

How is gender equality included in education sector planning?

An analysis of power, voice and social change in 8 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa

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List of Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GCI	Gender at the Centre Initiative
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEG	Local Education Group
MEPT	Movimento De Educaco Para Todos
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
RISE	Research on Improving Systems of Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Executive Summary

Despite significant progress in addressing gender disparities in education globally, girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are still furthest behind when it comes to education access and achievement. According to UNESCO/UIS data, 9 million girls in Sub-Saharan Africa between the ages of 6 and 11 will never go to school, compared to 6 million boys. Additionally, girls face the dire consequences of harmful gender norms in the form of gender-based violence, gender-biased teaching methods and lack of support from parents and communities. Boys also suffer from restrictive notions of masculinity which link in harmful ways to violence and control. To address these challenges, education systems need to integrate gender equality right from the start: through education sector planning.

Education sector planning can be both a force and a barrier to gender equality. Restrictive gender norms can become embedded and reinforced through education sector plans. On the other hand, gender-responsive education sector planning can lay a strong foundation for education systems to actively promote gender equality. This study examines how gender equality is integrated in education sector planning in 8 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It provides a unique look into the politics and power dynamics of education planning processes, and the opportunities to meaningfully integrate gender equality in the education sector.

The 8 countries in the study (Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Niger and Sierra Leone) are part of the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI). GCI leverages the leadership of Ministries of Education to develop gender-transformative education systems and build inclusive national and regional movements for gender equality. Based on interviews with actors from Ministries of Education, civil society and technical partners, the study examines education sector planning processes in each of the 8 countries. The conceptual model builds on existing gender transformative frameworks and uses four main themes: Political Economy, Relationships, Voice and Society. The analysis considers both the interactions between actors in planning processes and the content discussed within planning.

Within the area of Political Economy, the study demonstrates that while high-level gender equality policies exist, these often lack the support of tangible resources and expertise to translate policies into practice. There is also a lack of coherent and bottom-up accountability systems that use comprehensive data on gender equality.

The critical lens of relationships and power reveals how collective power is exercised by strong eco-systems of civil society networks and partners who are committed to driving progress on gender equality. However, while examples of planning directorates giving 'power to' wider bodies exist, these remain the exception. In most cases, planning directorates maintain their power by creating tightly controlled, "by invitation only" spaces in which only some voices can truly speak out.

The examination of 'Voice' considers how and where the voices of gender experts, young people and communities are involved in planning processes. Analysis shows that gender advisory roles in ministries are usually junior and filled by women, who are operating in deeply patriarchal environments that limit their influence in planning exercises. Gender experts that sit outside of ministries are seen to play a valuable role in the provision of technical support, though they are also constrained in how they can influence planning processes. Although there are some examples of good broader consultation exercises, results show that young people and communities are given a limited platform and are not supported consistently to influence the planning efforts that directly affect them.

The analysis in the section on "Society" reveals how social norms are considered in planning processes and how resistance to gender equality manifests. Restrictive social and gender norms are widely acknowledged as playing a vital role in girls' educational exclusion, yet in planning exercises these issues are rarely given sufficient attention. Results from interviews show that this is compounded by the inconsistent involvement in planning spaces of key norm holders, such as religious and traditional leaders. Resistance to efforts to address gender equality in education planning processes is noted in various forms across the studies. Examples cited include misunderstanding of the concept of gender, dismissal of the need for gender expertise or allowing non-gender experts to fulfil the role, denial of issues such as the prevalence of male violence in around schools, blocking techniques such as silencing gender expertise in planning, and stalling tactics on approving key policies that would contribute to safer spaces for women and girls. These techniques need to be captured and analysed to understand if they are systemic blockers to progress that require deep work to shift or could be resolved through strategies such as training or technical support.

The strengths and opportunities found through this study must be built on to make progress towards more transparent and intentional commitments to gender equality in education. Recommendations to these ends are included to highlight areas in which action should be taken to ensure education systems become truly gender transformative. The recommendations can be used by GCI country governments, GCI Alliance partners and other stakeholders to orient future action towards gender-responsive education sector planning.

Introduction

Although the last two decades have seen considerable progress on global commitments to address gender disparities in education, many challenges remain. Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are still furthest from equality in educational access and achievement, with factors such as poverty and location compounding with discriminatory gender norms to exclude girls from education (UNESCO 2022b). According to UNESCO/UIS data, 9 million girls in Sub-Saharan Africa between the ages of 6 and 11 will never go to school, compared to 6 million boys (UNESCO, 2019). In order to address gender inequality in education, we need to look at the planning processes that underpin how education systems are designed. Analysis of education systems reveals how restrictive gender norms become embedded in and reinforced through education sector design.

Engaging with gender equality in and through education at a systems level has the potential to break the cycle of inequality and provide young people with a quality education that challenges gender stereotypes and cultivates healthy relationships. Gender-responsive education interventions have been shown to have a significant impact on girls' educational outcomes, by helping girls to break out of generations of low educational attainment and limited social mobility for women (UNESCO 2020). Gender-transformative education goes one step further and unlocks the transformative power of education to shift harmful gender norms and unequal power balances (UNGEI, UNICEF, Transform Education, Plan International 2021).

