

ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON GIRLS' EDUCATION ---Towards Robust and Sustainable Outcomes

There can be no significant or sustainable transformation in societies and no significant reduction in poverty until girls receive the quality basic education they need to take their rightful place as equal partners in development. (Carol Bellamy – Executive Director; UNICEF)

Introduction

1. This document outlines a strategy for ***accelerating*** progress on Girls' Education in order to meet the goals of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and to eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education by 2015, with all girls and boys being able to complete a quality basic education. The gender parity goal set for 2005 is the first credibility challenge of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Dakar Education for All (EFA) goals. Failure to achieve results in this area will perpetuate entrenched inequities and condemn yet another generation of children (majority girls) to a life of ignorance, poverty and misery. This strategy paper sets out the ways in which UNGEI partners can work together and with governments, civil society and the private sector to achieve gender parity now as a basis for gender equality later in line with these MDGs/EFA goals.
2. As key actors within the EFA movement and the MDGs, UNGEI partner agencies should resolutely champion girls' education not only as a means of achieving the equity goals set for education, but also as a means of leveraging overall progress in EFA and addressing goals related to poverty alleviation and human development. For instance, UNICEF has set girls' education as a top priority in its Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for the period 2002–2005. The singular focus of many UNGEI partners on girls' education has led to a shared concern that the gender parity goals may be slipping out of reach in many countries, unless special steps are taken now to accelerate progress on girls' education. UNICEF in particular has a responsibility to provide the type of leadership through which UNGEI can help these countries pursue accelerated progress that will yield credible results in a robust and sustainable manner by 2005. This paper seeks to provide a platform for such action by UNGEI partners.

Purpose and Rationale

3. This acceleration strategy is based on a rights approach, as espoused in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The focus therefore is on the more than 120 million children (majority girls) who are denied access to quality basic education. The strategy takes into account work already being done by development agencies and funding partners as part of the education for all movement (e.g. the Fast Track Initiative led by the World Bank). It is therefore not intended to replace existing initiatives and efforts, but to complement and enhance them in the interest of accelerating progress on girls' education. It is an integral part of EFA efforts. The idea then is that normal work will continue with current programmes

such as UNICEF's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) and similar programmes of other agencies that deal with girls' education. However special efforts and resources will be devoted to the acceleration strategy in order to achieve credible outcomes by 2005 and move with greater momentum towards the 2015 goal, so we can keep our promise to the children of the world.

4. The main purpose of this new strategy document therefore is to provide an agreed platform for **accelerating** and **co-ordinating** work on programmes and activities in girls' education, in a manner that would result in robust and sustainable outcomes. Whilst the central focus is clearly on the EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals, it should be emphasised that the rationale for this acceleration strategy is to address multiple agendas relating to:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Contributing to the achievement of the MDGs and EFA goals for 2005 and 2015(b) Contributing to the achievement of goals outlined in the World Fit For Children(c) Reaching targets for girls' education in access, quality and achievement by UNICEF (MTSP) and by other partners working in this area.(d) Helping countries and regions achieve regional development goals (e.g. NEPAD).(e) Consolidating UNICEF's role in education and education's place in UNICEF. |
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Five Inter-related Strands of Strategy to Accelerate Progress on Girls' Education

Focus Intensive Interventions on Selected Countries

5. The first strand or dimension of the strategy is to focus on a set of countries for intensive interventions. This means that whilst normal country programmes and projects by UNGEI partners will continue everywhere on girls' education, there will be a concentration of additional effort, resources and intervention measures in selected countries. The hope is that this concentration will result in accelerated and maximum impact on girls' education and education for all. Several criteria have been used to create a pool for selection of these Focus Countries:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Countries in which the net enrolment ratio for girls is generally considered to be low (below 70%).....there are 44 such countries and some have less than 40%.(b) Countries with a gender gap of 10% or more in primary enrolment levels ... there are 30 countries estimated to be in this category.(c) The 10 countries with the highest numbers of girls (over 1 million) out of school.(d) The 23 countries on the initial EFA-FTI list announced by the World Bank on behalf of EFA partners. This list had 18 countries and 5 Analytical FTI countries.(e) High-risk countries where enrolment and gender parity are under threat. E.g. those heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS, civil conflict, natural disasters and emergencies. |
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6. Using these criteria a pool of countries was listed on a grid to show how many of the criteria relate to each country. Using this grid, other characteristics of the countries were explored and some negotiations took place on which countries should be selected for accelerated progress on girls' education. After much discussion a total of 25 countries were selected as the initial set of countries for acceleration. These selected countries include some of the most challenging in terms of gender parity, girls education and EFA generally. However, there are also some countries in which conditions offer a realistic chance of credible results and demonstrable success by 2005. Annex 1 shows the 25 countries that were finally selected for acceleration. It is estimated that together these countries account for 64% of out of school children.

