

## EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

2022 started on high energy for the Gender at the Centre Initiative. In this newsletter, we are happy to share the results that have been achieved through GCI in this first half of the year.

As girls and women's rights continue to be threatened worldwide, many of our GCI partner countries face additional challenges due to political instability, climate change and the impact of the Ukrainian crisis. Despite these challenges, GCI countries have shown commitment and perseverance to advancing gender equality in and through education.

After two long years of online meetings, the GCI Alliance was finally able to come together again. During the [Annual Alliance Meeting](#) in Dakar, GCI partners reviewed the progress made so far, discussed action plans for the coming year and reflected on the future of GCI. The meeting showed the uniqueness of the GCI approach and the strength of its partnership, including with Ministries of Education, and participants agreed on the need for the initiative to continue its important work to promote gender equality from a holistic perspective. As one Alliance member stated: "We are building a movement for gender equality, and it is only getting stronger."

In partnership with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, GCI organized a [landmark meeting on Gender Transformative Leadership in Education](#) in May. During 3 days, Ministers of Education and Permanent Secretaries from the GCI countries and five additional African countries reflected on their role as champions for gender equality. The meeting resulted in the [Freetown Manifesto](#), a strong and clear commitment by the Ministers of Education to use their leadership to push the needle on gender equality in education. The GCI countries now form a coalition of gender champions that will take forward their message, including at the UN Secretary General Transforming Education Summit in September in New York.

At the country level IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI organized a series of activities to foster capacity and commitment to gender-responsive education sector planning. In Nigeria IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI delivered a joint workshop for mid-level MoE staff on Gender Transformative Leadership and Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning. In Mozambique IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI organized two consecutive coordinated workshops on Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning and response strategies for School-Related Gender-Based Violence for MoE staff. IIEP organized a workshop in Burkina Faso to finalize the Participatory Gender Diagnostic, and a visit to the Mbera camp in Mauritania to collect data on the challenges of gender integration in education in crisis settings. Meanwhile, the first lusophone edition of the short course on gender-responsive education planning was launched.

GCI also continued its work on advocacy, community outreach, research and gender analysis. We encourage you to take some time to read through this issue's contents, which focuses on GCI's results and achievements in this first half of 2022 and draws attention to our planned activities for the rest of the year. We are grateful for everything we have achieved together so far, and excited about our plans to continue to fight for gender equality in and through education.

Thank you for your energy, commitment and solidarity.



**Eline Versluys,**  
GCI Lead, UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)



**Fabricia Devignes,**  
Program Manager, International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO)

# RESULTS & UPDATES

**Outcome 1: Improved gender equality mainstreaming in and through education led and implemented by Ministries of Education in conjunction with other relevant ministries.**

## GCI Alliance Annual Board Meeting

The 2022 GCI Alliance Annual Board Meeting was held in Dakar from 29 - 31 March. 80 GCI Alliance members and Ministry of Education officials from the eight GCI partner countries attended. Strategic partners were also invited to participate in the GCI Partners' Day on 31 March.

GCI Alliance Members and Partners discussed the results achieved by GCI in 2021, identified and shared priorities for 2022 and 2023, and reflected on how to strengthen the GCI partnership. Stakeholders also discussed strategic directions for the future of GCI beyond 2023, in addition to visibility and support for GCI at the national, regional and global levels.



Participants in the Alliance Board meeting

## Training in Gender-Sensitive Education Planning and Transformative Leadership in Nigeria

UNGEI and IIEP organized a training in Gender-Sensitive Education Planning and Transformative Leadership in Abuja, Nigeria from 4-7 April 2022. The Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality in Education course aimed to build the capacity of 20 senior staff, mid-level staff, and staff of Gender Units within the Nigerian state and federal ministries of education. Participants included permanent secretaries, directors, deputy directors, senior education officers and gender desk officers.



Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba the Minister of State for Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria during the launch event of the GCI in Nigeria

The Transformative Leadership course supported participants to strengthen their commitment, capacity and confidence to lead for gender equality in and through education. At the end of the programme, participants shared a heightened desire to build alliances with community stakeholders to promote gender equality in and through education in Nigeria, and reported an increased understanding of Transformative Leadership principles and practice.

