

SPENDING BETTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

WHY THE QUALITY OF FINANCING MATTERS FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

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INTRODUCTION

It is crucially important to get every dollar of value from financing for girls' education. Two simple processes, which are increasingly used in many countries, open the door to ensuring value for money at the same time as improving gender equality. These processes are 'gender responsive public expenditure management' and 'cost effectiveness analysis'. This policy note shows how these processes are already generating success in Uganda, and provides some pointers for how best to introduce them.

Girls' education matters. It is a foundation stone of gender equality in society. And it creates economic growth, leads to higher productivity and incomes, and contributes to reducing infant mortality, child marriage, incidence of HIV/AIDS, and malaria. Yet, despite education's clear importance, 129 million girls worldwide remain out of school. The Sustainable Development Goals aim to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys have 12 years of quality education.

To achieve this will require much more funding. Domestic financing for education needs to rise from US\$1.2 trillion to approximately US\$3 trillion per year, and external funding from US\$13.2 billion to around US\$39 billion. Meanwhile, the education community must strive to use limited currently available funds to deliver the best outcomes for girls' education.

During 2019, supported by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Malala Fund and UNICEF set out to explore how financing choices at national level can impact on girls' education, focusing particularly on case studies in Uganda. The research identified two promising tools to

allocate resources equitably, effectively and efficiently for girls' education:

Gender-responsive public expenditure management

This tool recognizes the different impacts of education spending on girls and boys, and reorients spending to redress imbalance, improving gender sensitivity in how funds are allocated and accounted for.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

This tool identifies cost-effective programs and interventions for girls' education.



1.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT (GRPEM)

What is it?

Gender-responsive public expenditure management is an approach to the budgetary process that explicitly includes gender-based assessments and considerations with the goal of promoting gender equality. In education, this approach benefits both girls and boys, as both girls and boys experience specific disadvantages that can be redressed through financing choices. Conversely, a gender-blind approach to public expenditure misses an opportunity to work towards gender equity.

There are some myths about GRPEM, and it is worth saying what it is not to dispense with these myths. It is not an analysis of budget lines exclusively dedicated to women, or an advocacy tool to allocate more funds to these budget lines, or a proposal to separate all budget lines by gender.

GRPEM is carried out by applying a series of steps and tools along each of the stages of the budget cycle. At the preparation stage gender issues are identified using gender disaggregated data; at the budget discussion stage work is done to get gender included; and at the budget execution stage public expenditure is tracked with gender awareness, generating information for the new cycle to start.