Adopt a Proactive and Intensive Approach

7. The second dimension of the strategy for accelerating progress on girls' education is to adopt a proactive and intensive approach that concentrates expertise, knowledge and other resources on reaching out-of-school girls and helping them overcome the barriers to obtaining quality basic education. This is really about using what we know already, when it comes to reaching out-of-school girls or addressing the barriers that prevent them from accessing and completing basic education. Plenty of examples of such measures can be found in the literature generated by various agencies such as USAID, World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, as well as from academia and civil society. The challenge now is to use this bank of experiential knowledge with much more urgency, much more resources and with a greater focus on selected countries. In the process, we also hope to learn more about how to better target these interventions and help countries take them to scale, so they work faster and better for girls' education. The intention is to use each of the initial 25 selected countries to help lift 3 additional countries by sharing experiences and lessons learnt.
8. Putting this dimension into practice has implications for the work pattern of UNICEF and other agencies. Accelerated progress on girls' education cannot be achieved through a "business as usual" approach. It requires new ways of working by most of the agencies involved. Each agency will have to work out the implications for its own way of working, but in general a greater degree of collaboration between agencies will be necessary to assist countries in an effective and efficient manner. For UN agencies, the reform process is critical to this approach. In the case of UNICEF, this approach requires greater engagement between HQ, Regional Offices and Country Offices, as well as enhanced advocacy and communications strategies. It also requires strengthened commitment and increased capacity at every level, improved networking within UNICEF and with outside partners, as well as increased flow of resources to help with rapid scaling up of successful interventions. These resources will involve financial inputs as well as advocacy, knowledge, expertise and guidance. As an example the following boxes illustrate what may be required for implementing a strategy that is proactive and intensive:

Box 1: Implementing a *Proactive* Strategy in Selected Countries

This strategy entails identifying out-of-school girls and providing schooling for them (initially on an emergency basis if necessary), rather than putting measures in place and waiting for enrolment to increase. To do this sensibly requires:- 1. Advocacy at the highest level (HoS/HoG) for accelerating progress on GE. 2. Advocacy with partners and nationals for high priority on accelerating GE in sector plans (SWAPs, PRSPs, SIPs, etc). 3. Mobilising communities / institutions to work on acceleration measures. 4. Safeguards on quality to avoid future setbacks. 5. Strong local participation to promote ownership and sustainability. 6. Anticipating and planning for the key consequences of acceleration (e.g. facilities, staffing, recurrent costs, management, integration into mainstream, etc).

It needs to be emphasised that a proactive strategy on its own will not lead to the type of accelerated progress that is advocated in this document. A proactive strategy will yield results when it is combined with an intensive strategy. In a sense the five dimensions of the acceleration strategy outlined here are highly inter-related and inter-dependent. There is not much to be gained by trying to use some of them and ignore others.

Box 2: Implementing an *Intensive* Strategy in Selected Countries

This means developing and concentrating a “**total resource package**” of interventions in the selected countries, in a manner that would yield results in a much shorter time-frame than would normally be the case. To do this sensibly requires:- 1. Understanding the local situation well to customise “total resource package” for each country. 2. Strengthening country level capacity to handle the intervention package. 3. Providing backup from Regional and Global levels in terms of guidance, technical notes, networking and “rapid response mechanisms” to support countries and deal with emerging needs. 4. Winning the community’s support for intervention measures. 5. Building capacity and partnerships to rapidly scale up proven interventions and good practices. 6. Strengthening capacity for problem solving and the ability to learn lessons from intervention measures that work as well as those that do not. 7. Creating a data bank of resource persons, physical assets and reference materials that can be used to support rapid implementation of the intervention measures. 8. Building action teams of UNGEI go-getters that can pull out all the stops, to accelerate progress on GE in the selected countries. 9. Providing short-term measures and incentives to ameliorate the worse disparities, whilst building long-term solutions.

A final point on this dimension of the strategy is to highlight examples of practical intervention measures that may form part of the action plan in the selected countries.

Box 3: Examples of Practical Measures for Selected Countries

This is about applying what we already know and what we think will work best for each country or community: 1. Operate double shifts in existing schools. 2. Expand other forms of provision (non-formal) and work to improve quality, win official recognition and regular funding for them. 3. Make small rural schools viable through multi-grade teaching. 4. Operate tent schools and use school-in-a-box for “emergency” needs. 5. Use incentives for enrolment and attendance (school meals, girls’ scholarships, etc). 6. Use public pronouncements by local leaders to promote enrolment and attendance. 7. Address home/community factors that help to release girls to enrol and attend school (provide water supply, community childcare, labour-saving gadgets and schemes, supplement to household income, etc). 8. Provide mobile schools for remote rural populations and transient/nomadic groups. 9. Advocate for building of new schools and expand / repair existing schools as incentive for increased enrolment. 10. Improve facilities available in schools (e.g. water supply, sanitation, play and recreational facilities, etc.). 11. Provide “Escorts” and measures to improve safety of the journey to school. 12. Use incentives for teachers and administrators (based on Learning achievement) to improve quality.

Intensify Advocacy at National and International Levels

9. The third dimension of the strategy for accelerating progress on girls’ education is to intensify advocacy at the national, regional and international levels in order to:
 - (a) Create a groundswell of local demand for open budgets, transparency and accountability.
 - (b) Transform political will into Government action to fulfil their obligations on girls’ education and ensure this is reflected in national plans and budgets.
 - (c) Mobilise financial resources and donor commitment to girls’ education as the main leverage on national education systems for achieving EFA.

