigorate the Gender Task Team by expanding membership, improving its internet presence, and defining new objectives across four key areas: practice, collaboration, evidence-building, and advocacy.

During 2018, the Gender Task Team worked to revise the INEE Pocket Guide to Gender, originally published in 2010. The updated **INEE Gender Guidance Note**, which will be available in 2019, captures the latest advances in the field, including updated resources and emerging promising practices, and is aligned with new tools and processes. UNGEI also conducted a knowledge-mapping exercise on gender and education in conflict and crisis settings. The exercise identified key gaps in knowledge, as well as related opportunities, in order to add to the growing body of evidence in this area, which will be built upon through the Gender Task Team.

During 2019, UNGEI will continue to prioritise work on gender equality in contexts of conflict and crisis, including disseminating the INEE Gender Guidance Note and complementary knowledge products for various audiences, continuing to co-convene the INEE Gender Task Team, and leading the development of a research and learning agenda.

UNGEI will also work in partnership with Education Cannot Wait (ECW) to develop country-level tools to support practitioners in applying standards and guidelines on gender and education in emergencies, as well as to develop an e-resource library. UNGEI will continue to advise ECW on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy as co-chair the ECW Gender Task Team (in partnership with Plan UK and Plan Canada) and will work with the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) as a member of its Gender Working Group.

In January 2018, UNGEI partner Plan International UK published *Safe from harm: Protecting every child and teacher at school*, which reported that **15 life-threatening attacks on education occur every school day**.

Plan International UK

Strengthening Capacity for Gender-transformative Governance and Leadership

“By denying girls an education we deny them a voice, a choice, we deny them their future.”

Theresa May
UK Prime Minister, speaking at the
UN General Assembly

Transforming gender relations in schools, as well as communities and society more broadly, depends on empowering more women to take on leadership roles and creating more gender-responsive governance structures. When women lead, they tend to place greater emphasis on gender equality, while legislatures with higher numbers of women are more likely to support health, education, and social welfare spending.⁸ Having women in leadership positions at all levels of government and the education system helps ensure that the voices and perspectives of women and girls influence policies and practices.

UNGEI’s third strategic objective—to strengthen capacity for gender-transformative governance and leadership in education—stems from a recognition of the important role of leadership in advancing gender equality in education. To do this, UNGEI contributes to global and regional efforts led by teacher unions and other lead actors to promote women in education leadership and strengthen the capacity of teachers and managers to model positive, gender-equal relations in classrooms, schools, unions, and education ministries. UNGEI also works to support the capacity of education ministries to champion gender equality.

Promoting women in education leadership

While women increasingly make up the majority of the teaching profession worldwide, the proportion of women in education leadership positions has lagged behind. Bringing together more than 300 teachers and education unionists from 79 countries, the **Education International (EI) World Women’s Conference: Finding a way through ‘the Labyrinth’: women, education, unions and leadership**, held in February in Marrakesh, Morocco presented an opportunity to explore how women can negotiate and overcome barriers to leadership roles in education. During a panel on ‘Gender, power and leadership’, UNGEI highlighted the different kinds of power used to advance the partnership’s collective agenda across the global arena. In collaboration with the education unions of South Africa and Zambia, UNGEI also co-convened a workshop on the UNGEI-EI project Education Unions Take Action to End SRGBV.

Building political momentum to champion girls’ education and gender equality

Political will—when a critical mass of leaders and decision-makers is sufficiently knowledgeable about a problem and committed to supporting an agreed-upon solution—is essential for achieving education

If 10 percent more adolescent girls attend school, a country’s GDP increases by an average of 3 percent.

Source: USAID

for all and ensuring no child is left behind. Through advocacy and awareness-raising on the global stage, the UNGEI partnership has helped propel girls' education and gender equality to the forefront of the global agenda and generate the political will to make good on ensuing commitments.