Through the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI), education planners are being encouraged to embed gender equality at the heart of education systems, recognising the importance of having the right political and organisational structures in place to deliver on high level commitments to gender equality. GCI was developed by the G7 Ministers of Education and Development in collaboration with partner countries and multilateral and civil society organizations committed to advancing gender equality in education. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and UNESCO's International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) have been jointly coordinating the initiative since 2019 in 8 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Niger and Sierra Leone).

This study examines education sector planning in the 8 Sub-Saharan countries that are part of GCI. The study examines one education sector planning process in each country to identify examples of good practice, opportunities and threats to promote gender transformative education systems. The research question for this study was:

Are education sector planning processes including gender transformative ambitions and strategies? If so, where and how? (enablers) If not, why not? (blockers)

The study builds on global literature and models to create gender transformative education planning processes and systems. The study revolves around four main themes: Political Economy, Relationships, Voice and Society. Areas covered in this study include:

- the role of political will and whether this is backed by concrete actions
- the existence of robust accountability mechanisms to uphold gender equality in education
- how power operates in decision making
- how external partnerships and coalitions can influence ambitions towards gender transformative approaches
- where gender expertise is actively consulted in the planning processes
- whether voices of young people and communities are systematically included in planning and design
- as important norm holders, where and how religious and traditional leaders are involved in the development of education sector plans
- where and how resistance to gender equality manifests within education planning processes.

This report includes an overview of the conceptual framework and research methodology, a synthesis of thematic findings, and a set of recommendations for policy makers, education planners and technical partners. The 8 individual country reports (see annexes) provide a detailed overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to gender mainstreaming at country level.

Conceptual Framing and Method

Conceptual framing

The focus of the analysis is at two levels:

First, it includes interactions that occurred between actors in the education planning process, examining the role of power, politics, and social norms in these relationships and

Second, the content and mechanisms being debated during the planning process are considered. These include accountability mechanisms and efforts to address the root cause of gender inequalities, such as discriminatory social norms.

This two-fold analysis is critical for revealing that it is not just what is planned, but also by whom and why, that matters in achieving transformative change in and through education. Too often we look at plans to see if they are realistic or doable, without looking at why they take the shape they do and whether the key players can and will implement them.

The conceptual framework developed for this study draws on models used to promote gender transformative change within development processes. The primary four quadrants of change build on gender transformative frameworks from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and Gender at Work (ATVET for Women 2019, Gender at Work, 2017). Within each quadrant key themes were explored that underpin gender transformative social change such as accountability, power, voice, and social norms. At the country level, these themes were overlaid by a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) lens to reveal examples of good practice and strengthening areas of weakness.

Section 3 of this report, which synthesises the country findings uses this framework to organise the results and enable them to be compared to each other.

Figure 0.1: Analysis conceptual Framework



Study Methodology

The study was comprised of three phases: (1) inception, (2) country studies, and (3) data synthesis and reporting.

The inception phase was informed by discussions held with key stakeholders from each GCI partner country present at the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI) board meeting in Dakar in March 2022. A steering group, comprised of attendees from the board meeting, commented and agreed on the conceptual framework and scope of the study.

GCI ministry focal points decided which planning process should be reviewed for each country case study. The criteria for selection included processes that were recently completed and well documented. For Nigeria, a State-level plan was selected.

In five country cases, the planning processes selected were the most recent National Education Sector Planning process. In Nigeria, it was the Katsina State Global Partnership for Education (GPE) planning process. In both Niger and Chad Interim or transition plans were used. Similarly, in Mauritania, the Education sector implementation plan was initially proposed as the main focus for discussion, but this scope was expanded to include other national planning processes due to difficulties faced in locating sufficient key informants involved in the implementation plan process. (See Annex A for the specific planning processes selected by country.)

Data for the analysis was drawn from desk reviews of materials related to the selected planning process, national policies on gender and education, and key informant interviews (KII). Criteria for the KII selection included informants being directly involved with the nominated planning process. Informants were drawn from across government ministries, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and technical partners such as UNESCO- IIEP, UNICEF, UNGEI and donors.

A total of 95 KIIs were held across 8 countries, with an average of approximately 12 interviewees per country drawn as equally as possible from the three key sectors. Out of the total, 49 women (52%) and 46 men (48%) were interviewed. See Annex B for breakdown by sector, sex and country.

This report synthesises and analyses the country level findings through a thematic analysis using the conceptual framework to examine how these issues are affecting gender mainstreaming in education sector planning. Examples of best practice are shared and findings are analysed against the context of broader research on these areas. These findings and analysis then offer a set of global recommendations for GCI country governments, GCI Alliance partners and other stakeholders for improving gender mainstreaming in education planning processes. The country level reports (see annex E) offer a detailed insight into the country-level data and also include strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses.