At the national and regional levels, the challenge is to get a unified voice and support from high level political leaders. Urgent work needs to be done on enhanced strategies for advocacy and communication in favour of girls’ education. The Communication Division in UNICEF HQ will be central in supporting the articulation and dissemination of a clear vision and communication strategy. Principals of partner agencies will need to spearhead the communication and advocacy drive. In the case of UNICEF, the Executive Director and her Deputies, as well as Regional Directors will need to make country visits and deliver convincing messages to national partners at the highest levels.

10. UNGEI should build on the success of existing programmes and initiatives in order to prioritise the co-ordination of efforts by partner agencies, donors, civil society and the private sector. Mechanisms that will be explored in this regard include the United

Nations Reform Process, the EFA Fast Track Initiative and Sector-Wide processes such as Swaps and SIPs. Through these and other mechanisms, UNICEF will seek to ensure mainstreaming of girls' education as well as effective co-ordination of UNGEI partner efforts. The challenge will be to broaden participation in UNGEI to include all key donors, major civil society entities and the private sector. This will be done in all the 25 selected countries by assessing the major interventions on girls' education and identifying champions to lead on girls' education at all forums, including the PRSP donor coordination group. In addition, UNICEF and other partners will help to create the space, build the capacity and provide entry points for civil society to participate in key decision-making forums. In this regard, UNICEF will build on its experience of creating bridges between civil society and policy-makers, as well as in organising children's participation. These efforts will require close collaboration with local NGOs and regional advocacy groups (e.g. FAWE in Africa). Strong popular demand in each country for accelerating progress on girls' education will further help ensure Government accountability.

11. Internationally also, UNICEF and other UNGEI partners will use this strategy to ensure that girls' education is a priority in the design, implementation and monitoring of the EFA Fast Tacking Initiative. These efforts will tap into the commitment of donor partner agencies to help countries achieve the MDGs and EFA goals and mobilise substantial resources for education through the Fast Track Initiative. UNGEI partners should endeavour to have a strong presence at policy forums and ensure sufficient co-ordination to make a unified contribution where key decisions are taken on investments and strategies for achieving these goals. UNICEF will work with other UNGEI partners to achieve greater visibility of girls' education issues within the international education agenda and convey a clear message of our engagement with it. We will also convey clear messages about UNICEF's leadership in the area of girls' right to education, its spheres of comparative advantage and its ability to work in partnership with others to help countries deliver on these goals. Again, this requires advocacy efforts led by the Executive Director, and other senior figures, including visits to donor countries.
12. Two of the most important roles we need to emphasise in our communications messages are: **“accompanying”** countries as they strive to achieve the MDG/EFA goals to which they are committed, and using an **inter-sectoral approach** to widen the range of interventions used and advocated for, as part of girls' education. These are two powerful and relatively new concepts that will need to be well honed as part of the UNGEI advocacy and communication strategies. They represent essential areas of assistance to countries, which are not often captured in development work; and the capacity to play these critical roles should be regarded as an important comparative advantage for UNICF and other UNGEI partners. Given that these are such new ideas for many partner agencies working in education, Concept Notes will be prepared and made available to UNGEI partners in due course. Meanwhile a brief outline of the gist of these concepts is given in the boxes below:

Box 4: “Accompanying” countries on the road to education goals

This is a new concept that seeks to go beyond the basic requirements of partnership. It is based on the notion of countries taking the lead, but also acknowledges that countries often need help beyond provision of funds and monitoring or evaluating their progress. The idea of “accompanying” a country therefore emphasises continuous and long-term support with a “total resource package” (not just funds) throughout the difficult journey that will lead to achievement of the MDGs, WFFC goals, EFA goals and other national or regional goals (e.g. NEPAD). Accompanying a country means being there through thick and thin, without being unduly obtrusive or trying to dictate matters. It means sharing and empathising with the vision and objectives of the country, yet being constructive with both support and advocacy for change where needed. It is about being involved in the day-to-day decisions and problem-solving difficulties that national officials and local communities will invariably face throughout this journey. It is about being there for a country and walking the distance as well as the extra mile if necessary. UNICEF should boldly stake its claim to being uniquely able to accompany countries because of its track record, its organisational structure and mode of operation in over 160 countries.

13. The concept of accompanying countries does not imply that an agency will act alone in helping countries. On the contrary it means that UNGEI partners will coordinate their efforts into a raft of supportive interventions, with each partner focusing on what it does best and adding value to the work of others. For instance UNICEF will use its MICS data to contribute regularly to the monitoring and evaluation process and help the designated agency (UNESCO) put together the best possible data (especially data dis-aggregated by gender). All UNGEI partners should also help to enrich monitoring and evaluation reports by providing illustrative data, case studies and narratives that can help to embellish the inter-sectoral achievements surrounding educational goals. In the same way, UNICEF will work with governments and partner agencies to scale up those interventions and good practices that have been shown to produce positive results for girls’ education and education for all. We will work to maximise the visibility of girls’ education as a lever to help countries meet the MDGs. The top leadership of all UNGEI partner agencies will also be expected to play their part in advocacy, communication and publicity on behalf of girls’ education.

Box 5: Adopting an Inter-Sectoral Approach to Education Goals

This approach recognises that addressing many of the obstacles relating to education for all and the MDGs (especially those affecting girls’ education) require thinking and acting outside of the education sector mode. UNICEF has a unique capacity to operate in many sectors through its programmes on behalf of children and vulnerable groups. Similarly other UNGEI partners contribute to girls’ education through their work in other sectors, for instance UNFPA’s work on female reproductive health. We need to convey this type of comparative advantage of UNGEI partner agencies through appropriate messages. This approach is part of the overall strategy for accelerating progress on girls’ education and it is outlined in greater detail, as the fifth dimension of this Strategy.