At the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)** in London in April, UNGEI partners played a key role in championing the transformative power of education for girls at the Women's Forum. CHOGM also marked the launch of the Platform for Girls' Education with 12 global leaders coming together to galvanise political will and highlight best practices in girls' education across the Commonwealth. The meeting concluded with Commonwealth leaders reaffirming their commitment to ensuring 12 years of quality education for all children, with a particular focus on the most marginalised in education, especially girls.

In September, girls' education was again placed centre stage at the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**. In the lead-up to UNGA, UNGEI collaborated with UNESCO to draft the Joint Outcome Statement presented during the high-level event **12 Years to Break Barriers and Leave No Girl Behind: Countdown 2030** hosted by the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Jordan, Kenya, and Niger, as well as leading multilateral agencies and civil society organisations. The joint statement put forward a call to action and a commitment to tackle barriers and build political momentum to deliver 12 years of free, safe and quality education for all girls.

In November, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) convened the **6th World Assembly** on the theme of **Transforming public education systems for equality, inclusion, and justice**. The event brought together education campaigners from across the GCE membership and beyond to debate a wide range of issues relating to universal education as well as determine priorities for the 2019–2022 strategic plan.

Gender considerations were highlighted during the Global Learning Event in advance of the World Assembly and during the Assembly itself, where UNGEI was invited to participate in the opening plenary. Gender equality is one of four areas for policy renewal that made up a resolution on Updates to the GCE policy framework, which called on GCE and its membership to:

- Fully integrate gender equality in its policy frameworks, planning processes, and political engagement.
- Pursue gender parity in the composition of its staff, bodies, and working groups.
- Develop a gender strategy, including a monitoring and evaluation framework, with a clear objective to engage in critical dialogue to strengthen political will on gender transformative education.

The resolution also called on states to advance gender equality across plans, policies, budgets, teacher development, and curriculum reform, and address critical gender and education issues such as gender-based violence, sexuality education, and the rights of LGBTQ+ students and teachers.

Driving change: Partnering with youth

Young people have long been recognised as key stakeholders in the Education 2030 Agenda, experts of their own experience, and, as such, a major force for development. Yet for youth to realise their power and potential as change agents, their voices must be heard and their presence felt at the decision-making table. In 2018, the global landscape continued to shift in favour of meaningful youth engagement, as UNGEI partners joined forces with youth and youth stepped up as leaders of change by speaking out, challenging norms, and working collaboratively to shape a gender-equal future.

In July, the Campaign for Female Education's more than 120,000 CAMA alumnae in the CAMA network celebrated the network's 20th anniversary. Reinvesting the benefits of their education in their communities, CAMA members are using their own resources to more than triple the support provided through donor funds to help marginalised children get the education they need. With a restructured leadership that puts young women alumnae at the forefront, CAMFED and CAMA are creating a new dialogue around female leadership and empowerment across the African continent.

Co-designed with young gender champions, in October, Plan International launched **Girls Get Equal**, a new girl-led, five-year campaign to fast track progress towards gender equality by amplifying the voices, power, and leadership of girls. Launched at the **Global Girls' Summit** in Brussels, the campaign is a global call to action to governments, civil society, the private sector, the media, and all allies to make a commitment to ensure #GirlsGetEqual and join the fight to end gender inequality.

On International Day of the Girl 2018, more than 1000 **girl takeovers** across 60 countries were organised with girls stepping into the shoes of presidents, mayors, head teachers, business leaders, and more, showing that they should be free to dream and free to lead. Plan International describes Girls Takeover as an initial step on a long road to change, showing that the girls' rights movement is gaining momentum.



Youth leading the way: An interview with Alice Saisha



Growing up in rural Zambia, Alice Saisha dropped out of school at 14 when her family could no longer afford her school fees. Selected as a scholar by CAMFED, she was able to complete secondary school and went on to join CAMFED's CAMA alumnae network of young women leaders, eventually graduating from university and becoming a CAMFED staff member. In 2016 she was appointed UNGEI's Youth Representative. UNGEI spoke with Alice at the 2018 Global Advisory Committee meeting.

