

UNGEI *GirlsEd-Net* eDiscussion #5: Renewing UNGEI's vision

Details of this eDiscussion can be found here: http://www.ungei.org/listserve/index_1733.html

Dear participants in the e-discussion regarding UNGEI's revised vision,

Your participation in this very important e-discussion regarding UNGEI's revised vision has been extremely rich and useful. The responses the e-discussion generated came from so many different countries. We heard African voices, Asian voices, Latin American voices, North American voices, and European ones. Representatives from UN agencies, donors, NGOs, and research institutes contributed to this debate.

The diversity of perspectives, the depth of the analysis, the voices of experience, the thoughtfulness of the contributions, and the sincerity of the inputs, make UNGEI and its Global Advisory Council want to take extremely seriously all the responses received during the e-discussion, study them carefully, reflect on them, and use them to revise its vision and mission. UNGEI will be going through this important exercise soon.

UNGEI deeply thanks each and every contributor to the e-discussion and renews its deep commitment to remaining a leader and a catalyst in support of girls' education worldwide.

May Rihani, AED Senior Vice President and Director
Moderator of this eDiscussion

Great News, I am happy to know the initiative of UNGEI.

Cheers,
Bandita Thapa
Founder
Women Foundation Nepal
"Possibility for Working Together"
Community Member
Women's international Networking, Switzerland

Among the strategic measures that I would like to see addressed in UNGEI's revised mission is a regional focus on which safety issues demand the most immediate attention relating to girls' ability to attend school and complete an education. Safety could be broadly defined as the ability to attend school and graduate from whatever form qualifies her for higher education if she chooses to go further. Unsafe practices are those that endanger and prohibit a girl's enrollment or attendance over a sustained period of time.

A global survey of cultural practices, health issues and policies that limit and/or make education possible for girls would be a first step in identifying what issues characterize a region's ability to educate girls. Synthesizing this information so that it's available to grassroots activists is one way to educate those who are trying to educate girls. It's a form of best and worst practices that is a tool for educators in and out of schools, organizations and governments.

Whatever strategies are adopted should follow UNICEF's policy of making it available to a variety of age and interest groups because everyone needs to work and ensure girls' right to an education becomes a reality.

Thank you for these forums.

Andrea Johnston, President and Co-Founder
Girls Speak Out
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My suggestion comes from a grassroots level. We need to remember, as Fatma Waziri pointed out, that the girls from disadvantaged, poverty-stricken and/or war torn areas are not at peace. I think it is important to consider the need for specific attention to be paid to the self-esteem and personal development of the girls, considering there is a very high likelihood that there will have been severe events witnessed and experienced by the girls. They need to be taught, first and foremost, that as girls/young women it is ok for them to be strong, integral and independent entities.

Kate Ricks
Western Australia
Murdoch University Law Student

For us in sub-Saharan Africa, UNGEI continues to remain highly relevant. What does it represent?

A world, a country, a community, a home, a school in which there is equity, equality and empowerment!

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Dear UNGEI,

The mandate of UNGEI needs to be both on gender parity and equality in education in order to ensure empowerment of girls through strategic partnerships.

UNGEI would therefore need to broaden its scope beyond working only with the UN bodies. The strengthening of the education system and community based mechanisms to ensure gender parity and equality in education needs to be carefully integrated in its approach. Mandate of this nature calls for a multi pronged approach firstly, working with the system to create and ensure the 'enabling environment' - in families, community, schools. The quality of education and ensuring the access and completion of girls' education needs to become the community agenda. UNGEI thus needs to facilitate the process whereby communities spearhead this responsibility. Thus, making this an inclusive process. It is only through these processes that one can ensure that the learning environment, the content, processes, and context of education are free of gender bias and encourage equality. Unless education systems and community based mechanisms are not strengthened, girls participation in education would remain a distant dream.

Secondly, working with the girls to empower them to fight this discrimination and face the world. This would include several small steps where ensuring learning achievements in schools, successful completion of education, strengthening life skills - including assertiveness, negotiation and decision making, facilitating the environment of informed career choices (vocational education options and role models) and inculcating positive health seeking behaviour.

Best wishes,

Uma Pradhan
Room to Read India

Thanks for the e-mail Re:UNGEI Girls Ed-Net eDiscussion #5:Renewing UNGEI's vision.

I understand that the UNGEI is putting in the best of efforts in helping the girls in the poor/underdeveloped countries to achieve a proper education, but it is also very important for the girls themselves to resort to self-help, to change their own lives, to lead their own lives, be their own boss and assert their own rights in the suppressed or oppressed home or country culture environment!

With Radio, Telephone, TV, Computer & all such high-technology, spreading the thoughts of gender parity, discrimination and the importance of education can be done much more effectively and faster now than in the old days. So, if the girls are really determined to get themselves a basic education, it is relatively much easier & more possible than in the past! Even if it's against all odds and adversity, "Where there is a will, there's a way!" And the girls should look up to the successful role models as the answer.

Sincerely,
MTP Fong

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