

3rd UNGEI GAC MEETING SUMMARY OUTCOMES

Session II: Progress and Updates

- The meetings further clarified partner understanding of what UNGEI is and how it has evolved – at the core it is a partnership where diverse stakeholders contribute to achieving the international goals on girl’s education by building on comparative strengths and expertise.
- Recognition that communication of UNGEI’s role remains a challenge that needs to be addressed on a continuous basis (see session IV).
- Agreement that UNGEI continues to require input from governments, UN agencies, donors, civil society from the North and South and the private sector.
- The meeting acknowledged the importance of the link between girls’ education and poverty reduction, and meeting the wider MDGs.
- It was observed that UNGEI has become a more coherent force for mainstreaming gender issues in EFA.
- It was agreed that UNGEI Secretariat will continue to report on the progress of work-plan implementation, with recognition that considerable progress has been made on the 2005 work-plan (approx. 60-65% implementation).

Session III: UNGEI Leveraging For Girls’ Education

- Greater understanding of the change in UNGEI at the country level - improvements and evidence of partners organizing themselves to work on gender responsiveness in a growing number of countries.
- Agreement on the need for a framework to be developed for strategic feedback from country level to the GAC meetings – in terms of interventions, direction, linkages with national planning processes, impact and gaps. This will enable a discussion at GAC in terms of how the UNGEI members can address gaps.
- Increased knowledge of how UNGEI is working with partners and governments to influence global initiatives such as FTI and EFA, and that more attention needs to be given to increase the impact of these efforts.
- Agreement that at country level UNGEI needs to give a higher profile (in terms of advocacy, resources and political leadership) to engage more with systemic government plans and policies such as EFA plans, PRS, SWAps, including financing (this links also to the reporting framework).
- In its role to address the cross-sectoral nature of girls’ education, UNGEI at country level needs to engage more effectively with different Ministries, particularly Finance and Planning Ministries (Egypt being a good example with diverse Ministry involvement).
- Agreed that there is potential for UNGEI to develop greater coordination with regional bodies such as AU, NEPAD, ESCAP to bring girls’ education higher up regional political agendas.
- Agreement that the key recommendations from the FTI study should be taken further including: adapting the ‘ten steps’ of OECD/DAC; UNGEI providing a data-base of technical expertise; and the development of gender champions.

- Agreement on the importance of bold strategies to accelerate progress in girls' education, and for UNGEI to champion such strategies as appropriate. It was agreed that it would be important for UNGEI partners to support a common agenda to:
 1. Facilitate and build on government-led processes to identify gaps and needs, and support them to take 'bold and innovative initiatives' to address problems in girls' education
 2. Provide the guarantee that UNGEI partners will work with governments to ensure strategies can be implemented in an effective manner.
 3. Ensure that governments allocate the necessary resources from their national budgets to implement the key strategies required to achieve agreed progress for girls' education – else for UNGEI to urgently highlight the problem.
 4. UNGEI partners to assist governments to undertake feasibility studies to determine gaps, and which strategies will bring the greatest gains, build capacity to develop typologies of what works at each level, and support documentation and dissemination of successful strategies.
- Such bold strategies, as examples of what could be done to effect major positive change, include the strategies presented in the meeting; 1. essential learning package; 2. abolition of school fees and other charges; 3. setting standards for quality using the concept of child-friendly schools; 4. increased attention to girls' education in post-conflict and conflict countries, and 5. a policy shift to gender equality. It was agreed that each strategy needs to be further elaborated to incorporate qualifying comments suggested during the meeting
- Based on the current discourse on key issues in education, it was suggested that additional bold and innovative strategies are required to address; 1. learning achievement; 2. gender based violence in and around schools; 3. psychosocial support to children in emergencies; 4. the indirect costs of education; 5. statistical gaps in information at a country level; 6. social protection issues (e.g. through cash transfers)

Session IV: Use of UNGEI Tools and Resources at Country Level

- Agreement the UNGEI website and listserv is a priority, and that partners need to actively contribute content, as well as promote the site. UNICEF will send out a letter explaining various ways in which partner organizations can promote the site.
- There was strong support for the ongoing work to develop country pages, French and Spanish versions of the site (to be up in the next few months), and on technical and other resources and documentation. It was suggested that Arabic be added.
- The UNGEI compilation and country videos (complete and clip versions) were well received. The clip versions will shortly be available on the website. They constitute templates that other partner can follow when considering further video production. UNICEF will send out a form on which UNGEI GAC members can indicate the formats in which they would like to receive master copies.
- The compilation video will be shown at the EFA High Level Group meeting in Beijing and at the MDG first-spouses event.
- It was agreed that partners would share other advocacy videos and communicate with UNICEF on opportunities for distribution and use.
- A photo-essay template has also been developed, that partners can use to build their own. Those produced by UNICEF for UNGEI are available for use by other partners.
- UNICEF also developed a UNGEI Screen-saver which will be sent on CD to GAC members;