The majority of interviews also included a stakeholder mapping exercise which invited interviewees to plot their perception of various actors' power and influence in planning exercises and how committed they were to gender equality. The collated results of this exercise are recorded in the country reports and are a valuable tool to plan how to engage actors in planning in the future.

Alongside this study the researchers also started a gender expertise mapping exercise. This involved a snowball methodology of KIIs being asked for recommendations of gender experts in country from all sectors who were then invited to complete an online questionnaire. UNGEI will build on this work to develop a register of experts at country level.

Study Constraints

The study faced two main challenges:

The response rate to invitations by email or WhatsApp by KIIs was low. Support from a local ally to act as a conduit for raising the profile of the study and organising meetings was crucial. Where these allies did not exist, the researchers found it more difficult to identify, contact, and successfully interview key informants.

Many online meetings were cancelled at the last minute or people did not join appointments that were booked as other priorities took precedence. Researchers were flexible and accommodated time shifts as far as possible and used platforms that KIIs had better access to such as WhatsApp.

Data on the number of invitations KIIs against actual interviews held is captured in Annex B. While these constraints affected some countries more than others, researchers tried to mitigate the impact by interviewing as wide a range of people as possible. There are no instances where we believe these constraints made it impossible to get a picture of the process.

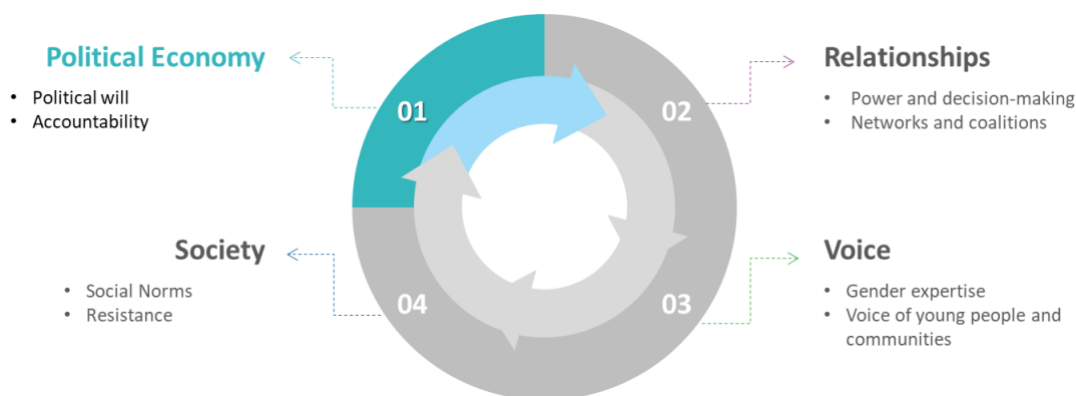
Additionally, data on who did not or would not participate is interesting to consider as part of this study. Several candidates who were recommended, primarily by ministries, declined the invitation based on factors such as lack of time, not feeling comfortable to speak to the gender aspects of this study, or feeling they were not involved enough in planning to be able to respond to questions being posed. These reasons are worth noting to give a sense of the depth of engagement in the process.

Synthesis of thematic findings

This section will use the conceptual framework to structure research findings from across all 8 countries. Each chapter below provides a brief research context for the eight sub-themes drawn from a relevant area of global literature, followed by results drawn from the country reports. A short analysis is provided per sub-theme to consider how the global research offers valuable reflections on these results.

Political Economy

This section will examine two key areas: (i) how political will to promote gender equality is manifest and where limitations occur and (ii) how duty bearers are held to account for advancing gender equality in education. This relates to the first quadrant from the conceptual framework:



Political Will

Research context: Political economy analysis

Political economy analysis (PEA) allows development actors to analyse support for strategies to deliver change. PEA reveals the political will of institutional actors, which includes the incentives that support or constrain actions; it also reveals the role of power (formal and informal) in who makes decisions and how. Political will and power together have important gendered dimensions, in terms of positions and influence women have within institutions and in terms of the ability and willingness of all actors to engage with gender equality.

Women's rights activists, recognising the need for a political approach to promoting gender equality, highlight the need for creating allies, using informal networks, and framing campaigns to align with current political interests (Nazneen and Masud, 2017). PEA research also highlights the value of coalitions to influence policy change, recognising their role in promoting and legitimising new ideas at a political level (Hudson, Mcloughlin, Marquette and Roche, 2018). Many of the wider

concepts within PEA are featured throughout this study, such as the influence of coalitions, decision making power and resistance to change. This section will specifically interrogate political will, constraints, and how these have translated into action or not.

Results

Most countries in the study have made important policy commitments to addressing gender inequalities in education. (See Annex C for policy context of countries in this study) This commitment is seen through the adoption of international and regional conventions and the presence of high-level national policies. All countries feature some form of national policy on gender equality or education policies that feature a notable gender and inclusion component. Examples include the National Gender Policies in Chad and Mali, Gender Strategy for the education sector in Mozambique (2020), the Sierra Leone Radical Inclusion in Education Policy (2021), the Nigerian National Gender Policy on Gender in Education (2006). These policies are positioned at national level or specifically within the education sector, therefore the level of detailed guidance they offer on how to embed gender equality at all stages of the education system varies.