The training also covered Gender Responsive Educational Planning sessions in the framework of this second component. Through these sessions participants analyzed their own policies and programmes and discussed alternatives for further mainstreaming gender into policy design.

**“The presentations were hands-on, interactive and collaborative. The teaching raised deep, thoughtful questions about gender and power”.**

Dr. Hyginus Eze, Secretary of the Enugu State Universal Education Board, Nigeria

The Training in Gender-Sensitive Education Planning and Transformative Leadership in Nigeria has been accompanied by the official launch event of GCI in Nigeria. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba the Federal Minister of State for Education officially inaugurated GCI in Nigeria and said the following: « I would like to thank all our Development Partners, especially UNGEI, IIEP, UNESCO and UNICEF for always standing by us and putting the education and well-being of our children in the front burner and to also assure them of the Ministry's support and unwavering commitment for this great initiative ».

## High-Level Gender Transformative Leadership Meeting for Ministers of Education and launch of the Freetown Manifesto in Sierra Leone

From 18 - 20 May 2022, UNGEI, the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Education and UNICEF Sierra Leone organized a [high-level meeting on Gender Transformative Leadership for Ministers of Education in Freetown](#). Participants included education ministers, permanent secretaries and directors from 13 African Countries. Through this meeting, and with the support of IIEP, the Freetown Manifesto was developed, a series of 4 national policy interventions to advance girls' education and gender equality in and through education. It is the only collective action agenda developed by Ministries of Education, with civil society, this year. The Freetown Manifesto was presented by the Ministers of Education of Niger and Sierra Leone at the Transforming Education Pre-Summit in Paris in June, and will be highlighted at the Transforming Education Summit in September.

[The Freetown Manifesto](#) actions include strengthening gender mainstreaming within Education Sector Plans, processes and budgets; increasing participatory, citizen-inclusive data gathering from households to better understand how intersectional gender norms and other forms of marginalization are keeping children out of school; providing alternative learning and safe spaces for girls in conflict and emergency settings; and growing multi-sectoral efforts and partnerships to build effective links between education and formal workforce employment, particularly for girls and young women. The Freetown Manifesto is not only about action, but leadership itself. Through the manifesto, Ministers acknowledge the harmful,



Young Feminist Activists with David Moinina Sengeh, Minister of Education, Sierra Leone at the Transformative Leadership Meeting.

internalized gender norms and biases inherent to patriarchal societies. They acknowledge the need to transform not only their education systems, pedagogies and institutions for gender equality, but also their own mindsets, attitudes and beliefs, in order to lead the way towards gender transformative education.

During this meeting, David Moinina Sengeh, Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, with support from Plan International, officially launched the Youth Advisory Group. The YAG will support [“all major decisions being made about education in Sierra Leone and will serve as an important accountability mechanism within the ministry.”](#) In the spirit of intergenerational dialogue, young feminist activists from NGOs, Plan International, Restless Development, and Purposeful joined the three-day meeting to highlight the persistent challenges for girls' education and gender equality in Sierra Leone. These included FGM, period poverty, and a lack of comprehensive sexuality education.

**“We want to work with you as co-leaders in creating a gender-transformative education that creates the Africa we want, the Africa we deserve.”**

Kadiatu, young feminist activist, Sierra Leone



Leaders come together during the high-level meeting on Gender Transformative Leadership for Ministers of Education, permanent secretaries and directors in Freetown.



Participants to the training on Gender-Responsive Education Planning in Maputo, Mozambique.

### **Training on Gender-responsive Education Planning and School-Related Gender-Based Violence for MoE gender focal points and coordinators in Mozambique**

IIEP and UNGEI organized a two-part training for Mozambique's Ministry of Education and Human Development staff. The participants included 11 gender coordinators from the provincial level and 26 central units gender focal points.

The first training was organized by IIEP and focused on gender-responsive education planning. The training took place between the 14th and the 18th of March in Maputo, Mozambique.

At the end of the training, participants were able to review Mozambique's ESP and its components that explicitly address gender inequalities and analyze related policies and strategies to address gender inequalities in educational opportunities.