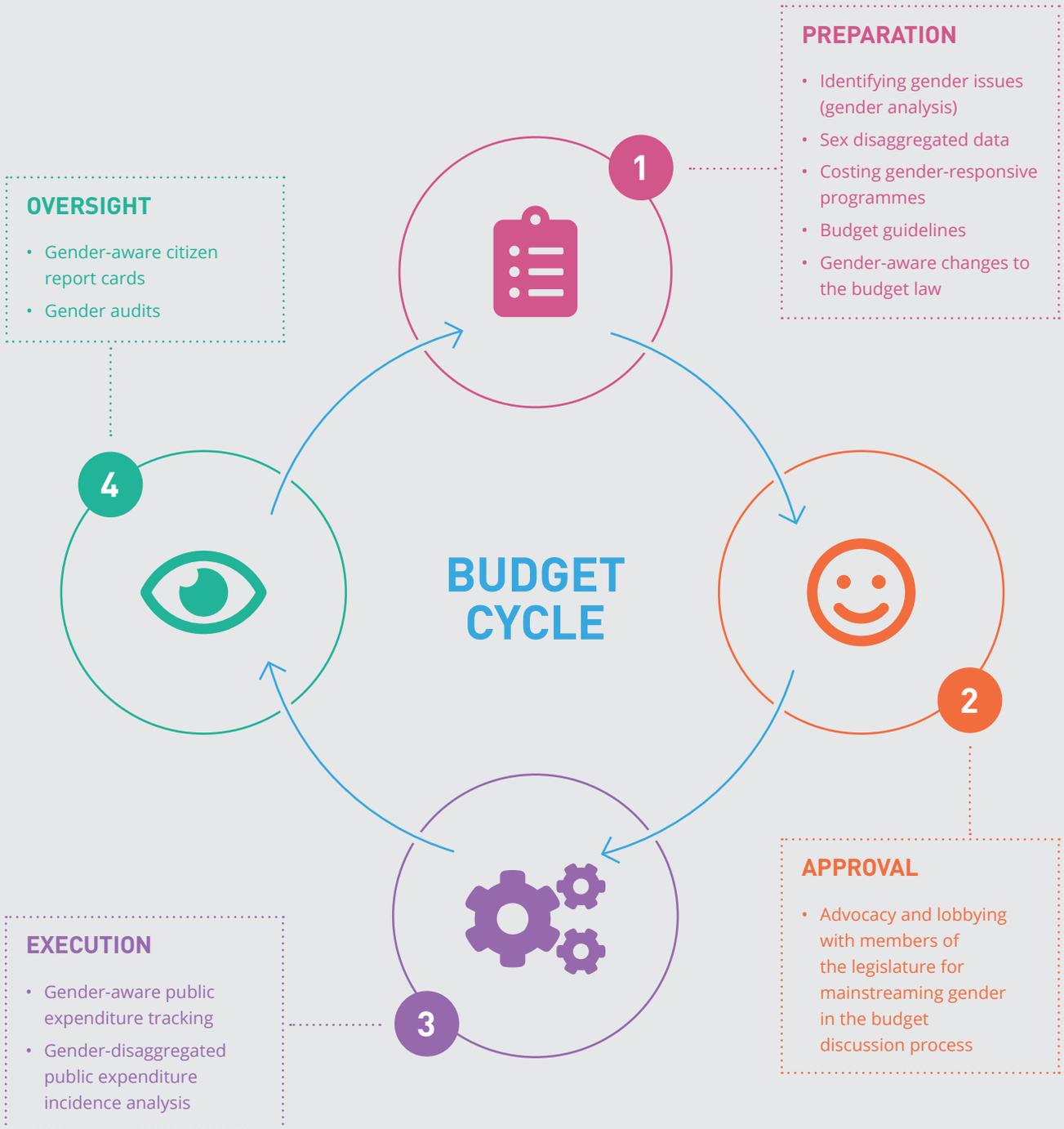
There are some elements that need to be in place to implement GRPEM: these include sufficient technical capacity, sufficient gender-disaggregated data, and because it needs the involvement of a number of government departments, sufficient political will.

GRPEM is already being implemented. A recent review by the IMF found prominent GRPEM initiatives in 23 countries around the world, including Afghanistan, Bolivia, Mexico, Morocco, Rwanda and Uganda.



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FIGURE 1: GRPEM ACROSS THE BUDGET CYCLE