Intensify Partnerships for Planning, Co-ordination and Service Delivery

14. The fourth dimension of this acceleration strategy is to intensify partnerships at all stages of the process leading to achievement of the education goals. There is far too much fragmentation in planning and implementing programmes, projects and activities related to girls' education. UNICEF will lead the work necessary to intensify co-ordination of country-level interventions, in terms of process as well as outcomes and results reported, so we know who is doing what and to what effect. Such co-ordination is required to avoid wasted resources and duplication as well as to help build synergy through blending appropriate interventions in the field of girls' education. In taking UNGEI to the country level therefore, a wide range of bi-laterals, multi-laterals, NGOs, Community Organisations, Private Sector and children's groups will be invited to join in a collaborative and coordinated partnership for girls' education. This will help to ensure that existing and future activities relating to girls' education by the various partners are co-ordinated for greater impact and improved outcomes. To be successful at the country level, UNGEI would need to assess and build on all existing mechanisms, processes and networks in education, particularly those that function well, and are familiar to most partners working in the country.

15. UNICEF will use its considerable experience gained through such multi-country initiatives like the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) to co-ordinate efforts in support of girls' education at the national, regional and international levels. In terms of planning and co-ordination of EFA efforts generally, there are already promising partnerships and movements at the international level through the EFA Fast Track Initiative led by the World Bank and the EFA Working Group led by UNESCO. UNICEF will use its involvement in these partnerships to influence change and to provide much needed co-ordination of efforts in support of girls' education. These efforts at the global level will need to be translated to partnership at the country level, to cover planning, co-ordination and service delivery relating to EFA-FTI and other efforts relating to EFA and the MDGs. It is mainly in the area of service delivery that partnerships for practical action are needed most at the country level. UNICEF will use its experience with AGEI in 34 African countries to build UNGEI into a broad and effective mechanism for strengthening partnerships and co-ordinating efforts in girls' education. UNGEI at the country level must therefore be fully inclusive in order to create a true partnership. The experience with AGEI needs to be replicated in Asia and other regions as part of a viable co-ordinating mechanism for girls' education.

Focus on Inter-sectoral Approach

16. The fifth dimension of the strategy for accelerating progress on girls' education is to focus on working across sectors in order to establish a framework for delivering quality education that is robust and sustainable. This involves developing maximum synergy with other sectors that impact on girls' education, in order to promote a new and more integrated approach to service delivery. The common denominator

underlying this new approach will be the use of **gender as a lens for accelerating progress on girls' education**. Some of the elements of this inter-sectoral approach are outlined in the following paragraphs, for key sectors that affect girls' education:

HIV/AIDS IN EDUCATION

17. An innovative approach to education and HIV/AIDS is proposed for UNGEI: **use the HIV/AIDS threat as an imperative for accelerating change in schools and education systems**. Prevention and mitigation measures can be used not only to combat the pandemic, but also to drive educational change. To date it has proved difficult to implement effective and imaginative education interventions on a large scale to combat the threat posed by HIV/AIDS. This is mainly due to a prevailing disconnection between intentions and actions. There is now growing awareness of the threat that HIV/AIDS poses to education systems, as well as the need for urgent measures to combat this threat. Prevention and mitigation measures are increasing, but with little evaluation of their impact. If we continue to treat HIV/AIDS as an additional agenda item for embattled education systems to deal with (rather than as part of the main education menu), then progress will still be patchy at best.

18. Given this reality, the proposed approach seeks to yield education dividends as well as helping to combat the HIV/AIDS threat. Combating HIV/AIDS through preventive education is not only about providing information and cultivating knowledge, but ultimately about influencing attitudes and values as well as promoting behaviour change. These are essentially the issues at the heart of all good quality education, with or without the problem of HIV/AIDS. UNGEI partners should therefore work hard to strengthen prevention and mitigation measures in ways that also contribute to quality education in terms of information, knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviour change in learners. These measures can also be used to drive school improvement through greater accountability to communities, resource management and a more welcoming, inclusive and child-friendly learning environment. The school can then become the locus for changes that relate to HIV/AIDS, as well as contributing to improvements in the quality of education. This holistic approach does not treat the measures in question as purely to do with HIV/AIDS, but rather as part of a general school improvement drive. UNGEI partners would need to identify and use the most promising interventions (through better evaluation) to address HIV/AIDS issues in education as an integral part of education reform. Pending improved evaluation and selection of the most appropriate interventions, UNGEI partners would have to use their judgement to select from measures currently used in education systems:

Examples of Measures to combat HIV/AIDS, that also Yield Education Dividends

(1) Flexible school times and catch-up programmes for orphans and working children. (2) Professional discipline and codes (teachers' unions) to stamp out improper contacts of male teachers with girl pupils. (3) More authority and resources for school heads to meet needs of teachers affected by HIV/AIDS (employment rights, counselling, freedom from discrimination, access to treatment and other benefits). (4) Empower pupils (especially girls) to improve on management of risk behaviour. (5) Empower parents and local communities to hold schools responsible and accountable for safeguarding children from sexual harassment, rape and sexual exploitation. (6) Promote a culture of school as a place in which teachers have rights as well as obligations that are to be monitored and managed by school heads. (7) Stress peer counselling, out-of-school clubs, child-to-child activities, positive living ambassadors and other such measures, to help children combat the threat of HIV/AIDS. (8) Provide resources to safeguard the rights of children affected by HIV/AIDS, to continue with their education in an environment free of stigma and prejudice. (9) Build stronger links between formal schools and non-formal alternatives to provide a safety net for children at risk of missing access to or dropping out of education.

