



**UNGEI Global Advisory Committee  
Technical Meeting  
27 May 2009, New York**

**Report of Meeting**

**UNGEI GAC Technical meeting**  
27 May 2009

**A. Introduction**

Launched by the Secretary General in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) supports efforts to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education and to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to all levels of quality education. UNGEI plays a central role in the Education for All (EFA) movement, and as such has been designated an EFA flagship. UNGEI's Global Advisory Committee (GAC) meets twice per year for shared planning, decision-making, guidance, and accountability. In addition to promoting gender equality in education at the global level, as articulated in the gender-related EFA goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the GAC also seeks to enhance regional and national level advocacy, partnership, and planning.

**1. Background of the meeting**

The meeting centered on the theme of Gender as an Entry Point for Addressing Social Exclusion and Multiple Disparities in Education. The discussion was based on a technical research paper prepared by Dr. Máiréad Dunne, Senior Lecturer in Education, Sussex University, and sociologist of education. Special emphasis during the day's discussion was given to examining the interaction of gender with other disparities in education, measuring educational quality for the most marginalized, and sharing knowledge and approaches for addressing gender inequality in education with actors and decision-makers at global, national, and local levels.

The main objectives for the technical meeting consisted of the following:

- Advocacy for the inclusion of the most excluded girls and boys
- Identification of holistic approaches to quality education to address salient disparities, especially discrimination against girls
- Advocacy for rigorous, gender-sensitive measurement of EFA goals
- Recommendations for the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR)

The one-day technical meeting, held during the week of 24 May 2009 in New York was preceded by a one-day meeting of the GAC Regional Focal Points and was followed by a one-day GAC business meeting.

In addition to GAC members, participants in the GAC technical meeting included UNGEI regional focal points, UNGEI global partners (EFA-FTI Secretariat), UN Partners, members of civil society organizations, and academicians.

**2. Welcome remarks**

Welcome remarks were made by Ms. May Rihani, UNGEI Co-Chair and Senior Vice President and Director of the Global Learning Group at the Academy for Educational Development (AED). Ms. Rihani began by highlighting the fact that UNGEI meetings tend to be extremely substantive and important due to the participation of those present. She reminded the participants that everyone thinks and agrees that a focus on eliminating disparities in education, in particular gender disparities between girls and boys, is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing to do given the impact of girls' education on other sectors. Ms. Rihani pointed to the recently nominated United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia

Sotomayor – who came from a humble background, was the daughter of immigrants, and struggled with a childhood illness – to illustrate the power of education to lift girls and boys out of modest circumstances. She went on to recognize that as there are persistent constraints against parity and equality in education, the day’s aim was to analyze how gender interacts with other disparities and how gender, as a cross-cutting disparity, influences and interacts with other disparities, such as remoteness, ethnicity, and poverty. Ms. Rihani closed by reiterating that it was a pleasure to have all present.

David Wiking, UNGEI Co-Chair and Team Director of Knowledge, Education, and ICT at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), also took the opportunity to welcome the participants and stated that he hoped that there could be open and frank discussions through the course of the day. He reviewed the purposes of the two-day program of the GAC technical and business meetings. The purpose of the former was to examine gender as an entry point for multiple disparities in education, and the purpose of the latter was to review progress made against the 2009 work plan. Mr. Wiking outlined the expected outcomes and drew from the Draft Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to distinguish between two objectives for each day’s meeting:

- UNGEI as partnership aims to influence results at global, regional, and country levels (technical meeting)
- UNGEI as a partnership strives to function efficiently in order to achieve development results (business meeting)

Mr. Wiking stated that the focus of the technical meeting should not only be to influence the GMR at the global level but also to consider whether the recommendations made to the GMR can be useful at the regional and country levels. He urged all to make use of the Regional Focal Points present at the meeting to verify if recommendations made to the GMR were relevant at country and regional levels. Mr. Wiking presented the challenge to the UNGEI partnership itself to consider how it can make a difference at all levels in a tangible way.

Mr. Wiking reviewed the agenda for the day and asked each member to introduce him/herself and state, if any, a topic of particular interest for the meeting’s discussion. (See Annex 3 for list of those in attendance). Participants mentioned the following areas for further exploration: global funding and FTI, gender-sensitive material development, the place of gender in the GMR report, and UNGEI making use of other networks such as the Commonwealth Education Ministers which will meet in Malaysia in June 2009.