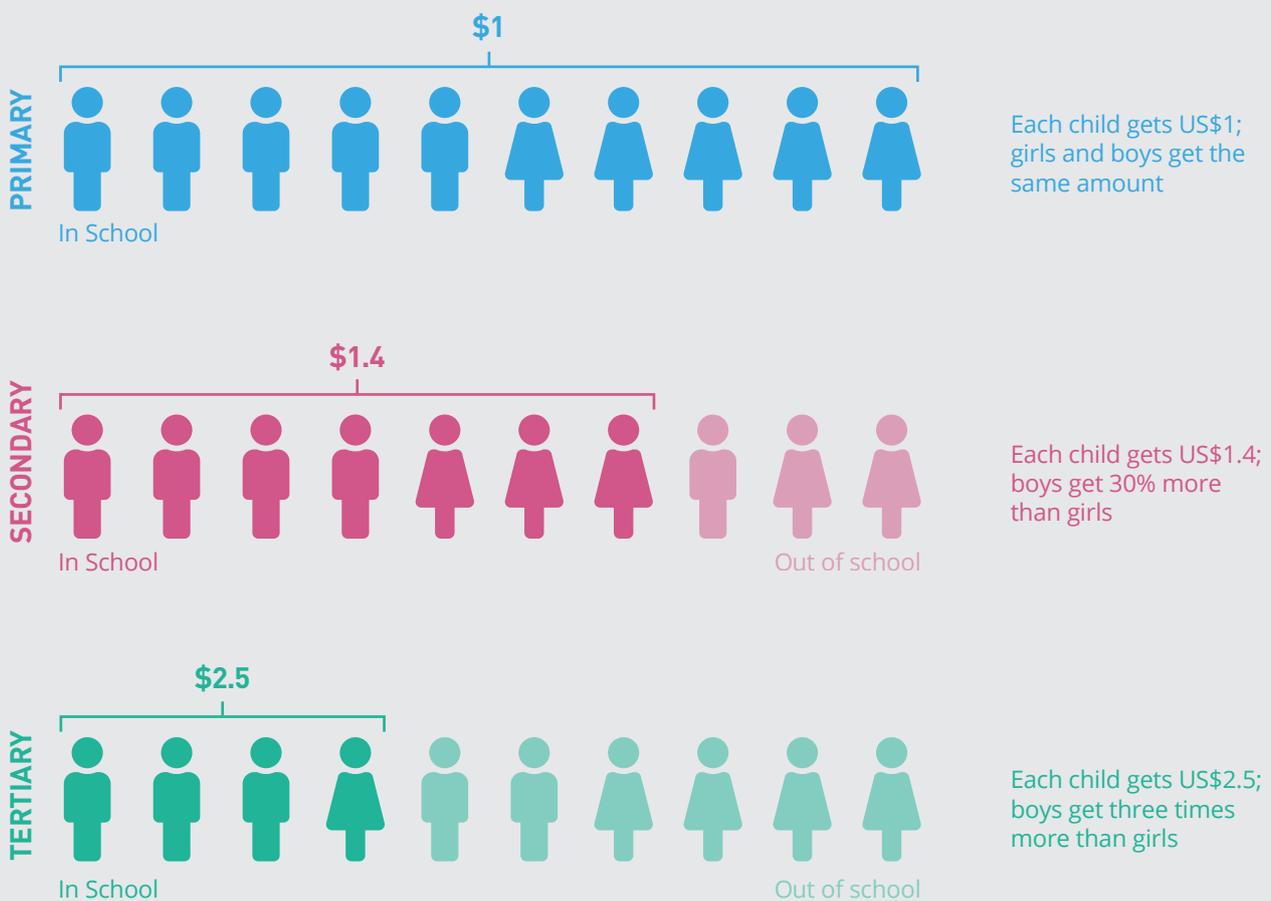


Why do it?

Public expenditure impacts are often different and unequal between women and men, or girls and boys. For example, in many contexts, boys average more years in school than girls - yet expenditure is often allocated on a simple per-pupil basis. This means that over time, as girls drop out of the system, boys will benefit disproportionately from each dollar spent.

FIGURE 2: UNDER A PER-PUPIL FUNDING FORMULA, AS GIRLS DROP OUT, BOYS BENEFIT MORE FROM EACH DOLLAR SPENT

If US\$10 is spent on each grade:



Source: Author

Uganda's experience of GRPEM

Evaluations have shown that in Uganda, GRPEM has spurred government effort to reduce gender inequalities, and gender budgeting has had positive impacts in access to education and health. (The same studies show similar results in Rwanda). The GRPEM process led to the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) securing funding for an ethical code of conduct for teachers, a violence-reduction component within the new National Teacher Policy program, and a gender-responsive pedagogy (teaching and learning process) component in some career training programs.

The manner of implementation of GRPEM was important and depended on factors both internal and external to the MoES.

Internal to the MoES	External to the MoES
A dedicated gender unit, which participates in working groups across the ministry	Gender-responsiveness focus within the Public Finance Management Act of 2015
Technical and political support for the gender unit from the planning department, which prepares the budget request in the MoES	Technical support from parliament, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC)
Political support from the permanent secretary in the MoES	Financial and technical support from development partners

The implementation of GRPEM was reinforced by the Public Finance Management Act of 2015. The law requires all government agencies to seek a gender-certificate on their budget proposal from the EOC, before it is discussed by parliament.

Gender equality champions in key decision-making and implementation positions– such as the chair of the Human Rights Committee and the Deputy Speaker - were crucial in getting to this point, and in Uganda they happened to be women, although this is not essential. Development partners also played a key role in building capacity, for example by initially funding the gender unit in the MoES – although the government has now taken over this funding, ensuring its sustainability and reflecting its success.

The success of the process relied on both the internal strengths of the MoES, and the support of others, in particular the MoF. Work in the different areas of government overlapped through the budget process, which allowed collaboration between key champions in different departments and ministries to snowball and create great impact.

To build on the success and go further in GRPEM, Uganda might consider improving collection and use of gender-disaggregated data, publishing more financial information to enable expenditure monitoring, and building capacity in gender offices at district level to enable monitoring of local programs.

2.

COST EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS (CEA)

What is it?