19. Prior to the invasion of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, these and many such measures have been advocated often in the past to help make schools more responsive to the challenges posed by obstacles to girls education and universal basic education. However, it has always been difficult to implement these measures in a meaningful way, without some major driving force or imperative for change. This is what HIV/AIDS now offers us! It is this opportunistic use of the threat posed by the pandemic that is innovative about the approach outlined here. By harnessing the overwhelming desire for action to combat the threat posed by HIV/AIDS, pressure can be put on schools and education systems from all angles, to implement much needed reforms. Pressure can also be put on Governments and external partners to provide the resources needed for such measures to be designed and implemented in the education system. The focus therefore is not simply to have HIV/AIDS in the curriculum or address it through peer counselling and school clubs. It is rather to transform schools into bastions against HIV/AIDS by implementing a raft of change measures that will fundamentally alter the culture of schooling. This in turn will result in considerable quality improvement that can benefit teachers as well as pupils and the communities served by the school. This is the education dividend that should inspire Ministers/Ministries of Education, teachers and school heads to see action on HIV/AIDS as more than just an add-on to an already full education agenda. For this approach to work, it is critical to have a strong advocacy campaign at all levels (especially at Heads-of-State and Heads of Agencies levels).

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) IN EDUCATION

20. The importance of ECD for education has already been well documented in the literature, in terms of early learning that offers a head start with positive behaviour

and school readiness, as well as early socialisation for gender sensitisation in children. An additional linkage that appears to have been overlooked relates to the battle for rhythm in the everyday life of a child. Winning a place for the rhythm of schooling at an early stage in a child's everyday life can determine whether or not the child starts school at the right age and continues without frequent lateness and absenteeism. This in turn can help to make gains in girls' enrolment and completion more sustainable, by ensuring that all children (especially girls) start school at the right age and stay on to complete, once they have enrolled.

Box 6. Using ECD for Sustainable Progress – “The Rhythm of Schooling”

In most rural communities and deprived regions, children are taken care of completely for the first 2 or 3 years and then they are slowly introduced to simple household chores and minor income-generating tasks (this is especially true for girls). These gradually build up into a routine or everyday rhythm in the child's life. Once these are established and take up most of the child's day (by 5 to 7 years of age), it becomes very difficult to introduce schooling into a child's life. This is a major reason for children not being sent to school at the right age or not at all. Provision of community-based EC care helps deal with this problem in two ways. First, because the child spends a few hours each day in some form of EC care we are in effect booking a place for schooling in the child's daily routine. Starting school becomes easier as it does not have to crowd out other established daily activities. Secondly, EC care helps to introduce the rhythm of schooling (like regular attendance at designated times, etc.) into the child's life at an early stage. This makes it likely that once the child starts school he/she will attend punctually and regularly. Through these effects, ECD can lead to sustainable achievements by ensuring that as more and more children have access to EC care, more and more children will start school at the right age, attend punctually and regularly, and complete their education.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN EDUCATION

21. The practice of using nutrition (school meals) as an incentive for enrolment as well as a means of promoting learning for children who would otherwise be too hungry and malnourished to learn, has been well established. Other benefits such as routine health checks, growth monitoring, micro-nutrients and de-worming programmes are also well known in the area of education interventions. Apart from these complementary benefits there are also direct educational benefits to be gained through health and nutrition interventions. The knowledge and skills components of nutrition and health in the curriculum can be used to improve the quality of learning achievements. They help to ensure that both boys and girls can acquire competencies that enable them to provide better care for their families in the area of health and nutrition. Moreover these components can provide boys and girls with a platform for career development in fields related to nutrition and health. Firstly then, health and nutrition interventions can be used as incentives for participation, learning readiness of pupils and improvement of learning environment. Secondly, these health and nutrition interventions can also provide valuable knowledge and skills in the curriculum to improve quality of learning achievements that relate to life skills. Thirdly, these

interventions offer a vocational platform for school leavers in the areas of health and nutrition. In general health and nutrition interventions can contribute not only to improved access, retention and completion, but also to better learning achievement and outcome of schooling.

