“Achieving equity in education will entail putting in place a rights-based empowerment framework that will target the most vulnerable and transform power hierarchies in learning spaces, communities and policy structures in order to give poor and vulnerable girls a voice and ensure that their rights to quality education is sustained” (UNGEI/Dakar Declaration, 2010).
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</table>
I. Objectives:

1. To gain an in-depth understanding of UNGEI and Afghanistan Girls’ Education Initiative
2. To learn about the experiences of such initiatives in other countries.
3. To explore possible strategies on AGEI in WR.

II. Workshop Process:

The first formal AGEI launching meeting was held on 4th August, 2010 at the UNICEF-Herat, chaired by the Deputy Director of Department of Education (DoE), Herat and co-chaired by the Chief of UNICEF-Zone Office. Activities related to girls’ education has been a priority in this region and many innovative activities are already on-going to ensure girls’ enrollment, participation and retention.

In the above mentioned meeting, it was agreed that the members of the AGEI working group and the steering committee would receive an orientation for better internalization of the spirit of UNGEI/AGEI.

Overview

Key excerpts from Raka Rashid’s presentation:

*Fair Play for Girls!*
Progress in enrolments

Net Enrolment Rate in Primary Education

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Afghanistan</th>
<th>Pakistan</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Bhutan</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Maldives</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
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<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: UNICEF SOWC 2010
* Data refers to the most recent year available during the period 2003-8.

Out of school children decreasing, but …

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010
Out of school girls are less likely to ever get into school

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010

Gender gap in education is narrowing, but gender equity in society remains an issue

Political Will, Policies and Practices

- Afghanistan: 25% of public expenditure and strategy to promote girls’ education but escalating conflict. Formal partnership at national level
- Bangladesh: Path-breaking initiatives such as the female secondary stipend programme: Formal partnership
- Bhutan: 17% of public expenditure, community schools, school meals and girls’ hostel
- India: Right to free and compulsory Education Act under implementation, school meals: multiple, formal partnerships by state
- Nepal: Scholarships, inclusive policies. Formal partnership
- Pakistan: Progress in some provinces, girls’ education threatened in others, country partnership formalization process delayed due to conflict and now underway
- Sri Lanka: Long years of investment in universal and equitable education have paid off

Challenges

Ongoing challenges
- Making education more equitable. Sub-national level data show disparities within all countries
- Early marriage, gender relations, child labour
- For girls, low survival rate in primary and transition to secondary schooling
- Effects of the economic downturn

Emerging challenges
- Escalating conflict, Urbanization, migration
- Growing number of adolescents and young people –youth unemployment, drugs/substance abuse
UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI)

- A movement & EFA flagship for girls’ education. Began in 2000 with UNICEF as the lead agency. It is not a project
- A coalition of partners representing governments, UN, civil society, donor countries, academia, private sector, communities & families at global, regional & country levels
- Committed to helping governments promote girls’ education and gender equality in education, driven by MDGs 2 and 3
- Operates at global, regional and country levels

Regional UNGEI Partnership

- Ten regional partners
- Study on public-private partnerships in education planned for 2010
- Consolidating regional efforts on young champion
- Training manual finalized
- Consultation to shares findings of the progress review, and help countries scale up and or mainstream as appropriate held in 2010
- Will now support Cos to scale up/mainstream model
- 2011 is the international year of youth declared by the UN
How does the regional UNGEI support country partnerships?

- Enhancing the evidence base, identifying knowledge gaps
- Sharing good practices
- Using knowledge for advocacy
- Technical support to form new partnerships &/or strengthen existing ones
- Financial support, but selective

South Asia Country Partnerships

- Afghanistan: partnership at risk due to conflict, security issues, relocation of int’l partners, pre-occupation of govt.
- Bangladesh: strong civil soc role, major initiative w/ parliamentarians planned for 2010
- Nepal: working with female parliamentarians, journalists, gender responsive budgeting, several joint activities
- India: 5 partnerships by region, 6th planned for the southern states, mandate to help GOI implement the Right to Education (RTE) Act
- Pakistan: in the process of formalizing existing partnerships, & forming a national partnership, process delayed due to security concerns
ii) Team work

a). In the plenary the barriers were identified. These are as follow:

1. Insecurity
2. Lack of schools
3. Lack of female teachers
4. Early marriage of girls and discrimination against girls
5. Limited recognition of female role models
6. Educated women do not contribute to women’ empowerment
7. Education system discourages girls from continuing education
8. Low quality of education and unqualified teachers
9. Lack of awareness regarding women’s rights
10. Lack of facilities
11. Poverty
12. Distance of school
13. Society has no confidence on girls’ potentials

b) The barriers were prioritized by the plenary as follows:

1. Poverty
2. Insecurity
3. Facilities
   a. Lack of schools
   b. Furniture
   c. Female teachers
   d. Boundary wall
   e. Drinking water and toilets
4. Culture and societal norms
5. Lack of awareness
   a. Early marriages
   b. Limited recognition of female role models
   c. Society have no confidence on girls’ potentials

The participants were divided into three groups assigned with the following issues:
a) Poverty, culture and societal norms  
b) Insecurity  
c) Lack of facilities  

Each group was asked to brainstorm and present strategies in order to come up with solution for each barrier. The questions addressed by each group are as follow:

a) How do we bring girls to school?  
b) How do we keep girls in school?  
c) How do we ensure that girls go from primary to secondary and complete her education?