Cost effectiveness analysis is the assessment of the relation of cost to results of different programs. CEA allows us to summarize a program, using a ratio of effectiveness to costs, facilitating the comparison between different program alternatives. The cost of a program reflects the value of all the ingredients required for its implementation, including materials and implementing workers' time. Effectiveness measures (in education) might include improvements in access (enrollment or attendance) and improvements in quality (learning outcomes). Some of the main education outcomes such as enrollment, attendance and learning can be expressed in terms of equivalent increase in years of schooling. However, others such as empowerment, safety of children and the gender-responsiveness of our programs cannot, making it harder to draw direct comparisons between them.

Gender considerations can be addressed in CEA by collecting gender-disaggregated impact data and thus identifying differential impacts of program on girls and boys, or women and men. This information can then be used to identify program interventions that advance gender equity goals. These need not be girl-focused in nature.

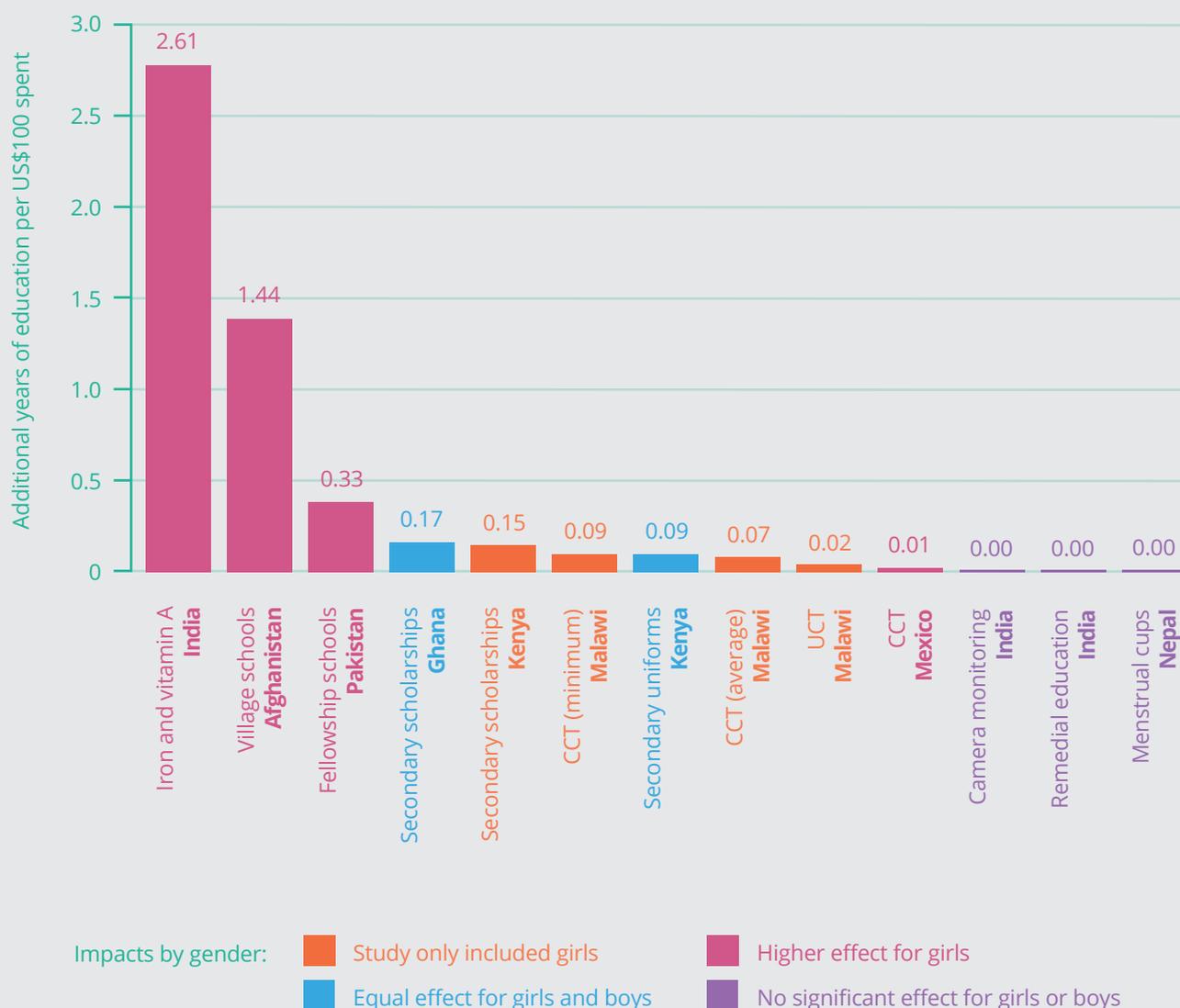
In recent years, CEA has increased in education programs by governments, civil society organizations (CSOs) and universities. For example, in 2012 FCDO issued its first report on the cost drivers of their education programming, and in 2017 it conducted a cost monitoring in the final evaluation of programs funded by the Girls' Education Challenge.