CHILD PROTECTION IN EDUCATION

22. Issues relating to child protection are critical for education in two related senses. Firstly, children who are not in school are most at risk of being subjected to exploitation and therefore most in need of child protection. Secondly, those children already in a situation of exploitation can find refuge and a new sense of hope for a new life, through education. For these reasons, those working in the field of child protection see education as a means of preventing various forms of child exploitation as well as ameliorating the impact of exploitation on affected children. The question for this strategy paper is: What does child protection have to offer education that can be used to accelerate progress towards robust and sustainable achievements in girls' education? In brief, the concerns of child protection reflect the concerns of educators about misguided (sometimes ill-motivated) reasons for keeping girls out of school. They also mirror concerns in society at large about the main consequences of girls being denied the right to basic education. Ultimately all such concerns highlight the importance of adopting a human-rights-based approach to education. Taking such an approach requires us to address these injustices through which girls and boys are denied access to quality basic education. It highlights the need for UNGEI partners to work together to re-awaken the moral force in education, so we can deal with issues of fairness, social justice and unethical practices. UNGEI partners should rally behind these moral and ethical issues as much as the technical strategies and intervention measures. Education after all is not a production industry for passive reception and efficient processing of cohorts of children. It is most importantly a force for good in society and also represents the ultimate tool for distributing social goods as well as for engineering social justice.
23. Besides this general concern, there are issues that need to be addressed urgently within an acceleration strategy if gains are to be consolidated. The rapid increase in the number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in some parts of the world raises new challenges for equity issues in education. Similarly increased child trafficking poses a major threat to girls' education efforts and the general EFA goals. School-based violence in general and gender-based violence in particular is also a major and growing threat to girls' education. Then there are new challenges when old problems like drought impact on communities that are already being decimated by HIV/AIDS. In most of these situations children (especially girls) are at risk and need to be safeguarded as part of the efforts to provide quality basic education for all. We therefore need not only to reawaken the moral force of education, but also to take practical measures that can make schools a "safe haven" for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) against these dangers. There is a considerable amount of work already done in the area of children affected by war and the UN Secretary General

has instituted a further study on violence against children. UNICEF partners should use these studies and knowledge base to design more effective advocacy messages and intervention strategies to address child protection as part of quality basic education.

Box 8. Re-Awakening the Moral Force in Education

Girls are much more susceptible to the evils of child exploitation in most situations that require children to be protected. Some examples of what needs to be addressed include:

1. Unfair distribution of public resources by providing schooling for some children but denying to others (especially girls as manifested by gender gap in enrolment)
2. Unfair distribution of household resources through preference for sending boys to school where parents have to make tough choices.
3. Unfair burden of household chores and income-generating activities that keep more girls out of school than boys, because of traditional gender roles in housework.
4. Denial of opportunities for schooling through traditional practices like early marriage.
5. Combating the problem of children made vulnerable in civil conflicts and other emergencies (with girls often more at risk than boys), by providing safe zones and setting up child-friendly spaces for learning.
6. Keeping children in school to avoid exposure to sexual exploitation (affecting girls more often than boys) in categories such as street children, child soldiers, child workers, child prostitution, domestic violence, etc.
7. Providing shelter and home care for HIV/AIDS orphans through new versions of boarding school and care centres, and helping families use schools as a temporary shelter.

UNICEF Deliverables, Outputs and Outcomes (DOOs)

24. To give concrete meaning to this acceleration strategy for UNICEF partners, it is essential to set out a range of suggested deliverables, outputs and outcomes (DOOs) that can be used to gauge progress and measure performance. These products should be based firstly on the expectation that the acceleration will result in favourable impact and credible results in the progress of the 25 selected countries towards achieving the MDGs and EFA goals in gender and education. Secondly there is also an implicit expectation that the acceleration strategy will provide UNICEF partners with an improving understanding of what works for partnerships in girls' education and how these solutions can be scaled up to national level. Finally it is expected that the acceleration strategy will contribute to increased synergy by working with and through existing mechanisms, processes and networks in education and development. Against this background of expectations the following deliverables, outputs and outcomes are suggested for UNICEF partners to focus on as they adopt and utilise this acceleration strategy over the next five years:

DELIVERABLES

- (a) Contributions to the annual EFA Global Monitoring Report that is prepared by the independent team based in UNESCO. E.g. use of UNICEF data on gender and girls education as well as analytical work by various UNGEI partners on progress with girls' education, especially in the 25 acceleration countries.
- (b) Providing a wide range of country case studies on the impact of girls' education interventions on EFA and MDG goals relating to poverty eradication, socio-economic development, good governance, gender balance and community empowerment.
- (c) Establishing a "legacy" of publications that review, analyse and synthesise available data, studies and reports on girls' education since Jomtien in 1990. These publications should help strengthen work in the field of gender and education as an emerging cross-disciplinary area of study and also provide key documents to mark 2005 as a watershed year for the achievement of gender parity/equality in basic education.
- (d) Use the experience of UNGEI partners to develop, compile and disseminate "greatest hits" common advocacy messages on girls' education that can be used by all partners.
- (e) Child participation through a "Let's hear it for the girls" collection in words and pictures of messages, stories and commentaries by girls who have achieved success and overcome obstacles in life through quality basic education..
- (f) Concept Notes and Technical Papers based on UNGEI partners' experience with the acceleration strategy: E.g. "Inter-sectoral Approaches to Service Delivery in Girls' Education" or "Accompanying Countries on the Road to Gender Equity in EFA".

OUTPUTS

- (g) Girls' Education adequately addressed as a priority in the national education plans (SWAps/SIPs/PRSPs) of the 25 countries selected under this acceleration strategy, as well as in EFA-FTI proposals and financing processes.
- (h) Increased participation of civil society achieved in planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring for girls' education, as part of the strategy of "accompanying" countries on the road to gender parity/equality in education for all.
- (i) Political commitment to girls' education and gender equity in education demonstrated through concrete action and measures by national and international leaders.
- (j) Strong advocacy campaign accomplished through UNICEF leadership and joint efforts by all partners.