What has been your role with UNGEI as Youth Representative?

My role is mainly to ensure that I bring the voice of the youth to the table so that we can also be heard, we can also be part of decision-making and planning. But mainly to ensure that girls and women are educated and empowered all over the world.

If you had to describe UNGEI in three words, what would they be?

One word that comes to mind is that UNGEI is 'exceptional'. I think it's something unique that is not replicated in terms of bringing different partners together and making one voice out of that partnership. And then the other word is that UNGEI is like a 'bridge'

because it connects two worlds together, a world of a girl out there and women out there and a world where different actors are playing a role to ensure that that child is safe in the community. And then the last word could be that it is 'transformational'—UNGEI brings about change and it's not just about talking, but also action.

As you look back on 2018, what is a milestone or achievement for you and your organisation?

As CAMFED, we play a role in ensuring more girls access quality education and more girls progress from one level of education to another, like from secondary to tertiary. We entered 25 years this year and that is 25 years of investing into a girl's education and ensuring that they transition from one level to another. And now we have about 120,000 girls who have been supported by CAMFED in the alumnae network called CAMA. Something that has happened to CAMA this year is that we are now taking the lead, we are now at the front line. You know, it's rare that youth are given the frontline to lead in any activity. But we are doing that with the support of CAMFED.

What's on the horizon for CAMA and CAMFED and your work with UNGEI?

What's on the horizon is bringing more girls on board CAMFED. We as CAMA are also identifying our own income generating activities in order to raise enough funds to ensure that girls are valued, respected, and they're in school and can also have a better life than we had. UNGEI mainly helps amplify those voices of those girls in society, so we shall continue speaking about children's rights.

To learn more about CAMFED and CAMA, visit camfed.org

Ending School-related Gender-based Violence

When students do not feel safe at school, they cannot learn and develop to their full potential. Sadly, research indicates that worldwide, half of students aged 13-15—an estimated 150 million—report experiencing violence from their peers in and around schools.⁹ School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) involves acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence occurring in and around school, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics.¹⁰ Approximately 1 in 3 girls between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying on a daily basis. Data from 96 countries and territories shows that more than 1 in 10 students who have been bullied report being made fun of with sexual jokes, comments, or gestures.¹¹

Recognising that SRGBV is a significant barrier to achieving the Education 2030 vision of quality education for all, UNGEI's fourth strategic objective is a pledge to advance the elimination of SRGBV. UNGEI leads efforts to strengthen existing partnerships with education unions to make schools safe for learning and locations of decent work. UNGEI also co-hosts the Global Working Group to End SRGBV (SRGBV Working Group), which identifies and promotes good practice approaches to eliminate SRGBV, including producing and promoting minimum standards and tools to foster safe and supportive schools. The SRGBV Working Group also facilitates knowledge exchange among global, regional, and country-level actors representing a diversity of sectors and groups and leads joint advocacy on SRGBV.

Partnering with education unions to end SRGBV

Education unions are a powerful, yet mostly untapped resource in the fight against SRGBV because they represent the majority of the teaching profession



Launched in 2014, the **Global Working Group to End SRGBV** is a coalition of more than 40 development organisations—including civil society, donor governments, research institutions, education unions and the UN—that work together to end SRGBV. It is co-chaired by UNGEI and UNESCO and coordinated by the UNGEI Secretariat with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNICEF.

in most countries. In this role, education unions are uniquely positioned to lead efforts to end SRGBV and help teachers become agents of change. In 2016, UNGEI leveraged its partnership with Education International (EI), a founding member of the SRGBV Working Group, to launch the four-year **Education Unions Take Action to End School-related Gender-based Violence** initiative with funding from the Government of Canada. With Gender at Work as the technical and learning partner, the initiative empowers nine education unions and their members from seven countries in Africa to prevent and respond