However, high-level national policies on gender in education do not always get translated into appropriate resources and technically sound implementation. In Nigeria, despite the presence of a National Policy on Gender in Education since 2006, it is yet to be officially adopted in Katsina State although many aspects have been included in the State Education Plan. The bottleneck identified here, however, was that funds were not released or final approvals for activities were not given; stakeholders saw this as a failure of political will to deliver, with some actors putting their own financial, political or social interests above gender equality goals. In Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Chad, despite having high-level policies, stakeholders reported weak technical understanding; for example, 'gender' was often wrongly assumed to mean girls. They report that budgets are often allocated elsewhere, and indicators are too weak to hold those who are tasked with the delivery of policies to account. They also note a disconnect between high-level stated commitments to gender equality and the resourcing of structures that can deliver on these commitments. For example, in Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Niger and Chad, gender experts and gender units were inadequately resourced and held too little influence to ensure policies were enacted (see further detail on gender expertise below).

Creating an enabling culture where actors are encouraged to promote and debate solutions to gender equality plays a key role in whether high level policies are translated into action. Many stakeholders in Sierra Leone identified the Radical Inclusion Policy and highly engaged high-level officials as a key factor in creating a conducive environment for debating the challenges and solutions to promoting gender equality in education. This enabling environment made it possible to prioritise gender in the education sector analysis and invite a transparent critique of the draft education plan through the appraisal process. In contrast, in Mali the first stumbling block appeared just beyond the national level gender policy.

Although some KIs indicated there was 'no opposition to girls' education' in principle, one respondent described some leaders as 'reluctant' to gender equality, hence creating an environment where discussion of gender issues was deprioritised.

Funding constraints were cited by respondents in most countries as the reason for inaction, however some KIs felt that this was an excuse for a lack of commitment to gender equality. In contexts where ministries inherited a chronically under-funded education system, such as Chad and Mali, budgeting exercises prioritised infrastructure, operating costs and teachers' salaries and gender considerations were deemed to be additional costs that cannot be covered. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the political and security situation is often used as justification to deprioritise funding for gender in planning exercises. Several stakeholders from Nigeria, however, were very clear that 'funding constraints' were used as an umbrella excuse under which inaction on gender reform was hidden. Stakeholders from Mozambique, Niger and Chad all reported that ministries did not use their own funds but relied on support from development partners to address gender concerns within education. Whilst Sierra Leone was able to budget for some efforts to address gender inequalities, the more transformative actions needed to realise the ambitions of the Radical Inclusion Policy relied on external donors and local networks. One solution to address funding constraints was shared by respondent from Burkina Faso, who spoke about a Gender Trust Fund set up by the technical and financial partners to support government activities to promote gender equality.

Box 1: Comments from stakeholders on commitment to gender equality

"Some leaders are reluctant to gender. They do not give importance to gender issues" - Mali

"We feel that there is a political will, but the problem remains in mobilizing the resources to change this situation." - Chad

"There is a certain hypocrisy at the central level regarding mainstreaming gender: we say that we take it into account but when it comes to budgeting, if the budget is too important, it is in the gender activities that we will cut" - Burkina Faso

However, a good example from Sierra Leone shows that:

Box 2: Good Practice Example from Sierra Leone

The culture created by the Radical inclusion policy in Sierra Leone is regularly quoted by activists, donors and CSOs as the bedrock for open discussions on inclusion. It allows ministry solutions to be debated in planning processes and for actors to offer suggestions on how to improve systems to be more proactive on gender and inclusion concerns. The Minister of Education is a keen advocate for this policy and continues to keep these principles central to discussions about education progress.

Analysis

Turning high-level policies into actions that can have an impact on gender equality requires multiple steps. For national and international commitments to be realised in any country the willingness of actors in positions of responsibility to commit budgets is needed and planning processes need to translate policies and goals into actions (see recommendations). In environments that appear to be supportive but where change is not materialising, further political economy analysis is needed to understand where the blockages might be. As seen in some country examples, while senior ministry officials verbally support policies, they can still be major blockers to progress in the process.

Claiming funding constraints is sometimes an exercise in hidden power, where actors use financial constraints to excuse inaction on gender. Budget processes involve financial trade-offs that are complex, especially in low resource settings, and that often expensive, fundamental investments in education infrastructure win out. Budget holders also assume that gender-sensitive budgets automatically increase expenditure, allowing them to exclude gender through prioritisation and cost-management exercises. However, respondents made it clear that more gender-responsive planning does not always mean significant additional costs; there are many aspects of gender-responsive education planning that do not require specific or additional funding, for example interventions that improve education quality for all can have equally positive impacts on girls and boys if they are designed well and monitored closely (see power and influence section below). Better data collection in education systems including sex disaggregated data on the impact of gender-responsive interventions would also help to make the case for these investments. Gender-sensitive budget training would also be crucial to

enable careful budget allocation that is able to meet educational needs without compromising gender commitments (see recommendations).