- The question of an UNGEI newsletter received wide interest; the production of a concept paper with required resources by the UNGEI Secretariat with assistance from AED was agreed, to be tabled in Beijing.
- Partners welcomed the production of a common UNGEI gender manual and agreed to provide further input on an individual agency basis. It was stressed that there should be consistency between documents and that the 6 steps could be combined with the outcomes of the DAC 10 step discussion.
- It was agreed that UNESCO will produce the UNGEI Scaling Up technical report with the UNGEI logo, in English, French and Arabic versions – the report will be made available in PDF on the UNGEI website; UNESCO will do a regular print-run and distribution as for its other publications.

Session V: Role of UNGEI Partners at Country Level

- Agreement in this session that the UNGEI Framework document is critical to situate what UNGEI is and how it works.
- All partners have critical role to play and we build on what exists at country level – UNGEI is not about imposing but helping to co-ordinate and align partner action, to identify gaps including whether there are sufficient government resource allocations to girls’ education and hence to add value.
- UNGEI can help to identify champions to work in the new aid environment.
- UNGEI needs to support leaders, capacity building, and training with the necessary resources and guidance building on existing learning centres.
- UNGEI needs to support country level mapping; recognize what has been done, highlight gaps and use country meetings and GAC meetings to identify how gaps can be addressed to help set the “agenda for change” within the SWAP, EFA, UNDAF and FTI processes.
- Recognition that it cannot only be UNICEF to champion girls’ education and systemic change – all partners need to communicate clearly within their respective organisations to ensure that organisations represented on the UNGEI GAC give their full buy-in to be champions at the country level. Strong messages from UNICEF at the highest level will help GAC members achieve this within their organisations.
- UNGEI should scrutinise the impact on partners’ work and financial resources used; holding ourselves to account.
- Role for UNGEI at global level is to give strong, clear and common messages to argue for increased resources and to influence policy.
- The UNGEI Secretariat will send out a suggested list of practical actions that partner organizations can undertake to promote UNGEI – particularly in relation to communication and mobilization.

Session VI: UNGEI Framework, and Advocacy Efforts

- It was agreed that the UNGEI framework document needs to include:
 - The UNGEI vision, with emphasis on added value of UNGEI building on country level efforts (not creating parallel structures);
 - UNICEF’s role in UNGEI is about monitoring and facilitating alignment of partners’ work on girls’ education to create a strong single message;

- Role of UNGEI as global leader on guidance and technical expertise on girls' education, and at country level role of UNGEI with regard to systemic change as well as targeted interventions,
- Guidance on how potential partners can contribute and align their work and interventions
- Guidance on how UNGEI links to EFA, the UN decades on literacy and sustainable development;
- Reference to a rights based approach;
- Consistency between the OECD/DAC ten steps and the six steps in the UNGEI manual -- so that there is synergy and coherence to all the documents;
- Section on indicators, and how to measure impact linked to resource inputs;
- It was also agreed that the document will be edited to become a more concise and clear document;
- Agreement that the UNICEF Division of Communication will produce a final draft for circulation by 26th July, and that comments will be provided by partners by 10th August.
- There was further agreement that the GAP is an effective instrument for social mobilization for girls' education and is serving throughout the year as a communication tool for stressing the importance of 2005, with support for the launch taking place in Beijing.

Outputs from Session VII: UNGEI input into High Level Meetings

- Agreement that UNGEI needs to be a strong voice at such meetings; with consistent messages. The meeting tasked the UNGEI Secretariat/UNICEF to convey the key messages agreed to, and also requests that partners use agency channels to do the same -- so messages are reinforced by the UNGEI partnership at every level and opportunity.
- The key message for all events from the UNGEI GAC is that unless there is a strong focus on gender and girls education the EFA goals and wider MDGs will not be achieved.
- For the EFA-FTI meeting -- coherence on gender between education initiatives within EFA movement; importance of addressing gender mainstreaming in sector development processes; importance of timely interventions. UNGEI proposes to take further the recommendations on gender championing, capacity strengthening, and adaptation of the OECD/DAC guidelines (to be presented in November).
- MDG Summit: With limited opportunities for side events; the opportunity of the First Spouses event, hosted by Mrs. Annan, will include a focus on girls' education. As regards the main Summit meetings, GAC members especially donor representatives committed to use available channels through their government representatives, media opportunities, etc. between now and September. Key messages are 1. the central role of girls' education to achieve the other MDGs; 2. the role of girls' education to promote good governance and a culture of public participation; 3. the role of education and the education of girls in particular to ensure peace -- within homes, communities and nations.
- EFA-WG and HLG meetings: importance to plan for the sequence of EFA meetings with consistent messages; to seek to influence the EFA agenda to ensure gender concerns are highlighted, this year around the focus on literacy; UNGEI aims also to contribute in making EFA meetings relevant to attract high level officials with a mandate to make commitments, to attend the meetings.