Education International (EI) is the voice of educators worldwide. It is the world's largest federation of unions, representing 32 million education employees in 400 organisations in 170 countries and territories. Since it was founded in 1993, EI has worked to achieve gender equality within trade unions and in education as a key policy and programmatic priority. EI adopted a Resolution on SRGBV at the 7th EI World Congress in 2015, creating an institutional framework to address SRGBV as a priority across its membership.

to SRGBV. The programme uses Gender Action Learning (GAL), a participatory approach rooted in the principles of gender-transformative change. Through this approach, participants come to understand the nature of gender inequality and gender-based violence in their context and reflect on their own biases and experiences of gender stereotypes, discrimination, and violence. The GAL approach has allowed each union to test its own methods ('change experiments') to end SRGBV and, through a peer learning process, share them with others and find creative solutions to the challenges they encounter. The change experiments have included approaches such as strengthening women's leadership and representation within the union structure, reforming union policy to end SRGBV, and working with school clubs and pilot schools to empower teachers and students to end SRGBV.

Since 2016, 396 union staff and members have been directly engaged in addressing SRGBV, reaching over 30,000 individuals. Education unions from across Africa came together to share learnings at the 2018 Education International Africa Regional Learning Encounter on SRGBV, where it became clear that the UNGEI-EI project has inspired a number of non-participating unions to launch their own projects on SRGBV. Other unions have also expressed interest in doing so. A second phase of the initiative was launched in 2018 with the Gambia Teachers Union and the Sierra Leone Teachers Union, alongside the EI Africa regional office.

Setting standards and monitoring progress in ending SRGBV

As efforts to eliminate SRGBV have gained momentum in recent years, the SRGBV Working Group has looked for opportunities to bring the gender dimensions of school violence into the monitoring process for SDG 4. Also, while data on SRGBV is being collected and monitored more often, national governments, schools, and communities are not necessarily equipped to respond to or report on all forms of violence in and around schools. To help address this, UNGEI led an effort to map sources of global and regional data on SRGBV, as well as evidence reviews of what works to address violence against women and girls, school violence, bullying, and violence against children in school settings. Particular attention was paid to linking child protection services with education systems. While there weren't many examples of evaluated, school-based approaches to addressing SRGBV, the evidence suggested that systemic or 'whole school' approaches are more effective than one-off interventions. A whole school approach builds on the inter-connectedness of schools, communities, and families while addressing the drivers and root causes of violence at the school levels.

Drawing on this research, in September 2018 UNGEI and the SRGBV Working Group published **A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-related Gender-**

based Violence: Minimum standards and monitoring framework. The tool presents a set of eight minimum standards for a whole school approach to prevent and respond to SRGBV. These standards take into account systematic prevention and response at the school level, as well as addressing the drivers and norms that lead to silence around acts of violence. The resource also outlines a monitoring framework to help track change at the school, provincial, and national levels. Education policy makers and practitioners can adapt the guide to their national context and use it to develop SRGBV prevention and response strategies, as well as improve data collection and reporting around SRGBV.

In October 2018, UNGEI partnered with FAWE Zimbabwe and Miske Witt and Associates, to pilot the whole school minimum standards and monitoring framework. The pilot will be implemented in ten government schools in two regions of Zimbabwe for two and a half years. The initiative is expected to generate evidence on what works to address the drivers of SRGBV at the school level.

Advocacy and promoting promising strategies to address SRGBV

Building the evidence base on what works to prevent and respond to SRGBV is an important part of promoting effective practices to end SRGBV at the country level. Aware that there was little documentation of SRGBV interventions and approaches from French-speaking West Africa, UNGEI partnered with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI) and the UNICEF Regional Office in West Africa to document case studies from the region. Over the last five years, MAEDI has worked with Plan International, UNICEF, and UNESCO to support a multi-sectoral approach to address SRGBV in Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo.