Dependency on development partners to fund gender-responsive elements of the plan means delivery cycles and design are often dictated by external actors. The dependency on external players needs to be moderated, for example through stronger local coalitions who can help amplify national priorities and operate as a collective, rather than the government being subjected to pressure from external donors pursuing individual agendas.

Accountability

Research context: Accountability

The RISE systems framework is a valuable model to apply to complex education systems and shows the role that accountability mechanisms play in effective delivery (Spivack, 2021). The framework identifies key actors at different levels - state, education authorities and service users - and highlights the various mechanisms that hold each to account. It also emphasises how accountability mechanisms work best when they include a wide range of actors and interests at multiple levels, with a coherence across the entire system to deliver on objectives, such as gender equality (Spivack, 2021).

Evidence and accurate data capture are also key elements in robust accountability mechanisms. However, there is a growing debate around the targets currently used to track the SDGs, as they are not seen to provide enough nuance to understand the connection between education and gender equality aspirations. This means that the visibility of progress towards meaningful impact on gender equality is obscured or fragmented (UNESCO 2018; Unterhalter, North and Orlanda, 2018). It is therefore vital that the data are available, are used to drive accountability mechanisms, and can measure progress against gender equality in education (UNESCO, 2018).

Results

The most frequently cited accountability mechanism was joint education sector reviews held at ministry level. These sector reviews were completed in Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Mauritania and Niger, although several reported that they had mixed engagement with CSO's and gender experts. Niger respondents noted that gender experts were absent from annual review processes so were not able to contribute to the analysis of progress against the plan and how it could be improved. In Mauritania, the review process included discussion in various working groups, including one on inequalities. In both Mozambique and Mauritania however, there was an absence of gender issues raised in the meeting notes or action plans.

Box 3: Good Practice Examples from Burkina Faso & Nigeria

Burkina Faso Government hosts a National Council for Gender Promotion, which is chaired by the Prime Minister. This body holds each Ministry to account on their progress towards promoting gender equality through an implementation plan and report. This National Council has a permanent secretariat dedicated to monitoring progress towards the national gender strategy 2020-24. It is early days in the delivery of this accountability mechanism, with some challenges flagged in cross-sectoral engagement yet to be resolved.

Katsina State in Nigeria hosts an innovative power sharing method of accountability. Two coalition bodies representing women's rights and education sector actors work closely with the state government and the State house of assembly to monitor education implementation plans and budgets.

The lack of appropriate data undermines the ability to analyse progress against gender equality goals. Critiques of the joint review process in Mozambique highlighted that many of the indicators lack the nuance needed to interrogate progress on aspects such as gender-based violence, child marriage or harmful social norms. The lack of sex disaggregated data across all necessary sectors was also being addressed in Sierra Leone, who were not able to discern gender needs and issues in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) from data collected.

Box 4: Comment from a stakeholder on analysing gender equality

"This component needs to be more highlighted, with clear goals for gender equality. Because it is cross-cutting, some activities stay outside of the Education Sector Plan currently. My understanding is that we need clear, qualitative objectives in terms of reduction of gender-based violence for example."
Mozambique

Accountability mechanisms for gender equality in education were inconsistent and often lacked detail. Despite having an action plan for implementation of the national gender policy in Chad, KIIIs were unable to describe operational accountability mechanisms that would track and ensure progress towards gender equality. There was a lack of a coherent approach across departments or sectors, with the responsibility of all design, implementation, and monitoring of gender equality in education concentrated within the Directorate of Girls' Education.

Regional or local level accountability mechanisms were rarely mentioned in interviews. Exceptions were found in Sierra Leone where the Children's Forums are meant to hold schools to account for upholding the new policy of allowing girls who are pregnant to return to school; although practitioners noted these Forums are not yet well established. Respondents from Burkina Faso also mentioned a local level mechanism through sectoral dialogue with parents, but these were only held periodically, and it was not clear what impact they were having.

In Burkina Faso the donor-led Gender Trust Fund¹ has its own accountability mechanisms with monitoring and evaluation indicators for programme delivery. Donor reporting mechanisms should feature at local and regional levels but were mentioned in very few interviews.

Analysis

Monitoring and reporting systems do not adequately track indicators for change in gender equality across all education actors, hampering the creation of a coherent system for accountability on gender equality in education. Planning processes seemed to focus on one dimension of accountability, between the Central level and Provincial or State levels, through joint sector reviews. Katsina State in Nigeria was notable in power sharing this responsibility with CSOs included in its highest, State-level accountability processes. Cross-sector coordination of how other departments could deliver on their responsibilities for gender equality seemed to be a major weakness.