Mr. Wiking thanked all for introducing themselves. He remarked on the positive development that the GMR has welcomed outreach from UNGEI and requested specific input for the report. Mr. Wiking expressed his pleasure to be co-chairing the meeting and then introduced the first speaker, Mr. Harald Fries, Minister, Swedish Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

### **3. Opening Remarks**

Mr. Harald Fries, Minister, Swedish Permanent Mission to the United Nations, began by expressing his pleasure to be at the meeting and by expressing his appreciation, on behalf of Sweden, for the work that UNGEI and UNICEF are doing in the area of education with a focus on girls. As gender equality and women’s empowerment are top priorities in Sweden’s development corporation, he reaffirmed that “nothing can be more important than investing in girls’ education.”

He highlighted the considerable advancements, such as increased enrolment and participation of girls and of other marginalized groups, which have been made in girls’ education since Dakar. Mr. Fries added that recently developing countries have proven that political leadership and sound policy do make a difference. He went on to say that in several developing countries where data have been collected, more

has been spent on education since Dakar, and a direct link can be made between spending on education and progress toward achieving the goals. Additionally, measures such as abolition of school fees in countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Zambia have been accompanied by a dramatic increase in enrolments. In Kenya, for example, the number of learners in school increased by 25 per cent between 2003 when school fees were abolished and 2006. While only one third of the 176 countries for which there is data have attained gender parity in primary and secondary education, Mr. Fries reminded the participants that it is important to celebrate that this represents 20 countries more than the 39 that had reached gender parity in 1999.

Mr. Fries placed particular emphasis on the continuing need for improved access to education and the need for quality as well as quantity in education. The EFA and MDG goals do not adequately capture quality of education and the quality of learning outcomes. As poor countries develop their own quality and learning assessments, Mr. Fries stated that it will be necessary to make sure that the results of the assessments are used to develop and improve educational systems and address the huge inequalities within countries as well as between countries. He stressed the essential nature of UNGEI's interests in order to achieve the EFA goals such that education is truly for all and not for some.

An opening statement was then made by Mr. Saad Houry, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF. He spoke about the fact that girls' education constitutes the business of men as much as that of women. He emphasized the fact that social mobility is the result of education for men and for women, and that for women it is the factor that will make the greatest difference in their lives. Reflection on UNICEF's programming revealed a need for greater efforts in the area of gender equality, in addition to the strong work already being done in education. Mr. Houry noted that especially in light of the global economic crisis it is important to disseminate information on the progress and achievements made so as to maintain momentum in advocacy and practice. He cited the importance of capitalizing on environments such as those of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam where the effects of the crisis have not yet been as severe as they have been in other countries. Mr. Houry also stressed the importance of taking time at the GAC meeting to examine what steps need to be taken to capitalize on and protect the progress made in education and to sustain that through the economic crisis.

## **B. Technical discussion on Gender as an Entry Point for Addressing Social Exclusion and Multiple Disparities in Education**

### **1. Keynote Presentation based on the draft background paper**

The keynote presentation was made by Máiréad Dunne, Senior Lecturer in Education at Sussex University. The draft background paper, "Gender as an Entry Point for Addressing Social Exclusion and Multiple Disparities in Education," provided a theoretical basis for the discussion of gender as the chosen lens through which to view the other inequalities that exist both within the educational system and beyond. Dr. Dunne clarified that the presentation would differ somewhat in nature from the draft background paper. (See Annex 1 for paper and presentation.)

According to Dr. Dunne, when discussing gender equality and inclusive education, one must consider the three main themes of identity, power and process, and methodologies as well as the link between policy and practice.

The following are highlights from the presentation:

- a. Theories
  - i. Theories are going to impose themselves on policy and practice implicitly and explicitly.