In 2018, UNGEI, together with MAEDI and under the banner of the SRGBV Working Group, published **Promoting a safe and supportive learning**

environment: Multi-sectoral approaches to eliminate SRGBV, featuring case studies from the SRGBV initiatives in Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo. The case studies present four promising strategies for preventing and responding to SRGBV using an inter-agency and multi-sectoral approach. They were documented using eight UNGEI criteria for identifying good practice: relevance, gender analysis, monitoring and evaluation, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, participation and partnership orientation, sustainability, replication, and lessons learned.

"UNGEI has played an important role in setting the agenda when it comes to girls' education. School-related gender-based violence can be a sensitive issue and one that has to be addressed to ensure quality education for all girls and boys. UNGEI has made a difference in speaking up about it and contributed to putting SRGBV on the global agenda."

Silje Sjøvaag Skeie
Senior Advisor, Norad

Raising awareness of the gendered nature of school violence and breaking the silence around the issue is a critical component of mobilising the global community to work together to end SRGBV. In 2018, UNGEI was invited to join the core group that conceived the **End Violence in Schools (EVIS): Safe to Learn** campaign with DFID, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. UNGEI played a critical role in ensuring that the campaign is embedded in the education sector and is gender-responsive, particularly in the framing of the 'Safe to Learn Call to Action'. The Whole School Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework

was one of the key reference documents informing the design of a benchmarking tool for violence prevention strategies that will be used by UNICEF to assess education systems in selected Safe to Learn countries.

Members of the SRGBV Working Group contributed to strengthening the focus on gender in a number of global policy publications, including the World Health Organization's **INSPIRE Handbook: Action for implementing the seven strategies to end violence against children** and DFID's education policy refresh and guidance note - **Get Children Learning** - for DFID Education advisors, which recommends indicators and standards from the Whole School Minimum Standards. Additionally, UN Women represented the SRGBV Working Group on the UNESCO-led effort to refine the definition of the new SDG 4a.2 indicator, with explicit attention to sex disaggregation.

UNGEI also raised awareness of SRGBV and shared good practices and strategies in several forums in 2018:

- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Along with representatives from 17 Latin American and Caribbean countries, UNGEI took part in the **Central American Meeting on Gender Equality, Violence, and Education** 28-30 May in El Salvador, participating in a panel on global and regional strategies to eliminate SRGBV. Attendees issued a declaration supported by civil society organisation members of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) and ratified by eight Central American countries represented at the meeting.

Natasha Harris-Harb
UNGEI Youth Advisor

“Youth are at the front lines of the battle to end SRGBV – working to break the cycle of power and violence and create the world they want now and in the future.”

- **North America:** During the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, UNGEI participated in a panel entitled **Ignite the Light: 12 years of quality education and learning for all girls by 2030**, hosted by DFID and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). UNGEI highlighted the importance of addressing SRGBV as a critical barrier to girls' access and learning and shared examples of evidence-based strategies that constitute a whole school approach.
- **Europe:** Together with representatives of VVOB, FAWE, Education International, and Plan International, UNGEI participated in a dialogue about the importance of multi-level partnership initiatives for tackling SRGBV during the **European Union Development Days** in Brussels, Belgium. Panellists shared experiences of supporting teachers, school leaders, students, and communities to take action against SRGBV and address root causes. Recommendations included linking aid to more effective policies, engaging men and boys in efforts to change gender norms, and working with the media to break the silence around SRGBV.

- **East Asia and the Pacific (EAP):** UNGEI contributed to a draft regional strategy document for the roll-out of **Connect with Respect**, which identifies teacher education and capacity building as key entry points. UNGEI, UNESCO, and partners will continue to support capacity building on Connect with Respect into 2019. In Thailand, EAP UNGEI co-chair UNESCO engaged in advocacy with the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) on the issue of bullying and SRGBV. In August, OBEC and UNESCO hosted a capacity-building workshop on bullying prevention and on Connect with Respect aimed at local education authorities and teachers.