Very few other potential routes of accountability, such as local education authorities or service recipients and students, were mentioned. With the exception of Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso, there is a large untapped resource amongst local actors, such as parents and Women's Rights Organisations, who could mobilise to hold the education system to account on delivery of gender equality. Engaging and coordinating with networks at regional and local levels to support broader scale accountability for gender equality would improve visibility across actors creating a more robust way to ensure answerability for gender equality. Donor funding of gender equality in sector plans is very welcome but can sometimes create parallel reporting systems and does not solve the problem of the Ministry

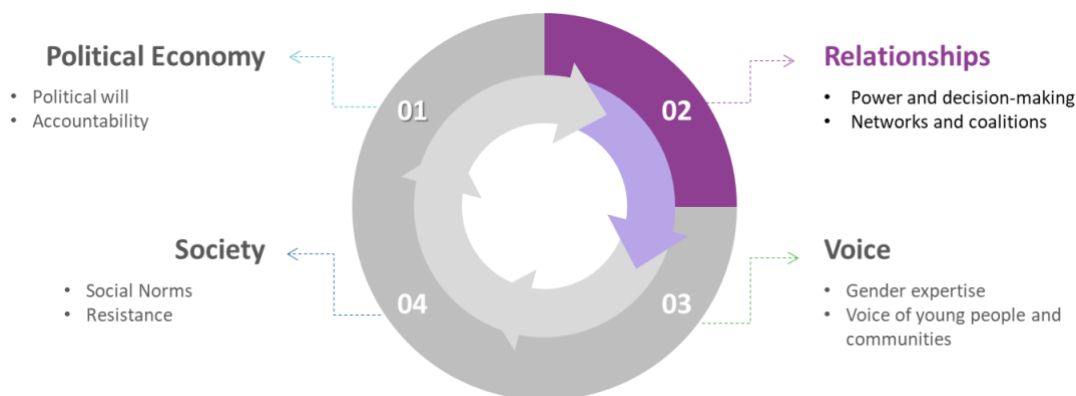
¹ Also known as the Education Trust Fund

itself not fully addressing and allocating resources and social capital to gender analysis and needs.

The lack of appropriate indicators to track real progress on gender equality in education undermines the ability to monitor and respond. Actors need to work together to embed the necessary reporting mechanisms at each level to allow this analysis and coordinated effort to respond (see recommendation).

Relationships

Two key themes are explored in this section: (i) the role of power within decision making and (ii) an examination of how civil society networks and coalitions can exert their influence on government- led planning processes. This relates to the second quadrant from the conceptual framework:



Power and Decision-making

Research Context: Power

This section focusses on power dynamics within personal relations, which is pertinent to decision making spaces in hierarchical institutions. There are various dimensions of power worth considering in this analysis:- dominating power is described as 'Power over'; emancipating power is 'power to'; 'power with' is a more horizontal dimension of power which highlights the importance of solidarities and coalitions; and 'power within' where actors develop awareness of their own capacity for action (Gaventa 2006, 2021; Kabeer 1994). The 'power matrix' developed by academics and activists looking at power dynamics in social change take these concepts further, articulating 'visible power' through the making and enforcing of rules; 'hidden power' expressed through setting the agenda; and 'invisible power' exerted through social norms (Pettit and McGee, 2020). Manifestations of power are also expressed in how different spaces operate; -with closed, invited or claimed spaces showing how those with power over and power to engage in a process. Power is maintained by elites by exercising fear, threats or

actual violence to maintain control (Batiwala, 2019), using closed or invited spaces. These definitions help to reveal how individuals and groups are operating in education planning spaces. This section will consider power in decision making specifically, but power dynamics also play a role in other elements of this study such as how political will operates, how social norms are maintained and how and which voices are included in consultations.

Results

Within the majority of planning processes analysed in this study, ministries created broader consultation opportunities with key stakeholders, but the structure and effectiveness of these varied significantly. There were several examples of significant stakeholder consultations during planning from Mali, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. Stakeholders included teacher unions, parents, religious leaders, NGOs, the Local Education Group representatives, and civil society representatives. Niger and Sierra Leone hosted presentation workshops in the capital and in regions to gain feedback on draft plans. Despite some significant efforts to create platforms for consultation, the timing, quality, scope and frequency of input invited varied considerably. Niger, Mali, Mozambique, Burkina Faso all noted these broader consultations occurred very late in the process and offered a limited opportunity to input in the drafting stage of the plan, with stakeholders reporting that deadlines were unrealistic to provide meaningful input.

More detailed technical dialogue was also hosted in several locations. Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Chad mentioned processes that invited cross sector specialists from other ministries, NGOs and CSOs to form specific working groups to provide more technical expertise into detailed parts of education sector plans. Working groups were designated to input into primary, secondary, TVET and other specialist areas of planning to be able to engage in a focused area of the plans.

The gender balance and expertise within technical working groups was not always as varied as intended. In Chad, it was noted that 80% of the different working groups were made up of ministry officials, with limited participation of external gender experts. In Sierra Leone, working groups were reportedly designed to be chaired by one man and one woman with at least one gender champion nominated per group. However, in reality, group representation was often dominated by men and group members were not all aware of this intention to have balanced chairing roles and balanced gender representation. In Mozambique, it was noted that all those with gender expertise were women in junior roles, while the Directors of planning, of Primary education and of Cooperation were all men, creating a divide on roles and expertise along gender lines which would inevitably have implications on social interactions and behaviour that might limit input from gender experts. (See gender expertise section below)

Box 5: Good practice example from Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's planning process had several iterations and chances for stakeholders to input. After technical workshops a draft of the plan was circulated through the LEG for stakeholders to validate amendments that had been made and offer further responses. Later in the process the draft plan was also filtered through an appraisal process by an external body to ensure alignment to the education sector analysis, that had a strong gender component. This allowed elements to be flagged so they could be remedied before the finalisation of the plan.