- ii. Gender is performed and socially constructed; it is not simply a result of nature or a biological determination.
  - iii. The way we use our agency to perform our gender roles is regulated by norms and rules. For example, the statements “Boys don’t cry” and “Girls don’t sit that way” reflect the way that we tend to naturalize gender and regulate it.
  - iv. Gender and sexuality performances vary from one context to another; they are appropriated differently in the way that men or women assume certain roles or perform tasks. In addition, they occur within the structure of other forms of our identity such as religion, ethnicity, class, caste, etc., as articulated by Chandra Mohanty.
- b. Power and processes
- i. Educational institutions are a key site for learning gender and sexual identity and tend to produce a gender hierarchy where males dominate physical and verbal space.
  - ii. Gender relations in school tend to be characterized by bullying, harassment, and sexual abuse. Boys experience corporal punishment disproportionately compared to girls. Girls tend to experience verbal and sexual abuse disproportionately compared to boys. In this environment, teachers stereotypically refrain from intervening.
  - iii. What occurs in the school links to what happens outside the school. Social and self-regulation of gender identities can be seen in gender-based violence especially as a strategy of war, in the division of labor in and outside the home, in early marriage leading to dropout, and in the gendered effects of HIV/AIDS.
- c. Methodologies
- i. The dominant methodologies of macro-level measurement create hierarchies and at the same time fix and homogenize social categories.
  - ii. The methodologies are decontextualized; they fail to capture both the local processes that shape identity and the intersection of gender with other structures of identity.
- d. Access to schooling
- i. Suggestion: The GMR should go beyond addressing educational exclusion by advocating reforming curricula and textbooks, enhancing quality of teachers, and increasing number of female teachers, and more child-friendly teaching and learning. Since access to schooling is about multiple factors, it is advisable to also address social context, post-school paths, local governance, and community participation.
  - ii. Ramya Subrahmanian posits that in a decentralized context access to schooling concerns the state, community, household, labor market, and schools.
  - iii. Giving women a bigger voice in the relationship between the school and the community is critical at this time of decentralization. For example, increasing the number of female teachers in education will cause a shift in the school environment; in the labor market, especially if females go into management positions; and in the community. So consider placing the school in a wider context.

## **2. Panel discussion**

Panel participants responded to and discussed the findings of the draft background paper.

The panel of experts included: Ms. Chloe O’Gara, Director of Education, Save the Children Federation US; Mr. Cream Wright, Associate Director and Global Chief of Education, UNICEF; Ms. Shirley Miske, President and Senior Gender and Education Consultant, Miske Witt and Associates.

### **Ms. Chloe O’Gara, Save the Children Federation US**

Ms. O’Gara, speaking on the topic of “Balancing Equity Concerns with Efficiency Imperatives in Addressing Education Disparities,” emphasized moving beyond the measurements of the GMR and examining the physical and interactions effects on education of variables such as location (urban/rural), poverty, ethnicity, and especially age. (See Annex 1 for PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. O’Gara agreed with the use of gender disparities as a proxy for other inequities in education and also highlighted the central component of age to the reconciliation of an equity goal and efficiency imperative for education. She noted the various trends at different points on the age continuum such as low investment in quality education for young children and the fact that girls compose the largest group excluded from education, and increasingly so with age in the poorer parts of the world.

Ms. O’Gara stated the need to pose the question of investment and efficiency in education for what purpose. She agreed with performing initial analyses of gender and age, due to the large data sets available, and then performing complementary analyses of the interaction effects of ethnicity, language, location, etc. However, she also suggested analyzing sex and age due to the fact that much of gender is constructed along an age continuum. For example, computer labs reveal very similar computer use among first-grade boys and girls while middle school labs reveal that computer use, rate, and access differ between the sexes. School programming ought to reflect this. Thus, we ought to focus on the certain change points for gender in each culture and school to get more traction on gender and other disparity issues. Ms. O’Gara reaffirmed the need for more intersectional analyses of gender and other disparities.

Research at Save the Children has begun to reveal that where there are gender inequities there is also disparity in public per capita investment in young children’s schooling. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the findings show that at lower levels of schooling where there is greater participation of girls, there is less public per capita investment in education, and where there are lower levels of female participation, there is greater per capita investment in education. Thus, males receive more public spending per capita – even in the vocational and technical education arena. When there are skewed distributions of investment linked to age, there is also skewed distribution of quality investment linked to gender.

In order to reach the marginalized, Ms. O’Gara recommended the following to the GMR:

- Conduct analyses by age and gender along developmental sequences of how gender plays out in schools, and intervene more efficiently at those points.
- Engage political will and identify financial resources to increase primary schooling investment due to the gender consequences of (lack of) investment in levels of school where girls and marginalized children are excluded.
- Emphasize that public investment in early childhood development is a gender issue.