**Group 1: (Poverty, culture and societal norms)**  
**Key outcomes:**

1. Raising parents’ awareness regarding girl’s enrolment and disadvantages of early marriages  
2. Raising awareness through Mullahs and influential people  
3. Recruitment of female teachers  
4. Practicing constitution law of obligatory education  
5. Motivational and supportive programmes for students and parents such as cash, food or stationery, etc.

**Group 2: (Insecurity)**  
**Key outcomes:**

1. Establishment and strengthening of school protection committees  
2. Promoting collaboration among government and security departments  
3. Raising awareness of communities through media and mosques  
4. Formation of a safe environment  
5. Involvement of girl-prefects for girls’ safety at schools for e.g properly monitoring girls when they come and leave school

**Group 3: (Facilities)**  
**Key outcomes:**

1. Establishment of a learning environment  
2. Recruitment of expert teachers  
3. Providing safe drinking water and toilets  
4. Boundary wall  
5. Providing sports kit for girls to ensure their entertainment at school level
6. Providing school uniform and stationary

**Additional points:**

1. Conducting seminars and provide incentives to Mullahs
2. Promoting quality of education
3. Participation of students in team/group work
4. Raising girls’ and community’s awareness on women’s potentials
5. Provide opportunities for girls to continue their higher education
6. Preaching of religious leaders on role of educated women in society
7. Support girls’ guardians for their social participation

*Nuzhat Shahzadi is facilitating the session on way forwards*
III. Way Forward

i. Draft the AGEI sub-national strategy and share with the working group: UNICEF

ii. Translate the TOR for wider distribution among education NGOs: UNICEF

iii. Organize workshops/briefings for local leaders and partners: DoE/UNICEF

iv. Develop a work plan, delegate activities and develop a reporting system: UNICEF/DoE

v. Circulate NESP to AGEI working group: UNICEF

vi. Ensure Raka’s visit to Herat office, end of November for training on gender for AGEI working group and partners: UNICEF

vii. Establish quality standards for CFS to promote and retain girls in school: ROSA/UNICEF-Kabul.Hera

viii. Conduct a meeting with the working group to work on specifics based on the strategy: DoE/UNICEF

The AGEI Orientation ended with supportive comments of participants regarding their active contribution towards their effective implementation of the AGEI programme.

Ms. Nuzhat Shahzadi, Chief of UNICEF, once again thanked the working group and the steering committee for their commitments and coordinated behaviour with UNICEF WR.

Ms. Raka Rashid, Education Specialist, also thanked all the participants and promised to visit Herat Office once again in November.
# Annex 1:

**Agenda**

**Date:** 28/08/2010  
**Venue:** UNICEF, Conference Room  
**Time:** 09:00 AM 12:10 PM  
**Participants:** DoE, WOV, WASSA, AIHRC, YICC, Principals from girls’ schools where CFS concept is being implemented, War child UK, DoLSA, ARCS, Herat University and UNICEF Programme team.

**Facilitated by:** UNICEF  
**Reporiteur:** Ms. Fariha Natawan & Mr. Tahir Sakhi

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<tr>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>09:00-09:15</td>
<td>Welcome participants &amp; briefing of Objectives</td>
<td>Nuzhat Shahzadi Chief, West field Office, Western Region</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi Education Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>09:15-09:30</td>
<td>Self Introduction</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>09:30-10:30</td>
<td>Presentation on AGEI background and international &amp; regional context</td>
<td>Raka Rashid Education Specialist UNICEF-ROSA</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Open discussion with participants on barriers and prioritize the issues</td>
<td>Raka Rashid</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>11:00-11:20</td>
<td>Presentation on situation of girls’ education in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Nuzhat Shahzadi</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>11:00-11:10</td>
<td>Grouping the participants</td>
<td>Bhanu Pathak Programme Specialist</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>11:10-11:30</td>
<td>Develop strategies to address the barriers</td>
<td>Raka Rashid/ Nuzhat Shahzadi/ Bhanu Pathak</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>11:30-12:00</td>
<td>Way forward</td>
<td>Raka Rashid and Nuzhat Shahzadi</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>12:00-12:10</td>
<td>Wrap up the meeting</td>
<td>Nuzhat Shahzadi</td>
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### Annex 2: Participants’ list