Interviewees often reported that despite various consultations and working groups final decisions were often still taken by a small group of people, who often didn't have gender expertise. Stakeholders in Chad felt excluded by the planning process, reporting that without knowing the 'rules of the game' decision making was maintained by people who control the planning process. Similarly, Mali noted the final process lacked accountability to inputs with no feedback or rationale for final decision making (see quote below). Consultants in the core group of ESP writers in Sierra Leone recognised that their group did not have gender expertise, they reported that they relied on the technical working group consultation process involving technical partners to bring this expertise into the drafts.

Box 6: Comment from stakeholder on collaboration in gender equality topics

Different versions of the commented documents were shared but, "in the end it was the members of the technical team who validated the final version without explaining whether the proposals made had been taken into account or not" - Mali

The control of financial resources to fund activities and research is an important tool for exerting power over decision making. Many respondents, particularly in Mozambique and Sierra Leone, reported that donors had a significant influence in decision making as a result of their control of funds for projects and within the Local Education Group (LEG).

In Mali, the power of data and reports was also noted, with departments or institutions who commissioned studies being able to influence discussions and decisions using well-researched studies to lend more weight to their ideas.

Analysis

The majority of planning meetings showed key stakeholders being 'invited' into national spaces to contribute their expertise. This dynamic demonstrated power hierarchies where invitations were issued by senior ministries to external and junior participants to be part of planning working groups, which inevitably led to the exclusion of some parties from these key decision-making spaces (see recommendation). Hidden power is also evident within these invited spaces: invitees are aware that they should not challenge the leadership too far, or they may risk being excluded from subsequent rounds of consultation. In countries where the leadership did not recognise or value gender expertise and insights into education planning, this power to issue the invitations and to silence criticism can become a prime blocker to gender being integrated into strategic decision-making platform and spaces.

That said, the prescriptive invitation list could be used as an opportunity to be deliberate about the make-up of groups and ensure a good gender balance and the inclusion of other groups and voices; this intentional design of invitation lists was used to reasonably good effect in Sierra Leone.

Planning directorates have the tendency to maintain 'hidden power' or 'power over' stakeholders by setting the agenda of the planning process; transparency of their thinking in their agenda setting is often lacking (see recommendation).

There were examples of directorates wanting to make space to give 'power to' stakeholders to input into technical areas of the plan and asking for validation of changes made, such as in Sierra Leone and Mali. Coalitions in Mali created a dynamic where several actors coordinated to create 'power with' each other to exert influence on aspects of the preschool planning design, largely seen as a successful strategy.

Invisible power can also undermine the ostensible gender balance of decision-making groups. For example, when gender experts are women in junior roles, which is the case in Mozambique for example, social norms and hidden power ensure that older, more senior, male participants effectively shut out their voices, even when they are invited to the table.

The ability to control and deploy funds, effectively prioritising some areas over another despite what is written in a plan, was captured in key informant interviews in many contexts. This power could be seen to be exerted through guiding and controlling how funds are spent and could also be seen to be used to influence the agenda more broadly, by supporting key pieces of research or work that would generate evidence to support a certain area or way of working. Who influences the allocation of funds was opaque and rarely discussed in planning, though it was acknowledged that this was a critical space for advancing gender.

Networks and Coalitions

Research Context: Coalitions and alliances

This section explores the role of coalitions and alliances that act together to exert influence in planning processes. Studies have looked at how strategic alliances between feminist bureaucrats and civil society activists have the potential to leverage significant progress on gender equality agendas, especially if the insider-outsider approach is coordinated intentionally. Feminist bureaucrats trying to straddle these two relationships are often frustrated, feeling like they are promoting a gender equality message that is too radical for their colleagues and not radical enough for their external counterparts (Eyben and Turquet, 2013). Coalitions built between women's rights activists, feminist politicians and feminist civil servants have been called the 'triangle of empowerment' and are highlighted as a method which can strengthen gender equality agendas and women's rights (Unterhalter et al. 2018). Feminist movement building goes beyond addressing the symptoms of gender inequalities; rather, movements seek to reveal and challenge how power structures operate in private and public spaces and address the root causes of gender discrimination (Batiwala, 2020). Coalitions and movements are less well documented in the education space but learning from these models in other areas can help us interrogate the networks and coalitions that have been identified in this study.

Growing youth movements in education are claiming space and using creative methods to exert their influence to advocate for children's rights to quality education and to challenge gender inequalities (UNESCO, 2021; UNGEI, 2020). Girls' movements are also gaining a political voice in some settings, demanding that girls are seen as agents for change and have access to resources to be political actors that find solutions to the challenges this generation of adolescent girls face (Bransky, Myrum and Marriam, 2022). These are all examples of organisations using the concept of 'power with' mentioned in the previous section to gain influence in education systems and sectors.