**Mr. Cream Wright, UNICEF**

Mr. Wright also reaffirmed the need to examine gender inequities in order to get a better understanding of other forms of exclusion from education. The four main areas discussed were: understanding disparities, gender in relation to all disparities, strategies to use in addressing disparities, and the question of why gender. Key points from Mr. Wright’s presentation follow:

- a. Understanding disparities
  - i. We must pay attention to the statistical significance of variables used in the analyses of disparities to rule out that an occurrence is not just happenstance. We must also discover the underlying causes of the significant occurrence and then “work smart” by finding out who is excluded, the extent of the exclusion, and why.
  - ii. We must examine other nuanced factors beyond national laws such as household dynamics that can lead to the occurrence of discrimination. These occurrences might also be governed by norms of tradition, culture, religion, or the economy.
- b. Gender in relation to other disparities
  - i. Traditionally, poverty is the most statistically significant disparity.

- ii. Rural location is second to poverty and is politically sensitive.
- iii. Disability implies a moral imperative to take care of those who might hold a weaker position in society.
- iv. Ethnicity also composes a significant disparity.
- c. Strategies
  - i. Examining the purest statistically significant variable implies addressing disparity through poverty, yet nations or communities might not deem that the most important.
  - ii. Using a basket approach of viewing not just one disparity, but all disparities together. This does, however, pose the dilemma of many groups competing for the same pool of resources.
- d. Why gender?
  - i. Gender is the most ubiquitous among all disparities.
  - ii. Addressing gender has an impact well beyond gender. For example, a mother's education has a strong impact on whether she will send her children to school. Also orphans are more detrimentally impacted and less likely to continue schooling if the mother dies than if the father dies.
  - iii. Gender has an impact on social progress well beyond education itself. For example, in Latin American and the Caribbean where boys experience the tradition of corporal punishment in school, boys reject school and a culture of violence has arisen.

Mr. Wright suggested that gender is the least controversial of all the disparities because it is a universal issue. It is a focus on gender that gives us the best chance to leverage change in an effort to provide quality basic education for all children.

**Ms. Shirley Miske, Miske, Witt and Associates**

Ms. Miske focused her presentation "Practical Effects of Gender Disparities on the Persistence of other Education Disparities" on four main areas: the importance of broadening conceptualizations of gender (which girls and boys), gender and approach, power and the social processes of becoming gendered, and the need for more empirical research. These ideas are based upon the understanding of gender as a social construction and as a social process by which power and privileges are unevenly distributed as well as negotiated and shared.

Highlights from the presentation include:

- a. Broadening conceptualizations of gender (which girls and which boys)
  - i. A 2005-2006 UNGEI qualitative study in Vietnam found that interventions for girls' school absences needed to vary according to region of the country, where community and family practices differed.
- b. Multiple identities ("Gender and" approach)
  - i. A study of girls' enrolment in Nepal begs the question of whether interventions address interacting factors such as household decision-making processes and power dynamics and the implications of that for the future beyond schooling.
- c. Power and the social processes of becoming gendered
  - i. The impact of bullying, harassment, and sexual violence was noted in the Vietnam study when a bullied boy could not be convinced to return to school. These human rights abuses need to be placed at the top of the education agenda.
  - ii. Despite improved learning outcomes by both girls and boys and even fair practices of teachers calling on girls and boys equally, reproductions of power relations that give dominance to boys can remain. A 2007 study of five schools in Malawi conducted by Nancy Kendall also demonstrated that while improvements in educational outcomes and

- d. The need for more empirical research regarding gender disparities in education
- i. Example: A 2005 study funded by CARE US's Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative is examining marginalized girls in non-dominant groups in Cambodia, rural Tanzania, rural Mali, and urban Honduras over a ten-year period. The study will measure: 1) educational attainment, with a component examining how girls apply the skills they learn, 2) quality with a focus on the gender-sensitive nature of school environment, 3) gender equality, assessing boys' and girls' opportunities as perceived by adults, and 4) gender empowerment, with a focus on girls' agency and access to basic human services. The study aims to promote South-South knowledge sharing and to strive to understand how to educate the last 10 per cent in order to achieve EFA.