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basir Ahmed Tahiri</td>
<td>Deputy Director</td>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>0799 412 343</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mohtaseb Zada</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor</td>
<td>Herat University</td>
<td>0799 372 973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nuzhat Shahzadi</td>
<td>Head of Office</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bhanu Pathak</td>
<td>Programme Specialist</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 692</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gh. Rabbani Wardak</td>
<td>H&amp;N Specialist</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 664</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Eng. Qasim Nazari</td>
<td>PO - WASH</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 662</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>M. Shafiq Tahir Safi</td>
<td>M&amp;E Officer</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mohammad Farzan</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>UNICEF Badghis</td>
<td>0798 507 683</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gulalai Haideri</td>
<td>Program Assistant</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 674</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tahir Sakhi</td>
<td>Education Consultant</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 674</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fariha Natawan</td>
<td>WASH Consultant</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0703 272 803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Eng. Abdullah Azimi</td>
<td>WASH Consultant</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0799 417 173</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nafissa Noorzai</td>
<td>Radio Operator</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0798 507 673</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Qandi gul Tajik</td>
<td>MRM Consultant</td>
<td>UNICEF Herat</td>
<td>0799 017 872</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gulabuddin Qari</td>
<td>Youth Manager</td>
<td>ARCS</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Ah. Shair Salehi</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>WASSA</td>
<td>0799 574 040</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Basira Mohammadi</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>DoLSA</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Suraya Daqiq</td>
<td>WR Officer</td>
<td>AIHRC</td>
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<td>Saqib Yonus</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
<td>VOW</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Helen Guillemr</td>
<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>War child UK</td>
<td>0799 565 417</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Farkhunda Guillemr</td>
<td>YICC Manager</td>
<td>YICC</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Basira Basiret Khuwa</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Tajrobawee High School</td>
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<td>Aziza Popal</td>
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<td>Gawhershad high School</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Asifa Moshfaq</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Rahofa Jami</td>
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<td>Mehri High School</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Aziza Tawfe</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Majoba Herave High School</td>
<td>0799 203 419</td>
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</table>
Annex 2:

Girls’ Sports Forum (GSF): promoting girls’ education and learning through fun!

'**I am a girl and I want to kick a ball!**' - play is a rare commodity in Afghanistan and gender norms restrict girls' physical movement and their ability to give voice to their concerns and ideas. At puberty the “world” of the girls separate in Afghanistan like many hard core Muslim communities. Many girls also become vulnerable to child slavery and debt bondage practices--practices that are technically illegal but are often disguised as marriage, labour or family affairs that do not require state intervention.

The GSF has proven to be a powerful forum for girls to claim their rights and pursue their dreams. In 2009, UNICEF responded to a request from a small group of girls in Hera city to play sports, mainly volleyball and basketball in their schools, and organize matches/competition in the local stadium. With support from the department of education, UNICEF identified 10 girls’ schools initially with high attendance of girls in the secondary classes. Later, the GSF has been extended to additional 10 schools. So far, about 2000 girls are members of the GSF, supported by at least 55 teachers. Many girls have emerged as peer leaders who are coaching younger girls on their rights, especially the right to play and recreation as well as freedom of speech. They also encourage girls to stay in school and learn through fun by participating in debates, matches, round table conferences, exhibitions, etc.

Some of these schools are also implementing the Child Friendly School (CFS) concept, and using CFS indicators to advocate for space, allocated time in the school timetable, and the school's commitment to running the forum. The GSF members have now taken over the management and oversight of the forum in their respective schools, and UNICEF continues to provide technical support by providing sports equipment, play spaces, and guidance on girls’ rights to health and education as addressed in GSF. While the forum has played a significant role in shifting gender norms among the girls, UNICEF staff also recognize the need to adapt programming to address local concerns and to ensure girls’ safety. For example, staff established a Code of Conduct for working with girls and continue to work with community leaders and parents in some instances through courtyard meetings to address safety concerns and foster community support.

The principle of child and adolescent participation continue to guide the structure of the GSF. Girls select the sports they want to learn, are trained as peer mentors, and drive the agenda of the issues that are addressed, such as menstrual hygiene and reproductive health--topics that are considered taboo and difficult to address openly. Given the reality that many young girls will soon be married, maternal health issues are also discussed including hygiene, sanitation, immunization and nutrition.

UNICEF, in western region of Afghanistan is working as an active organization, contributing towards every child’s health, education, equality and protection to ensure rights of children on the humanitarian ground.

Girls who have been deprived of basic and fundamental rights as a result of many years of war and frustration, on the other hand being an important part of society are given the priority in many of UNICEF’s programmes. In 2009 along with DoE, UNICEF has come up with an initiative to promote the girls’ rights to play under title as Girls’ Sports Forum. The forum is formed to provide
the girls with an opportunity to play and exercise games at school level. UNICEF is supporting in term of Sports facilities, play grounds and sports rooms/tents.

"We need to remember - the heart of working with sports is giving girls a chance to be girls to their fullest potentials. Sports allow them to move, to have fun and play. But more than that, it teaches them to give expression to their ideas and raise their concerns, set goals for themselves, work together and support each other. The girls’ sports forum has been a way to open up the space for girls to enjoy their right to play and to claim their right to education, health, and support each other."

Members of Girls’ Sports Forum are seen cheering their teams