- **Eastern and Southern Africa:** UNESCO is leading the adaptation and piloting of Connect with Respect in Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique, Eswatini, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, Malawi, and Namibia in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. The aim of the pilot project is to strengthen school-based teaching and learning to prevent SRGBV by preparing a cohort of master trainers from education ministries, as well as finalising a set of tools that have been field tested and adapted to the region.

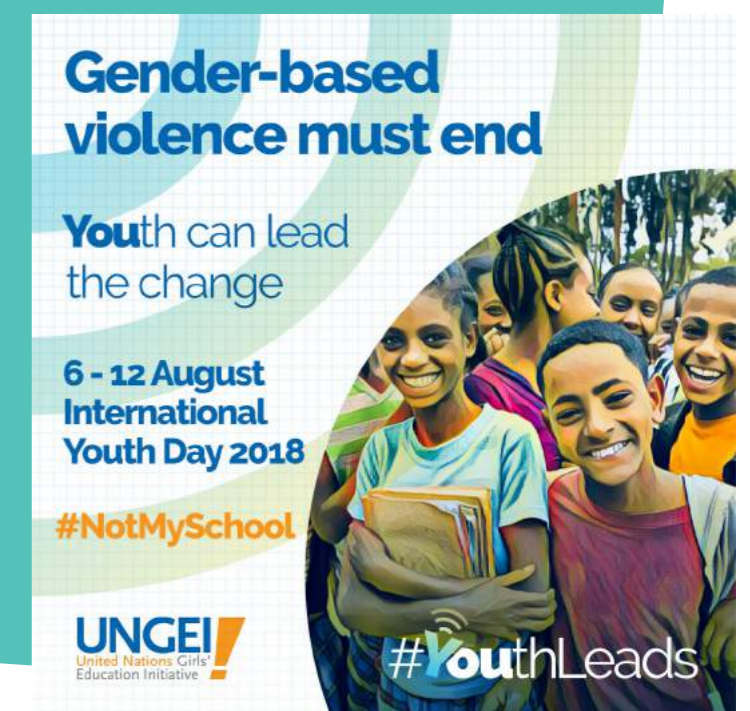
The #NotMySchool Campaign

In the lead up to International Youth Day, UNGEI hosted a youth-led campaign to galvanize young people to speak out and take action against SRGBV. The **#NotMySchool Campaign** was designed by youth representatives of partner organisations and networks, bringing together activists from across the world to share experiences and ideas around tackling SRGBV. Through videos, blog posts, and other actions, the campaign reached and engaged more than 4 million people in one week to break the silence and exchange ideas around tackling SRGBV.

To carry forward the activism ignited through the campaign, youth leaders again came together to produce the **Not My School Global Youth Call to Action to Eliminate SRGBV**. The Call to Action is an appeal to governments, educators, fellow youth and the global community to adopt practical measures identified through the course of the campaign as effective strategies for addressing SRGBV.

Connect with Respect

Connect with Respect is a classroom programme for students in early secondary school (ages 11-14) aimed at preventing gender-based violence in schools. The tool helps teachers, school principals, and the broader education community provide positive role models, empower children and youth to have healthy and respectful relationships, and deliver a violence prevention programme within their curriculum in Asia and the Pacific.



Driving change: Empowering men and boys to advance gender equality in education

Although on the whole girls are more likely to be excluded from education than boys, in some situations the gender gap is at the expense of boys. In April 2018, the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) released the policy paper **Achieving gender equality in education: don't forget the boys**, which highlighted regions where girls are out-performing boys at the secondary and tertiary levels and staying in school longer.

Unlike girls, boys' vulnerability to dropout is not usually the product of structural or historical discrimination, but harmful gender norms, attitudes, and behaviours. Male breadwinner norms, coupled with employment opportunities for low-skilled labour that do not require secondary school completion, can lead to high levels of drop-out. Negative experiences in and around school, from discriminatory teaching practices to violence from teachers or peers, can also alienate boys from school.