Ms. Miske suggested that UNGEI and GMR could bring together and analyze existing and future qualitative studies in order to draw out more information about the processes of change, to give scope, to map social disadvantages, and to examine local perspectives and knowledge in order to understand the processes of the social production of disadvantage. This examination of multiple perspectives in multiple contexts might then reinforce a global commitment to educational inclusion and equality.

### 3. Plenary Discussion

Prior to opening the discussion, Ms. Rihani thanked the four speakers for excellent presentations that challenged our thinking. She then highlighted four points made by the presenters:

- Gender is a social construction, and gender is a performance.
- We might ask: Does the intervention address household power dynamics?
- It is crucial to look at investments by level and grade with a gender lens.
- A focus on gender will help us leverage change among many disparities.

The plenary discussion raised additional issues to be considered for the draft background paper. The topics included: the GMR definition of marginalization, what kind of education is being advocated, gender and the transformative nature of school at certain levels, rights-based education, meaningful policy reflecting practice on the ground, non-cognitive skills needed for girls' labor market performance, child-friendly schools, and gender sensitization included in teacher training. Other topics of discussion included: the need for informed national decision-makers, global reporting on country-specific disadvantaged groups, political reasons for lack of data, the recognition that decision-makers may or may not be agents of change, dangers in decentralization, and the quest for resources at global level to make change at local level.

Ms. Rihani offered a summary of the comments raised during the plenary discussion under an overarching theme of healthy tensions:

- There is a movement toward global equality. However, are the answers local or global or both? If so, what is link between these two?
- Data should be used as flags, but they can be overemphasized. The data tell us what to look at, but they may also cover things that we might need to examine.
- Gender can be the most threatening or difficult issue to deal with, yet it can also be a universal issue that, when examined, can help leverage change in other disparities.
- Are the strategies for promoting girls' education achieving the goal or not? What do we do with a strategy when it is not supporting girls' education? Remember that UNGEI's *raison d'être* is to focus on gender.

- How is the tension of centralization vs. decentralization affecting gender? Is it empowering? Transforming? Is it allowing education to be a transformative process?

Ms. Cheryl Gregory Faye, Head of the UNGEI Secretariat, reviewed the afternoon’s agenda and verified even participation in each of the three breakout groups – access and equity, gender mainstreaming and empowerment, and quality and learning achievements.

In closing the morning session, on behalf of the partnership, Ms. Rihani lauded the tremendous contributions to girls’ education of two colleagues who are retiring: Mr. Cream Wright and Ms. Patricia Moccia, UNICEF Chief of Development Professionals. Ms. Rihani expressed her deep appreciation by stating that without Mr. Wright and Ms. Moccia, UNGEI would not be where it is today. Ms. Moccia thanked the gathering for the privilege to serve UNGEI as a “community of meaning, joy and hope,” and Mr. Wright concurred.

## C. Group Work

According to particular interest, participants separated into three working groups: access and equity, facilitated by Mr. Jon Kapp, UNGEI focal point for East Asia-Pacific; gender mainstreaming and empowerment facilitated by Ms. Changu Mannathoko, UNICEF Sr. Education Advisor; and quality and learning achievements, facilitated by Ms. Moira Wilkinson, UNICEF Basic Education and Gender Equality Consultant. Each of the three groups prepared responses to the following areas of inquiry:

- Examples of how gender has served as an entry point for addressing social exclusion and multiple disparities in education considering human interest stories and or case studies
- How the world community—and especially the UNGEI partnership—should be addressing these issues
- Key issues/messages to address in the forthcoming edition(s) of the EFA GMR

### 1. Presentation of group work

#### Access and Equity

Mr. Matarr Baldeh, *rapporteur* for the Access and Equity group, presented the following recommendations:

- a. Examples of how gender has served as an entry point for addressing social exclusion and multiple disparities in education considering human interest stories and or case studies
  - i. Cash transfers to families in Zambia, Yemen, and Nigeria allow children to attend school when they otherwise might be engaged in income-generating activities
  - ii. Scholarship programs in Gambia
  - iii. Alumni / peer support programs in Zambia
  - iv. Examples like Nigeria and Yemen empower mothers to continue supporting their children in school
  - v. Holistic and systemic approach to access and equity
  - vi. UNGEI focal points at national / regional level
- b. How the world community – and especially the UNGEI partnership – should be addressing these issues
  - i. Examination of multiple disparities such as orphan boys and girls and school feeding
  - ii. Linkages to political bodies (national, regional, and global)
  - iii. UNGEI improvement of sharing or collecting human interest stories and learning. Not all will be taken on board, but it’s possible that some aspects will be inputted. This can only be more successful with more evidence-based input.