- With regard to literacy and the EFA-HLG UNGEI agreed to focus on: 1. the need to define literacy in an inclusive and broad way; 2. the need to invest in children and youth now to prevent the perpetuation of adult illiteracy problem; 3. show-casing positive examples from countries that exemplify good practice and are champions of literacy and gender, to win support and buy-in from high level officials.
- The UNGEI Secretariat/UNICEF will organize a two-day technical meeting in Beijing around these themes for which a small committee of GAC members will be constituted.
- It was also agreed that the FTI Secretariat be requested to draft an article (OpEd) for signature by several Ministers and some donors, re commitment to FTI including a focus on girls' education.

Session VIII: UNGEI Secretariat and GAC

- New developments since the last UNGEI GAC meeting in November 2004 with regard to UNGEI capacity in UNICEF are:
 - A stronger UNGEI Secretariat in place, with a dedicated senior professional staff member, as a result of a decision by UNICEF's Executive Director (Carol Bellamy) following donor lobbying in Brazil in November 2004. The UNGEI Secretariat also includes a programme support staff post and a webmaster.
 - Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director provides commitment and senior level support to UNGEI.
 - Increased technical support from UNICEF's Communication Division, vital to the advocacy and communication work of UNGEI.
 - There now is a larger regional UNGEI team in place, including UNGEI co-ordinators for Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia.
- Co-ordination and harmonisation will be a key priority for the strengthened UNGEI Secretariat; around the common goals for girls' education and effective use of available resources.
- The UNGEI work-plan will be updated to incorporate the decisions made at this GAC meeting.

Session IX: Closing and Evaluation

- Participants shared ideas of how they will take forward joint UNGEI initiatives including:
 - AED will work with CAMFED on the impact, lessons learned and best practice of scholarships for girls in Africa. AED work on girls' education in the Sudan and would like to explore how to complement the work of other partners. Another idea is to create a working group in AED on scaling up, using the UNGEI report, as useful to AED programmes in Africa and the Middle East.
 - CAMFED plans to work with UNESCO and the Commonwealth Secretariat on the ABCs for scaling up. CAMFED also is linking with UNICEF (communication) on tools and how to use for advocacy. CAMFED will also report UNGEI GAC meeting results back to GCE.
 - UNICEF will extend new work with UNESCO and WB on key issue of learning achievement, esp. reading, to more partners, and share report of recent meeting on

- learning achievement more widely through UNGEI website, and through to UNGEI, FTI and GMR co-chairs/boards.
- UNGEI focal point in East and Southern Africa will strengthen participation and voices of girls (esp. GEM) in UNGEI in ESAR.
 - UNICEF in West Africa will strengthen collaboration with WFP on essential education package further by bringing in new partners, such as AED.
 - WFP mentioned the new Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and WFP as a basis for closer collaboration between the two agencies in UNGEI. The Red Cross provides significant support to WFP's school feeding programmes in Africa.
 - UNESCO is involved in the Sudan's basic education plan, and will get on board with AED and others. Will also look forward to development of a paper on girls' education and literacy, in collaboration with UNESCO as responsible agency.
 - The World Bank is taking stock of its contribution to girls' education over the past decade and its comparative advantage in taking the agenda forward. WB also engaged in learning achievement in reading, school fees, and global study on regions on what happens to girls in the classroom
- Main points shared to take forward to the next UNGEI GAC meeting include:
1. Development of a framework for strategic feedback from country level to the GAC meetings – in terms of interventions, direction, linkages with national planning processes, impact and gaps. This will enable a discussion at the GAC meeting of how different agencies can contribute to address gaps.
 2. Concern that there was too little time for country updates – the reporting recommended above should help to alleviate this concern in future meetings.
 3. Agenda needs to have a clear indication of the outputs expected from each session in order for participants to be well prepared in advance.
 4. It is helpful to have papers and materials in advance, to read in preparation and to build on existing work.
 5. Sufficient time is required to discuss the Framework document, with discussion on dissemination and optimal use of the document, with particular input from country level.