

## **UNGEI *GirlsEd-Net* eDiscussion #7: Addressing Gender Inequalities in and through Education in Emergencies, Post-Crisis and Contexts of Fragility**

Details of this eDiscussion can be found here: [http://www.ungei.org/listserve/index\\_1981.html](http://www.ungei.org/listserve/index_1981.html)

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Dear Participants in the e-discussion regarding Addressing Gender Inequalities in and through Education in Emergencies, Post-Crisis and Contexts of Fragility,

The voice of the community in supporting girls' education is heightened in situations of conflict, post-conflict and contexts of fragility when the state may not be the primary service provider. Involving individual households, community groups, councils, parent teacher associations, etc. in discussion around the importance and benefits of girls' education is a way to initiate systemic change that may be linked to traditional beliefs and religion. While results of this type of community dialogue may not be immediate, it is the foundation for long term change in thinking around the importance of girls' education. There are layers to a community and a multi-faceted approach may be required to mobilize various groups using a variety of methods such as gender equality training, securing more decision making power for women in local governance structures, and initiatives that demonstrate to the community the value of girls' education in the short and long term.

Do you have any examples or thoughts on how to advocate at the community level for the girls' education in situations of conflict, post-conflict, or countries facing fragility?

For example:

- Might there be a role for youth groups in the communities to advocate for support for girls education?
- What are the strategies have you used to increase the number of the women in decision making positions to ensure that gender-responsive education services?
- What are the roles for men and boys in the community in advocating for the importance of girls' education?

**Kara Mitchell, Analyst, Canadian International Development Agency**

INEE Gender Task Team

*Moderator for this eDiscussion*

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Just some general thoughts:

Even in the 21st century, women are not truly liberated from the bondage of the past. In many parts of the world, especially those places which are war-torn or experiencing wars and armed conflicts, women are often being tortured or abused, suffering from violence and abuse, sex discrimination and gender inequity. Women are victimized and are being taken as scapegoats and punchbags, being stepped on ruthlessly as if they were only toys or sex objects for men.

The traditional role of women in many eastern and even western societies was one of subservience. Females were considered dispensable, and girls may suffer infanticide in the extremely poor families in the under-developed, remote villages.

The tyranny of some cultural attitudes toward women and the impact is terrifyingly great and deep.

Very obviously, the importance of the time-honoured traditions and social customs in various cultures and how the entire society/village/family are structured to keep women in an inferior role or position would require much broader and immediate review and attention.

Women who are living in the places which are constantly fighting (whether it be in the family, community, country) would probably have to suffer tremendous pain and sorrow of losing their loved ones in the human conflicts or wars, seeing so many killings and casualties would be detrimental to their physical and psychological health. In addition, these women may suffer from the pressures of unhappy, tyrannical family situations and abusive arranged marriages, for example.

Because of these helpless women's lack of knowledge and the inability to get a formal education, they are left to suffer in silence and not knowing how to defend and empower themselves.

Whether young or old, men or women, boys and girls, people need a good education to face up to life's challenges. And especially for girls living in tyrannical, pathological cultures or families, they do need to try hard to emancipate themselves from the bondage of the past and try relentlessly to find their dreams.

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