While finding ways to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised boys are not left behind in education is key, UNGEI is also seeking to better understand how boys can be engaged as champions of gender justice. Schools are a place where children learn and are shaped by gender norms, which means they can also be an environment where gender-responsive approaches and curricula enable boys to think critically about gender and challenge the status quo. While there is evidence that supports this premise, less is known about how to do it—what works to empower boys to challenge and overcome discriminatory gender norms, and why?

In May 2018, UNGEI chaired a workshop hosted by the Brookings Institution entitled **Mainstreaming gender justice through dialogue with boys**. During the workshop, Urvashi Sahni described the gender equality curriculum she developed at the Prerna Boys School in Lucknow, India. Sahni's programme relies on schools that are safe spaces and sanctuaries from everyday violence, as well as teachers that are gender-aware and equipped to foster students' critical thinking around gender norms. Male teachers show boys that men can be gentle and caring, presenting an alternate vision of masculinity.



In a subsequent panel discussion, Ruti Levtoy of Promundo and Oswaldo Montoya of the MenEngage Alliance discussed their work with men and boys to promote gender equality in schools, as well as in the broader community. Through knowledge-sharing events like these, UNGEI is committed to expanding the evidence base on what works to empower boys to reject harmful gender norms and embrace gender equality in the classroom and beyond.

Harnessing the power of education for gender justice

In June, FHI 360, a long-standing member of UNGEI's Global Advisory Committee, hosted the Gender 360 Summit 2018: Positive Girl and Boy Development, in Washington, D.C. to explore the intersections of education, health, economic empowerment and gender-based violence among girls, boys, and youth of diverse gender identities. It brought together over 100 people from across these fields, including a number of UNGEI partners from around the world. UNGEI moderated a panel on gender-based violence in diverse contexts, highlighting good practice models to prevent and address gender violence against children and youth. Recently, Andrea Bertone, Director of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Hub at FHI 360, shared her thoughts on the role that men and boys can play in advancing gender equality in education and beyond.

Why are men and boys an important factor in girls' education?

An important aspect of the work that UNGEI has been doing that is related to girls' education is the idea of gender equality in education. I'm a huge proponent of engaging men and boys, making sure that we're not leaving them out of the conversation for multiple reasons. One reason is that they contribute to the development of social norms that impact what happens to girls. The other reason is because sometimes when we focus on girls and we leave boys out, there's a backlash against the girls and the project and that certainly does not adhere to a 'do no harm' principle. Another reason is because boys also can benefit when they are engaged in the classroom, when they are learning side by side with girls and the idea is inculcated in them that they have a role to play in the development of their community, their society, and their country and that they should be doing it in collaboration with girls and women as they get older.

Is there enough awareness of the role that men and boys can play in advancing gender equality in education?

I think sometimes we as a global development community have been focusing on girls' education, and rightfully so. However, we also need to understand that in some areas of the world boys are falling behind for certain reasons and we need our approaches to catch up with that reality. We need to recognise that it's happening and to make sure that the discourse that we're using at the global level about education doesn't ignore certain realities and trends that are happening in different areas of the world for boys.

How is FHI 360 planning to engage men and boys in the education sector?

There are two things that FHI 360 is planning to do in 2019 related to gender equality in education. One of them is to better promote the idea of boy's and men's engagement in our education programmes and to make sure that we have consistent approaches in our programmes to engage boys and men. The second area is to have a signature approach for FHI 360 on the engagement of boys and men. And going beyond that, it's really looking at transformational programmes – how do we transform gender norms in education and health programmes?