Why do it?

While more finance is needed for education, the immediate challenge for education planners is how to use the limited resources at their disposal to the best effect— especially as education for the most marginalized girls can require complex, often costly program responses. If comparable methods are used, CEA can be used to compare programs evaluated in different contexts and in different years. It must be noted, however, that comparing the cost-effectiveness of a pilot program with programs at scale can be complicated, as costs are likely to change.

Existing CEA analysis has helped identify cost-effective program elements that deliver more additional years of education for girls than boys. This includes improving girls' health through iron supplements and vitamin A, and developing community schools to decrease distance travelled, with around 2.6 and 1.4 additional years of schooling per \$100 spent respectively.

FIGURE 3: COST EFFECTIVENESS AND RELATIVE IMPACTS BY GENDER FOR SELECTED PROGRAMMES



Source: Author calculation based on Jameel Poverty Action Lab (2017).

There is limited CEA evidence around some important programming alternatives for girls' education, in areas such as menstrual-hygiene management, preventing violence in school, gender-responsive pedagogy and gender-responsive curriculum reforms.

To implement CEA more widely, more cost data needs to be made publicly available. This requires a cost-capture plan before a program is implemented. If costs are estimated afterwards, the estimates are subject to recollection bias. One way to do this is via development partners' monitoring frameworks.

CEA in Uganda

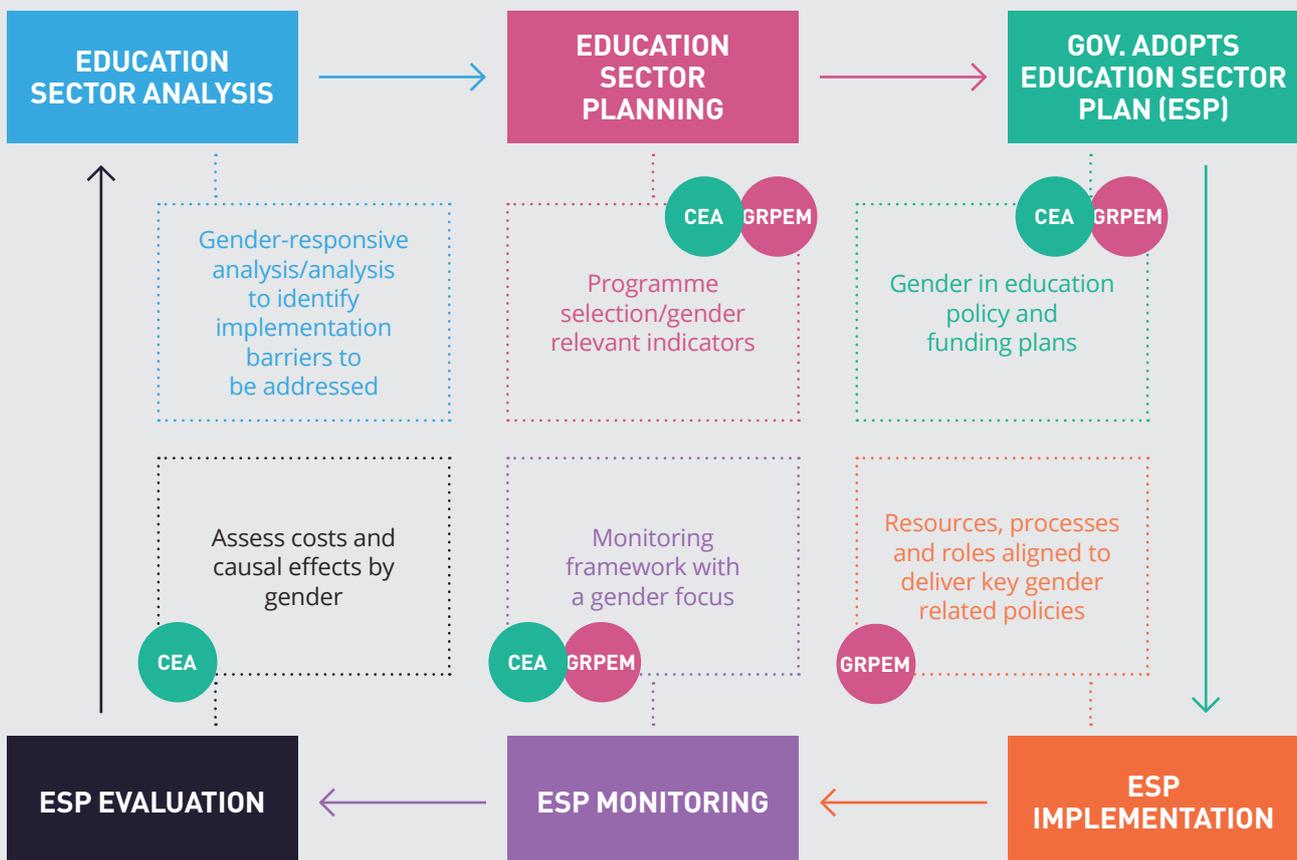
CEA has been used in Uganda to advocate for scale-up of the Good School Toolkit (GST), a program for violence reduction in schools, developed by CSO Raising Voices. Violence in schools is a significant issue in Uganda and the region, impacting school participation, learning levels and completion rates. Both girls and boys can be victims or perpetrators, although the extent and forms of violence experienced are different. Thus, the GST incorporates elements tailored specifically to girls and to boys.