From 6 - 10 June, UNGEI organized a training on School-Related Gender-Based Violence for Education Planners in Ponta de Ouro, Mozambique. The training targeted the same participants as the one on gender-responsive educational planning and built on the previous training's results. Participants engaged in productive discussions and experience sharing on SRGBV. They also discussed how to strengthen multi-sectoral partnerships in the fight against SRGBV.

**“With this training on SRGBV, we discussed the link between cultural issues and harmful gender norms. I learned positive strategies that can be used in my institution, in my daily life and pedagogical practices to deal with GBV.”**

Edna Umbelina Langa Saúde, Gender Coordinator, Maputo Provincial Education Directorate, Ministry of Education and Human Development, Mozambique

### **SWOT-Analysis on Gender Mainstreaming in Education Sector Planning**

UNGEI, with support from Cambridge Education, conducted an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for mainstreaming gender equality in education sector analysis and planning in the 8 GCI countries. Based on a literature review and key informant interviews in each country, a political economy analysis (PEA) was conducted about the systemic enablers and barriers to mainstreaming gender equality approaches. In parallel, a gender expertise mapping was undertaken to identify where gender expertise is located in each country. In September, the research report will be presented, containing good practices and recommendations for improving gender mainstreaming and meaningful consultation in future planning processes.

### **Final Workshop on the Gender Participatory Diagnostic in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

On 13 June, the final workshop of the Gender Participatory Diagnostic of the Ministry of Education of Burkina Faso (MENAPLN) was held in Ouagadougou. 45 participants, from different services of the Ministry and from partner organizations, including civil society, took part in discussions on the methodology, the conclusions and the recommendations of the report. IIEP-UNESCO was there to present the purpose of this work and to follow-up with the MENAPLN on the next steps on this report. The delegation also met technical and financial partners in Burkina Faso during this mission.



Participants in the final workshop of the Gender Participatory Diagnostic of the Ministry of Education of Burkina Faso.

## Field Mission to Mbera Refugee Camp for a Study on Gender and Education in Emergency Settings

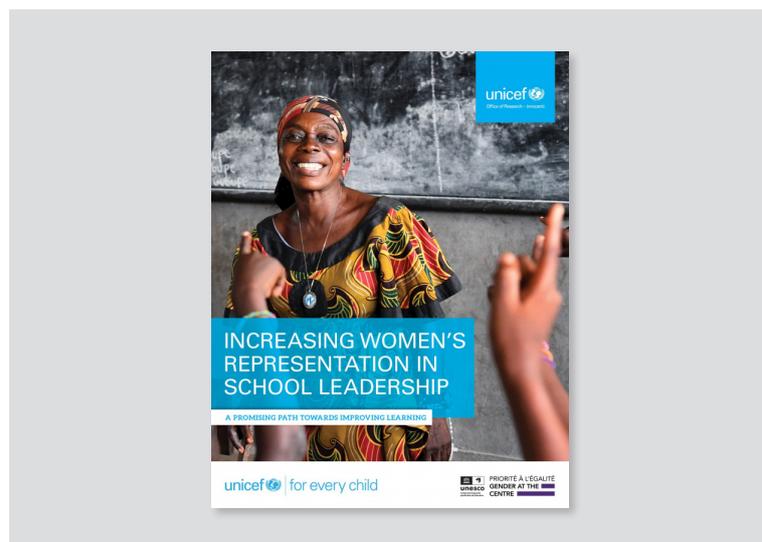
From 20-24 June, a delegation from IIEP-UNESCO Dakar visited the Malian refugee camp of Mbera, Mauritania, as part of a research mission on gender dynamics in refugee education. The research team met with key actors involved in education in the camp and participated in World Refugee Day celebrations. Refugee girls face a unique intersection of barriers to obtaining an education, due to their gender and displacement status. In the camp, gender gaps in education widen in the transition from primary to secondary school, and increase further in access to higher education. There are only two women teachers out of 34 at the secondary level. To date, there is very little work on the barriers and challenges to gender equality and their impacts on education. The interviews conducted in the field will be the subject of an analysis that will be published in the fall of 2022.