- (k) Increased provision of safe zones and child-friendly learning spaces achieved as standard practice for children in emergency situations, and provision of alternative forms of schooling realised for out of school girls in the 25 countries.
- (l) Increased inter-sectoral inputs established as standard in education systems, in order to improve the quality of the learner and the learning environment in the 25 selected countries. (water, sanitation, health, school meals, etc)
- (m) Improvements in pupil/teacher ratio as well as in the quality of teachers and school management achieved in the 25 countries.
- (n) The concept of schools as safe havens and centres of community empowerment in difficult countries established as standard practice for education in emergencies.

OUTCOMES

- (o) Reduced % of out of school girls in all 25 countries by at least 30% (2005)
- (p) Reduced gender gap in education achieved on a rising tide of increased enrolment and completion rates in basic education.
- (q) Improved retention and completion rates for girls in all 25 countries as measured by the percentage of girls at the right grade for their age (Grade Appropriate NER)
- (r) Improved performance of girls in learning achievement as measured by national tests where available or by proxy indicators such as transition rates from primary school to secondary education (Performance n Primary Leaving Examination).
- (s) System-wide improvements and more robust and sustainable results in education, as demonstrated by independent evaluation studies in the 25 selected countries.

Implications for Capacity of UNICEF as Lead Agency

25. UNICEF needs to strengthen its capacity in various ways to meet the challenges of leading UNGEI and implementing an ambitious acceleration strategy that involves major co-ordination efforts. In particular, staffing capabilities will need to be strengthened in country offices, regional offices and headquarters. This does not necessarily imply major increase in staff numbers. What it implies is the need for a careful review of critical tasks to ensure that the range and profiles of education staff at each level can adequately cover existing tasks relating to the UNICEF MTSP, and extending to address new demands posed by UNGEI and the acceleration strategy. This might well require changes in some of the present job descriptions, and in the way UNICEF engages with partner agencies at these levels, but more importantly it will require additional funding to facilitate and back-stop UNGEI activities as well as

to support UNGEI as a thriving partnership. The precise nature of what is required in each of the selected countries and the regions concerned will be determined on the basis of the reality in each case and business plans that will be developed for UNGEI at country level and regional level. For the global level, it is proposed that capacity in UNICEF’s Education Section be strengthened to provide the necessary support for the emerging UNGEI Secretariat as outlined in the chart below:

26. In addition to the Secretariat function of servicing UNGEI, areas of expertise for UNICEF at the global level should conform to two major categories. Firstly, to deal with issues of access, completion and quality (ACQ) in girls’ education. Secondly, to tackle issues of quality, achievement and sustainability (QAS) in girls’ education. These inter-related categories of expertise allow a meaningful delineation of roles and responsibilities within a complex global team that is expected to address policy and strategy issues for girls’ education as a UNICEF priority and as a focus for the UNGEI partnership. In terms of deployment of expertise in support of the acceleration strategy, there should be two main thrusts. The first thrust provides back-up and rapid response to Regions and Countries in line with the need for greater engagement for normal programmes as well as for the acceleration strategy. In this regard the recent move by UNICEF towards building an “Extended Education Cluster” that embraces both global and regional levels through shared priorities and capacity building measures. The second thrust concerns reviewing progress with girls’ education, in order to build and strengthen a global knowledge bank in this area.

Key Tasks and Work Plan Implications

	Back-up And Rapid Response	Review And Knowledge Bank
<u>ACQ</u> Access Completion and Quality	Outreach help with getting girls into school by all possible means (school-in-a-box; tent schools, safe learning spaces in conflict, the use of mobile schools for nomadic groups). Help with measures to make schools more conducive to learning and to keep girls in school to completion (persistence). Work on provision of adequate learning resources.	Document lessons learned with strategies for getting girls into school under different and difficult conditions.
<u>QAS</u> Quality Achievement and Sustainability	Outreach help with teacher training and the curriculum in different circumstances. Work on development of teaching and learning resources. Help with learning assessment in different school settings and systems.	Help with research and documentation of a range of measures to improve the quality of education.
UNGEI SECRETARIAT	Provide key services required to support the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee (GAC) and UNGEI at regional and country levels in line with the TOR agreed by partners.	Establish and maintain master resources on a dedicated website and through promoting UNGEI studies and evaluation work

27. In order to meet these technical and staffing requirements relating to UNGEI and the MTSP UNICEF and key UNGEI partners should further discuss possibilities in line with the planning cycle and staffing priorities of the agency. In the meantime, there will need to be interim measures through use of consultants and temporary staffing, as well as through “load-sharing” with other UNGEI partners. There is also a need to pursue joint efforts by partners to ensure that the expectations of partners regarding the leadership role of UNICEF remain realistic and practical in relation to the staffing and funding levels of the agency for education.

Resource Implications for Regional and Country Levels:

26. Details of the resources required at regional and country levels have to be elaborated through the proposed business plans that will be developed in consultation with the UNICEF offices at these levels. However there will generally be a need for increased capacity for facilitating UNGEI work that involves convening, back up and networking. In this regard partners may wish to support this process through increased funding as well as by secondment of qualified and experienced personnel (particularly in countries and regions where a partner agency does not have a presence); or load-sharing where there are partner offices with the capacity required. The need for co-ordination at these levels also has key implications for additional resources over and above the normal funding requirements that are outlined in the MTSP for UNICEF programme work.