Pilot programs have demonstrated that the GST toolkit is effective, reducing violence in schools at a cost of US\$15 per student per year. This cost is a barrier to scale-up for the MoES. However, for this research project, a road map to scale up the program was built, assessing how its components matched existing MoES processes. For example, materials could be distributed through the existing public procurement process, and training could be incorporated into existing teacher training. Through these and other cost-savings, the estimated cost was brought down to US\$5 per child per year – a significant reduction.

Putting it all together

GRPEM and CEA can, of course, be used separately. But they are most effective when they are used in tandem, complementing each other, at different stages of the education sector planning process. How this can work is illustrated in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4: GRPEM AND CEA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING



3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments should:

- Consider using both GRPEM and CEA in education, as tools which can improve gender equality.
- Identify ways to use the two tools together, in ways that complement each other.
- Support gender-responsiveness in domestic financing of education, rather than solely in education programs funded by development aid.
- Work with development partners to get the basic elements in place, such as the relevant data collection processes or technical capacity building.

Development partners should:

- Promote GRPEM and CEA for gender equity in education in national and global forums.
- Provide technical assistance to build country capacity on GRPEM and CEA at national and sub-national levels, aligning with GRESP processes where relevant.
- Commit to collect and publishing detailed cost data for girls' education intervention with an agreed methodological approach across development partners.

On GRPEM

- Incorporate successful GRPEM components into Ministry of Education structures.
- Work to build political will for GRPEM across ministries, for example by nurturing and supporting GRPEM champions in the Finance and Education Ministries and Parliament, using opportune moments to raise awareness of GRPEM, and building co-operation with CSOs (who may raise awareness through tools such as gender-aware citizen report cards).

- Build technical capacity for GRPEM, but be aware that this is not enough without political will.
- Strengthen the collection of gender-disaggregated data.

Using cost-effectiveness analysis

- Support generation of evidence on cost and effectiveness of programs for girls' education, particularly in areas where there are few or no high quality studies.
- Use approaches to CEA that enable comparison between different programs.
- Record program costs using a system developed before the program starts - which for some programs may include incorporation into monitoring tools.
- Consider working with local CSOs, which can have a key role in piloting initiatives and testing their cost effectiveness, and may be best able to reach the most marginalized girls.
- Assess the potential to scale up successful pilot programs, remembering that the cost per participant can be significantly reduced at scale.

This policy note is a product of the research carried out for the main report:

Colin-Pescina, Jorge U., Fry, Lucia and Fyles, Nora. 2021. "Better spending for gender equality in education" New York City, NY: United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and Malala Fund.

References drawn on in the policy note can be found in the main research report at <https://better-spending.ungei.org>



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