

UNGEI

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative

Educating girls is key to a nation's development. To build a healthier, more peaceful and more equitable world, classrooms everywhere should be filled with girls as well as boys. Yet, the majority of the 115 million children out of school are girls.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Sustainable development and the eradication of poverty will only be achieved with quality education for all – girls and boys alike. Since girls face much greater obstacles, special efforts are needed to get them in school and ensure that they complete their education.

If girls remain uneducated, they are likely to become women who are illiterate, impoverished and less likely to raise healthy and educated families. Society cannot afford to allow another generation to forego its potential. That's why the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the goals of Education for All (EFA), call for gender parity and equality in education.

WHAT IS UNGEI?

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Its goal is to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to ensure that by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to all levels of education.

UNGEI, the EFA flagship for girls' education, is a partnership that embraces the United Nations system, governments, donor countries, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, and communities and families. UNGEI provides stakeholders with a platform for action and galvanizes their efforts to get girls in school.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

UNGEI's vision is a world where all girls and boys will have equal access to free, quality education.

We work for the removal of barriers to learning, such as school fees and other education costs, and for access to education in emergency situations. We promote strategies that put the needs of the most disadvantaged, including girls and women, first in education policies, plans and budgets. We advocate for a cross-sectoral holistic approach with balanced investment in education across the life cycle, addressing early childhood education and development for children of poor families, and literacy and empowerment of women and young people.

Beyond access to education, UNGEI works for gender equality in a broader sense.



IT'S EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS TO GET GIRLS INTO SCHOOL – NOW.

WHY?

BECAUSE EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IS A MATTER OF SURVIVAL – FOR THEM AND FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

BECAUSE EDUCATING GIRLS AND WOMEN IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE INVESTMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

HOW WE WORK

UNICEF is the lead agency and Secretariat for UNGEI. A Global Advisory Committee is composed of key partners who share in the planning, decision-making, guidance and accountability of UNGEI. UNGEI Focal Points in different regions facilitate the coordination of girls' education strategies and interventions at the country level.

At the country level, UNGEI supports country-led development and seeks to influence decision-making and investments to ensure gender equity and equality in national education policies, plans and programmes. It operates as a mechanism to advance education strategies and the technical capacity to assist countries. UNGEI partners mobilize resources for both targeted project interventions and country programmes as well as large scale systemic interventions designed to impact on the whole education system. UNGEI streamlines its efforts through the strategic use of existing mechanisms such as Poverty Reduction Strategies, sector-wide approaches and UN development assistance frameworks.

UNGEI members are actively involved in the EFA Working Group coordinated by UNESCO, the EFA Fast Track Initiative led by the World Bank and the Acceleration Strategy for Girls' Education developed by UNICEF.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Join forces with us in this global effort. UNGEI is interested in expanding partnerships and is open to all agencies and organizations that work for girls' education, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.

Current partners at the global level include UN agencies (ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, among others), the World Bank, donor agencies (Danish International Development Assistance, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, UK Department for International Development, USAID, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, among others), non-governmental organizations (CAMFED International, Campaign for Popular Education Bangladesh, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Global Campaign for Education, World Vision, among others). Other partners include the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Academy for Educational Development.

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KEY DATES DEFINED BY THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS

2005: Promote gender equality and empower women – Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

2015: Achieve universal primary education – Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

There is growing consensus that without rapid and significant progress in girls' education, all international development efforts – including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals – are in jeopardy.

Visit the UNGEI global website at www.ungei.org for more information.