## Launch of the Lusophone edition of the Short Course on Gender-Responsive Education Planning and of the call for Applications to the Second Francophone Edition

IIEP-UNESCO Dakar regularly offers a high-level online course on gender-responsive educational planning for African countries. The aim is to provide participants with the skills to integrate gender into all stages of educational planning, taking into account the multidimensional factors that perpetuate gender inequalities in and through education. After the French edition in 2020 and the English edition in 2021, the first edition in Portuguese started on 4 May and will continue until 26 July 2022. 55 education managers and officers from the five Portuguese-speaking African countries (Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe) are participating in this edition.

IIEP-UNESCO Dakar is also launching a [new Francophone edition of its Short Course on Gender Responsive Educational Planning](#). [The training is aimed at national executives and managers from ministries of education involved in the formulation, planning](#) and implementation of education policies and plans, working at central and decentralized levels. It is also open to specialists from related fields (e.g. finance, health) as well as from civil society and development, research and training institutes.

## Launch of the Evidence Brief on Women's representation in school leadership



Evidence Brief for Increasing Women's Representation in School Leadership.

As part of the workstream on female leadership in education, IIEP-UNESCO Dakar together with UNICEF-Innocenti launched in March an [Evidence Brief](#) that compiles emerging evidence on female representation in school leadership and its impact on education outcomes. This research piece is part of a growing portfolio, including a multi-country analysis for francophone Africa to be published in the fall; several in-depth country-level policy analyses; and an accompanying agenda for the design, development and implementation of interventions to improve female representation in school leadership in GCI countries

## Sierra Leone 2022-2025 Education Sector Plan

GCI continued supporting the government of Sierra Leone to finalize its 2022-2026 Education Sector Plan. In this framework, IIEP supported the costing of the ESP with a strong gender dimension. The ESP was finalized in June, incorporating recommendations from the independent appraisal sanctioned by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), with the appraiser declaring the finalized plan as 'credible'. Through this process, the gender technical capacities of the ESP national team, composed of more than twenty-five MBSSE and Minister of Higher and Technical Education (MTHE) staff, were strengthened (Desk officers, education officers, directors, deputy directors).

# WHAT'S COMING UP?

- In November, UNGEI will deliver a Gender Transformative Leadership Training for MoE staff in Francophone GCI partner countries. The training will be held in Dakar.
- In collaboration with Plan Niger, UNGEI will pilot a play-based curriculum to transform gender stereotypes in classrooms in Niger.
- In September, IIEP-UNESCO will launch a new Francophone edition of the Short Course on Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning.
- In October, IIEP-UNESCO will deliver tailored training on gender-responsive data collection and education planning in Sierra Leone.
- The IIEP GCI and Research and Development team are currently developing, following the MoE's requests, two studies on Factors associated with girls' school drop-out in Sierra Leone and Mozambique. UNGEI will

**Outcome 2: Improved education sector enabling environment in support of MoE efforts in gender equality mainstreaming in and through education.**

## **Civil society initiatives in support of MoE's efforts in gender equality mainstreaming in and through education**

In Sierra Leone, CSO Consortium member Plan International contributed to the development of the 2022-2026 Educational Sector Plan, led by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. Key focus of this process, amongst others, was to ensure a gender-responsive school environment, in addition to enhancing a gender-sensitive school curriculum. As the lead of the CSO consortium in Sierra Leone, Plan International participated in the National Consultation and led a group to address the gender gaps that were identified by the CSOs. Based on these gaps, CSOs made recommendations to the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to ensure the gender issues identified in the first draft were addressed. The recommendations were successfully adopted by the Ministry.

As part of the Global Week of Action for Education, which was celebrated worldwide from 25 - 29 April 2022 on the theme of Education in Emergencies, CSO Consortium member ANCEFA organized a policy dialogue held online on April 28, 2022. Through this dialogue, ANCEFA and its coalitions called on policy makers to protect education in emergencies now and to adopt an inclusive and gender-sensitive approach to emergency response planning and budgeting. This activity contributes to the achievement of GCI's goals. A documentary film was developed to support the advocacy efforts of ANCEFA and its members.