Monitoring and Evaluation Implications:

27. The main tasks on monitoring and evaluation for EFA have been assigned to the EFA Monitoring Team based in UNESCO. UNICEF and other UNGEI partners should seek to provide data and analysis through their normal programme work as well as through this acceleration strategy. The main contribution on data and analysis will pertain to gender dis-aggregation and analysis of key issues affecting progress with girls’ education. As a minimum, UNICEF and other UNGEI partners should provide data on indicators that are outlined in their own individual work programme. For instance the UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for girls’ education outlines the following indicators:

Focus Areas	Examples of Monitoring Indicators
Access	% of Out of school girls; Completion Rates;
Quality	Learning Environment; Readiness of Learner;
Learning Achievement	Transition Rates;

Costs and Financing

28. The strategy for accelerating progress on girls’ education implies additional costs and the need for financing sources to be identified. Indeed the viability of the acceleration

strategy and the number of countries to be targeted depend very much on the ability of UNICEF and other UNGEI partners to identify and/or attract additional funding sources in support of this strategy. It should be appreciated that funding for UNGEI and the acceleration strategy should complement the main funding that is increasingly provided to Governments through sector funding or general budget support. This complementary funding for UNGEI is essentially an insurance to promote effective and efficient gains in progress towards gender parity/equality in education for all and the MDGs. There are three basic options for funding UNGEI and UNICEF as lead agency:

- (a) Donors provide additional “Global Thematic” resources to UNICEF for UNGEI and the acceleration strategy, especially to finance the funding gap relating to work in the acceleration countries that UNGEI decides to focus on.
- (b) Partner agencies allocate funds at regional and country levels to support evolving work by UNGEI on a case by case basis decided at that level.
- (c) Donors provide “tied” funds to UNICEF and other partners to address specific challenges and work plan elements in selected countries.

29. The recommendation of UNGEI partners could also be to pursue a combination of these three options in order to finance the acceleration strategy in as many countries as possible. Whatever the case, UNICEF will need to work with other partners to establish estimates of funding gaps in line with the UNGEI business plans and currently available resources for work in girls’ education at all levels.

30. The resources presently anticipated by UNICEF are skewed heavily towards Other Resources that need to be raised with donors, as distinct from the more reliable Regular Resources that have been committed. This limits how much UNICEF itself can prioritise resources for support to UNGEI and the acceleration strategy. Some consideration should be given to changing this imbalance by increasing the flow of regular resources to the organisation. Against this background, additional resource requirements relating to the strategy for accelerating progress on Girls’ education are many and varied. They will firstly involve resources to UNICEF offices in the selected 25 countries for work on implementation of partnership work on programmes, projects and activities relating to UNGEI. The feasibility of the acceleration strategy in terms of national impact has been increased by selecting at least 10 of the fast track countries, with the hope that they will benefit from major new funding under FTI. Work needs to be done by all partners to ensure that reasonable fast track funds are allocated to dealing with barriers affecting girls’ access to and completion of basic education. Secondly resources are required at the country level to facilitate support by UNICEF and partners (agencies, civil society and private sector) to ensure effective and efficient implementation by “accompanying the countries. Increased staffing and improved back up as well as networking will be the key to accelerated implementation and co-ordination of efforts. Thirdly, resources are required for regional level work to provide back up, increased capacity and improved networking services to the acceleration countries. Finally resources are required at the international or global level for an UNGEI Secretariat, as well as for strategic planning, operational guidance, back-up, networking and global knowledge building.

ANNEX 1

LIST OF INITIAL 25 COUNTRIES SELECTED FOR ACCELERATION*

COUNTRY (Girls NER < 70%)	Girl NER (< 40%)	FastTrk Country	Gender Gap> 10%	> 1 Million Out ' school	At Risk HIV/Etc
1. Bangladesh**	83%	Yes	-3%	Yes	
2. Bolivia**	97%	Yes	0%		
3. Burkina Faso	28%	Yes	13%		
4. Congo Dem. Rep.	32%	Yes	1%	Yes	
5. Ethiopia	28%	Yes	6%	Yes	
6. Guinea	41%	Yes	15%		
7. India	64%	Yes	14%	Yes	
8. Nigeria	33%	Yes	5%	Yes	
9. Pakistan	60%	Yes	24%	Yes	
10. Tanzania	48%	Yes	-2%	Yes	
11. Yemen	45%	Yes	31%	Yes	
12. Zambia	66%	Yes	1%		Yes
13. Afghanistan	15%	No	27%	Yes	
14. Benin	57%	No	25%		
15. Bhutan	47%	No	11%		
16. Central Af. Rep.	42%	No	21%		Yes
17. Chad	45%	No	24%		
18. Djibouti	26%	No	9%		
19. Eritrea	37%	No	6%		
20. Malawi	71%	No	-5%		Yes
21. Mali	36%	No	15%		
22. Nepal	60%	No	19%		
23. P. N. G.**	80%	No	8%		
24. Sudan	41%	No	8%	Yes	
25. Turkey**	82%	No	11%		

* Subject to confirmation

** Girls NER is greater than 70% but selected for other reason

Source: The State of the World's Children 2003