- c. Key issues / messages to address in the forthcoming edition(s) of the GMR
  - i. Access versus quality (teaching, learning materials, distribution of teachers)
  - ii. Focus on gender as it relates to other disparities and variables
  - iii. Usage of UNGEI knowledge at local, regional and global levels to produce and share information for the GMR
  - iv. Usage of UNGEI knowledge and competence on national level for field experiences

#### Gender mainstreaming and empowerment

Ms. Codou Diaw, *rapporteur* for the Gender Mainstreaming and Empowerment group, presented the following key messages:

- a. National governments should integrate gender mainstreaming in the whole life cycle of the education policy formulation, planning, programming, and practice. This should be implemented in systematic, methodical fashion that addresses multiple forms of exclusion. All actors should support governments to move this process forward.
- b. UNGEI could develop indicators that can encapsulate variables such as empowerment, gender equity / equality in education, and propose them to the GMR so that the GMR can better capture the progress made in these areas. It is recommended that this be done for the medium term.
- c. UNGEI should reach out to various gender networks of actors who are involved in women's empowerment in line with MDG 3.
- d. Given that the child is at the center of all of our efforts to provide better education, it is recommended that teachers' capacities to address gender issues within the school and classroom settings be developed and that child-centered and gender-responsive pedagogy be utilized to provide better quality and relevant education.
- e. UNGEI and perhaps with other stakeholders should map, document, and disseminate good practices and successful initiatives in girls' education for the purposes of contextualizing them and scaling them up.
- f. Question for reflection: What is the purpose of education? It used to produce civil servants, but this is no longer relevant. This is a major question for discussion by the education fraternity.

#### Quality and Learning Achievements

Ms. Ruthi Hoffman Hanchett, *rapporteur* for the Quality and Learning Achievements group, noted that if we have empowering quality education inputs, learning achievements will follow and flow out of quality learning. All of the statements and recommendations are valid at all levels of learning:

- a. Quality should be measured by the most marginalized groups. In order to have quality education, you must be able to see systematic differences and educational quality achievements for each group. When assessing quality, we must disaggregate the data.
- b. Quality learning should produce more equitable societies where citizens value and respect each other as holders of human rights. Empowerment pedagogies have a significant impact on quality. A school ethos where there is respect, support, and equal participation of all boys and girls increases learning outcomes. Examples: case study from UNICEF work in Egypt, Escuela Nueva in Colombia, Action Gender in School
- c. Quality must be about safe learning environments. Safe learning environments address all forms of violence such as physical, psychological, emotional. Safe learning environments must also address state-level, community-level, inter-familial, and classroom violence. Examples: USAID Safe Schools, ActionAid Stop Violence Against Girls
- d. Quality must address all the enabling and empowering formal and informal learning experiences of a student in and outside the classroom. To advance school quality, we must address the social context of the child and the school.

## 2. Plenary Discussion

Following the group work presentations, participants offered additional reflections to complement the recommendations already made. The areas for discussion included: enlarging the target group for the recommendations to include UNGEI, GMR, and regional networks; viewing women as a force to grow the economy; acknowledging rights to, in, and through education as human rights relating to gender identity, political participation, and access to economic activity; considering informal and nonformal education as well as the purpose of education; and linkages to gender networks beyond education. Important issues that were advocated included: disaggregation of data along other lines of disparity; innovative approaches to address the rights of out-of-school girls and boys; examination of gender differences at transition points in education and to the workforce and the need for data collection at those points; articulation of complexities of education in a clear manner to decision-makers; comparative advantage of UNGEI to share knowledge among members and with partners, donors, and governments; and UNGEI's systematic gathering of best practice models and grouping the data by target audience. Additional points for examination included: the concept of who is safe in education; education outcomes for which purposes; education as a symbol of identity; the effects of the economic crisis on educational attainment and achievements; transformative versus instrumental education; and advocacy for funding education systems that can allow societies to critically question the status quo and economic situations.