## **Gender Equality in Education Snapshot (GES) Toolkit pilot**

UNGEI has started piloting the [Gender Equality in Education Snapshot \(GES\) Toolkit](#) in Mali and Chad. The GES Tool offers a user-friendly and rapid way to visualize the status of gender equality in the education system and beyond. The pilot includes using the toolkit with the Local Education Group and the Ministry of Education to carry out a joint rapid assessment of gender equality in and through education, and to foster a dialogue among education stakeholders on the state of gender equality in education in the country.

# WHAT'S COMING UP?

- produce Gender Equality in Education Snapshots for the 8 GCI countries, and will work with the Local Education Groups in Sierra Leone and Nigeria to pilot the GES Toolkit and organize workshops to discuss assessment results.
- UNGEI will conduct the second phase of the girls' education and social norms research, with a mixed-method field research on the social determinants of girls' education in Sierra Leone.
- UNGEI will develop Local Education Group (LEG) Annual Reports, summarizing initiatives to promote gender equality in education for each of the GCI countries.
- UNGEI will organize two learning webinars for CSOs to share good practices on gender and education as a result of the campaign activities they are implementing;
- UNGEI will support CSOs (ANCEFA, Plan International, FAWE) in each GCI partner country to organize the following workshops:
  - **Mali:** Strengthening capacity to advocate for the inclusion of girls' education strategies in the Programme de Développement Économique, Social et Culturel (Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Program [PDESC]), a planning document for municipalities in Mali.
  - **Mauritania:** Gender mainstreaming in public education strategies; Advocacy and communication techniques for girls' inclusion in education;
  - **In Mozambique:** Influence of Policies in the Education sector with a focus on Gender and Inclusion;
  - **In Niger:** Training of Ministry of Education officials, civil society actors and youth organizations on gender and education.
  - **In Burkina Faso:** Development of two training and sensitization modules on girls' education in emergency situations; Use these modules to train CSO actors on girls' education in emergency situations.
  - **In Chad:** Political advocacy and capacity building on girls' enrollment and retention in schools, universities and vocational training in the pilot intervention zones.
  - **In Nigeria:** Capacity Building of CSOs and government partners on implementing, tracking, reviewing and reporting on progress made on the implementation of ESP in Adamawa and Sokoto States.
  - **In Sierra Leone:** Training of CSO on advocacy, monitor ESP / track budget spending on girl's education and how to collect gender data.

Launch of the [Freetown Manifesto for Gender Transformative Leadership in Education](#)

## EVENTS

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**19 September 2022**

[Transforming Education Summit](#)

*New York, USA*

### PAST EVENTS

**4 - 8 April 2022**

[Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality](#)

*Abuja, Nigeria*

**29 - 31 March 2022**

[2022 GCI Alliance Annual Board Meeting](#)

*Dakar, Senegal*

**15 June 2022**

[Girls' Education: Counting the Uncounted, NORRAG](#)

*Virtual*

**18 - 20 May 2022**

[High-level meeting on Gender-Transformative Leadership in Education](#)

*Freetown, Sierra Leone*

**22 June 2022**

[GCI session on the Impact of Gender Stereotypes in Schools, European Development Day](#)

*Brussels, Belgium*

**22 June 2022**

[AU-CIEFFA Expert Meeting on Learning Losses and Recovery for Girls](#)

**28 - 30 June 2022**

[Transforming Education Pre Summit](#)

*Paris, France*



The Transforming Education Summit.



High-level meeting on Gender Transformative Leadership in Education, Freetown, Sierra Leone.



Participants at the 2022 GCI Alliance Annual Board Meeting Dakar, Senegal.