Looking Ahead

For UNGEI and the many individuals and organisations advocating for girls' education and gender equality in education, 2018 was a remarkable year—one in which years, if not decades, of planting the seeds of awareness, building relationships and networks, sharing hard-earned lessons and good practice, and steadfast policy advocacy seemed to blossom into an unprecedented level of global attention to girls' education and gender equality in education.

While 2018 was marked by a number of encouraging developments for girls' education and gender equality, many challenges remain. Effective education policies and interventions depend on reliable and complete data and information, but there are large gaps, particularly about gender issues at play during conflict and crisis and within the classroom. Accurately measuring impact and change is also difficult, in part because of the lack of data. Though the GRESP movement grew significantly in 2018, tools like the Guidance on Developing Gender-responsive Education Sector Plans and regional workshops are just a starting point on the path to ensuring that education policies, programmes, and systems are gender-responsive and gender-transformative. At the country level, more financial and technical assistance is needed to support post-workshop planning and policy-making. Greater understanding of the dynamics of education leadership and education ministries, both internally in terms of institutional barriers and gender inequality and in their relationship to other parts of government and civil society, is also essential for progress.

After a momentous first year implementing the strategic directions, UNGEI is moving forward to capitalise on global attention to girls' education and gender equality in order to continue making progress towards achieving its vision. In July 2019, there will be a review of SDG 4 during the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which provides a platform for countries, UN agencies and other international and regional organisations, civil society,

and businesses to highlight their efforts to achieve the SDGs, as well as to examine what is working and what is not working to achieve SDG 4. In 2020, UNGEI will mark the 20th anniversary of its founding, the 25th anniversary of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to advance women's rights and gender equality, as well as 10 years remaining to the goal end date set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These anniversaries invite reflection on what has been accomplished and what is left undone, as well as engendering a renewed sense of urgency and determination.

Guided by its Strategic Directions and member dialogue and feedback during the Global Advisory Committee and Steering Committee meetings, UNGEI has identified a number of priorities for 2019 and beyond. Recognising that changing social norms and advancing the empowerment of women and girls goes beyond the education sector, UNGEI will focus on working across sectors and in collaboration with women's movements to maximise reach and impact. UNGEI will continue its efforts to grow the evidence base on what works to advance girls' education and gender equality, particularly for the most marginalised – girls with disabilities and those affected by conflict and crisis. As a convener, bridge-builder, and knowledge-broker, UNGEI is well-positioned to support greater coordination and dialogue around comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). UNGEI will continue to strengthen the GRESP movement by leveraging its regional and national presence through partners to build local capacity and promote South-South knowledge-sharing on GRESP, costing and financing. A GRESP training facilitator's guide is also in development to help equip countries to conduct their own workshops.

Finally, young people have played a leading and vital role in the landmark achievements for gender equality and girls' education in 2018. UNGEI is committed to continuing to partner with youth as key stakeholders and leaders going forward, ensuring that their voices are heard, their ingenuity tapped, to advance our common goals.

UNGEI Global Advisory Committee Meeting in Ottawa, 11-13 December, 2018



In addition to its four strategic objectives, a key goal for UNGEI is to convene global and regional actors, including UNGEI partners and others, to build mutual accountability for the commitments to gender equality in education outlined in the Education 2030 agenda. The annual UNGEI Global Advisory Committee (GAC) meeting is a critical opportunity to advance this goal.

In 2018 representatives from more than 25 organisations, including multilateral and bilateral agencies, academia, youth, and international, regional and national civil society organisations and networks attended the meeting in Ottawa, Canada, 11-13 December. The meeting was unique in that it was co-hosted by donor partner Global Affairs Canada and more than half of the participants were attending for the first time.

During the meeting, participants reviewed the global and regional developments within the gender and education landscape in 2018; took stock of achievements and challenges during the first year of implementing UNGEI's Strategic Directions; developed clear directions on how UNGEI will leverage the growing momentum for girls' education and gender equality to advance its global commitments in 2019; and explored key issues in depth: gender and education in conflict and crisis, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP), and engaging men and boys.

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