## 3. Recommendations to UNGEI, countries, and the GMR

Mr. Wiking, assisted by Ms. Rihani, summarized the plenary discussion. Mr. Wiking suggested that the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee refine the recommendations for UNGEI during the business meeting on the following day. He also proposed that the recommendations for the GMR be limited to those that are applicable in the immediate term. Long-term recommendations for the GMR could be further elaborated and circulated via email. Mr. Wiking explained that the UNGEI GAC would finalize all of the areas of recommendations via email feedback during the following week.

It was recommended that **UNGEI** consider the following areas of action:

- Develop indicators on empowerment as well as mapping, documenting, and disseminating good practices.
- Endeavor to conduct research; produce relevant, systematic evidence-based findings; and share that information among the partners.
- Stand not only for an instrumental but also a transformative approach to education.
- Seek linkages with gender networks and women's groups such that both UNGEI and the networks and groups can be strengthened.
- Build broader partnerships to support regional-level policymaking.

It was recommended that **countries** consider the following areas of actions:

- Continue to integrate gender mainstreaming into education.
- To the extent possible, disaggregate data beyond girls and boys and along other variables of disparity such that the data are contextualized. It is important to collect the disaggregated data geographically (regionally within countries).
- Address the transformative nature of education, especially for girls, such that it can be linked to greater opportunities for women in social, economic and political sectors.
- Ensure that innovative approaches address the causes of school dropout, especially those at points of transition from one level to the next.
- Measure quality education by examining the most marginalized groups. Measure and evaluate quality learning by determining whether more equitable societies are being produced.

It was recommended that for the immediate term the **GMR** consider the following:

- The UNGEI GAC, meeting 27 May 2009 to discuss the research paper entitled “Gender as an Entry Point for Addressing Social Exclusion and Multiple Disparities in Education,” affirms the importance of the way in which gender interacts with other forms of marginalization and that a focus on gender will aid in leveraging change among multiple disparities.
- The reduction of gender inequity in education over the past decade (girls as a portion of out of school children decreased from 60 per cent to 55 per cent) has been largely due to targeted investment in girls’ education. Resources for equitable, engendered education continue to be needed more than ever before to protect the gains made in education and to continue ensuring those gains, particularly as they relate to gender equality.
- The world community (the GMR and global and regional organizations) can go beyond viewing exclusion through a quantitative lens (i.e. parity) by examining exclusion through equality.

[Note: Finalized recommendations to global/regional levels are available online at [http://www.ungei.org/news/247\\_2141.html](http://www.ungei.org/news/247_2141.html).]

### **Closing Remarks**

Ms. Faye requested that those with case studies, evidence-based data, and human-interest stories send that information to the UNGEI Secretariat no later than the following week. She also commended everyone for a positive, productive day’s meeting.

Co-Chair Ms. Rihani lauded the efforts of all participants who contributed to a very substantive, programmatic, technically productive day. With those comments, she closed the meeting.

## Annex 1 – Statements and Presentations

### Presentations

Keynote background paper by Dr. Maireád Dunne “Gender as an Entry Point for Addressing Social Exclusion and Multiple Disparities in Education” prepared for the meeting:

<http://www.ungei.org/ny2009/docs/Gender%20as%20Entry%20Point%20to%20Address%20Education%20Disparities.pdf>

Keynote and discussants’ presentations and comments on background paper:

<http://www.ungei.org/ny2009/documents.html>.

## Annex 2 – Key Documents

Agenda of the Technical Meeting <http://www.ungei.org/ny2009/agenda.html>

Participants' List [http://www.ungei.org/ny2009/docs/Participants\\_GAC2009.xls](http://www.ungei.org/ny2009/docs/Participants_GAC2009.xls)

Review of Purpose of Meeting, Expected Outcomes, Key Documents

<http://www.ungei.org/ny2009/docs/Purpose%20of%20Meeting,%20Expected%20Outcomes,%20Key%20Documents.pdf>

**Annex 3 – Participants present at the UNGEI GAC Technical meeting  
(Listed in the order that they introduced themselves)**

Shirley Miske, Miske Witt, and Associates  
Chloe O’Gara, Save the Children Federation US  
Cream Wright, UNICEF  
Kathleen Letshabo, UNICEF  
Moirra Wilkinson, UNICEF  
Corey Heyman, AED  
Helen Belcastro, SIDA  
Coudou Diaw, FAWE  
Sonia Yeo, UNICEF  
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