# RESOURCES & PUBLICATIONS

## GUIDANCE, BRIEFS AND TOOLS

[New Gender at the Centre Initiative Briefing Note](#)  
(UNGEI and IIEP-UNESCO)

[Generating new knowledge on women's leadership in education](#)  
(IIEP-UNESCO and UNICEF Innocenti)

## REPORTS AND STUDIES

[Education in Africa: 5 Priorities](#)  
(IIEP-UNESCO Africa office)

[EiE-GenKit: A Core Resource Package on Education in Emergencies](#) - now available in Arabic!  
(UNGEI, INEE, ECW)

[Social norms and girls' education: A study of eight sub-Saharan African countries](#). GCI Policy Paper. Available in English, French and Portuguese.  
(UNGEI)

## BLOGS AND NEWS

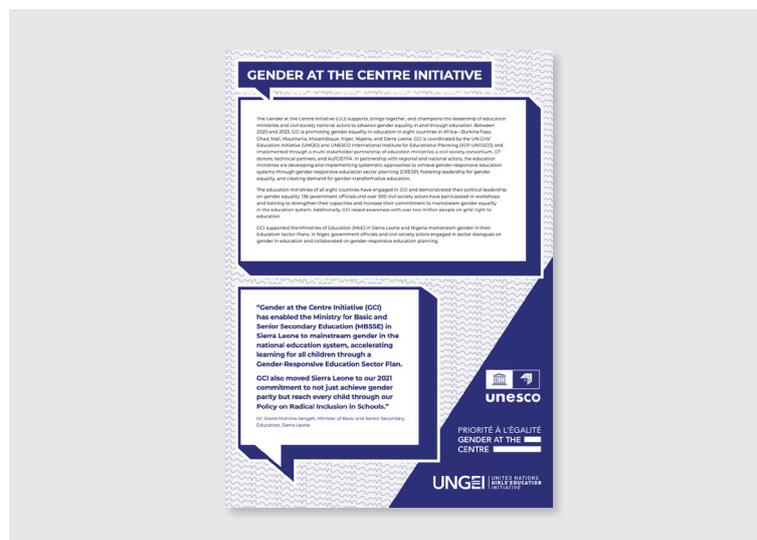
[Education planners share what being gender-responsive means in eye-opening short-course](#)  
(IIEP-UNESCO Africa office)

[International Women's day : IIEP supports gender equality in and through education](#)  
(IIEP-UNESCO Africa office)

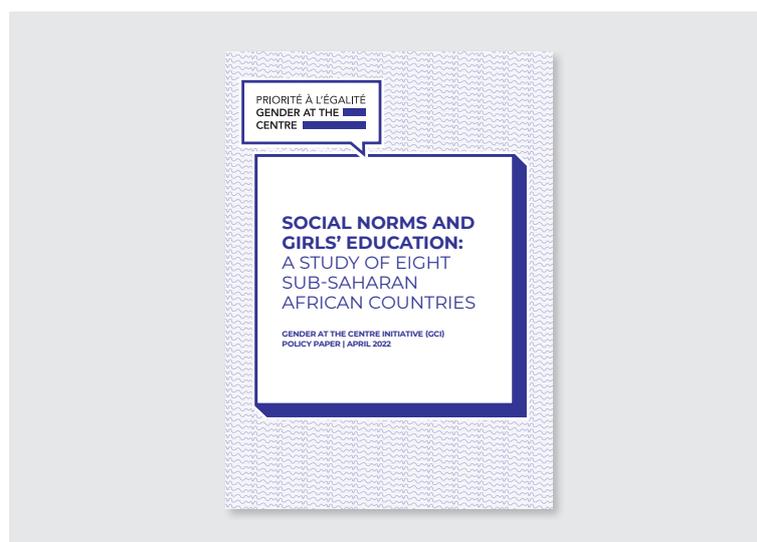
[Stand up and join the fight to end FGM and advance girls' education](#)  
(UNGEI)

["Girls' rights don't come on a silver platter, we need to keep fighting for it!"](#)  
(UNGEI)

[SRGBV training for Ministry of Education education staff in Mozambique](#)  
(UNGEI)



The new Gender at the Centre Initiative Briefing Note.



Social norms and girls' education: A study of eight sub-Saharan African countries.



Blog on short course on gender-responsive education planning

PRIORITÉ À L'ÉGALITÉ  
GENDER AT THE CENTRE

For more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to [eversluys@ungei.org](mailto:eversluys@ungei.org) and [c.giraud@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:c.giraud@iiep.unesco.org).

[Gender at the Centre Initiative \(UNGEI\)](#)

[Gender at the Centre Initiative \(IIEP-UNESCO Dakar\)](#)