Results

Network organisations and coalitions that represent collective voices have been noted as making valuable inputs in planning processes captured in this study. This was seen in Niger, Mozambique and Sierra Leone. A wide and representative membership of youth or women's organisations were channelled through smaller, organised and skilled leadership allowing ministries to efficiently include key representative groups in planning processes. In Mozambique, a successful gender and education coalition wrote a joint advocacy document highlighting the need for work to shift including social norms around child marriage and initiation rites in the education sector plan. Similarly, coalitions in Burkina Faso and Mali worked to influence planning to ensure plans considered issues such as menstrual hygiene management in schools. Collective voice can be seen to increase the power of these organisations and constituencies effectively.

That said, there are examples of CSO pressure being less effective or engaging. For example, in Mauritania while a CSO coalition and CSOs that represent girls and women's rights exist, the ministry did not actively engage with them in the gender analysis processes or request their inputs to plans as they were perceived to be poorly organised and hard to engage with. Stakeholders in Mauritania also noted that even when CSOs are invited to planning events, they are usually represented by men who do not present girls and women's issues and will often validate ministry documents without debate.

Box 7: Good Practice Example from Nigeria

Coalitions in Katsina State are reported to work well, consulting their membership regularly. They are seen as particularly successful as many of the CSO members are former civil servants, meaning they have an established understanding and trust with gender experts in government, making effective cross network relationships. They are often referred to as the 'third eye,' indicating their role in holding the government to account. The good working relations between CSOs and ministry gender experts can be seen to have made visible progress on gender issues within planning.

Local Education Groups (LEG), who are present in all countries in this study, have the remit of guiding education planning and implementation. They are a collaborative forum of education sector actors who develop, monitor and evaluate Education Sector Plans at national level. LEGs. LEGs are made up of

representatives of the ministry of education and other ministries, national civil society organisations, international NGO's, donors, teachers' unions, and private education providers. KII responses indicated that LEGs were not fulfilling their potential in all countries.

The LEG in Mozambique features various specialist working groups including one on gender and inclusion allowing good coordination on these issues. However, in Sierra Leone and Mali, the LEG regular meeting agenda does not feature issues of gender equality; and in Chad, the LEG was not providing expertise or influence on gender equality issues. So, in all three cases, this opportunity for cross sector coordination and influence on gender was absent. There was disappointment in Chad that technical and financial partners did not play a more active role in critiquing education plans and offering suggestions to better integrate gender into planning processes through the LEG, indicating an absence of this collective technical voice to influence change. Many informants said that the power of the LEG was often due to the presence of donors, who used the forum to exert significant influence over decision making, undermining the intention of it being an equitable collaborative forum.

Box 8: Comment by stakeholder on influencing:

"The influence of the Technical and Financial Partners in terms of gender is strong because they set conditions: CSOs and political organisations have no choice but to go along with the partners who accompany them. Moreover, it is often their presence within the consultation frameworks that allows CSOs to express themselves." - Burkina Faso

"The reality is that it is those with the best ability to write strategic documents whose ideas will be best represented in the Plan" - Chad

Analysis

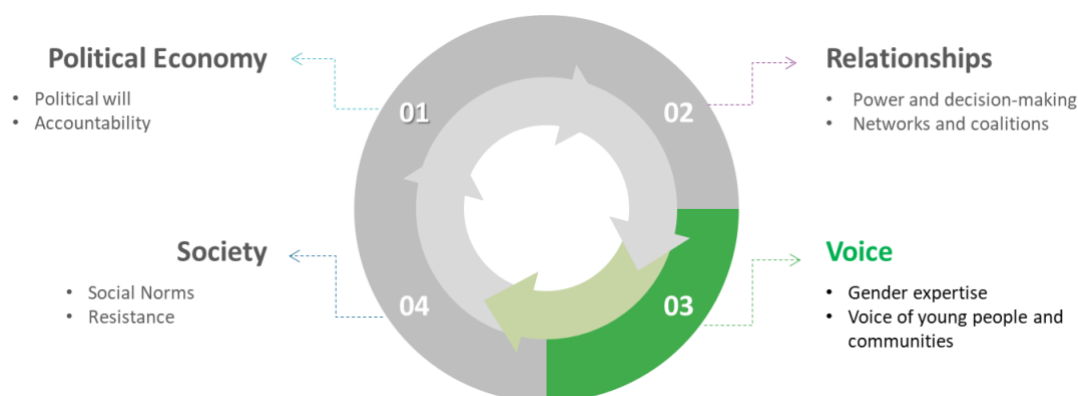
Influence through collective action within the LEG or subgroups looking at gender within education was seen to have real potential to drive more ambitious engagement with gender inequalities and ensure that marginalised or excluded voices are heard (see recommendation). Acting as part of a wider coalition means external actors exert a moderating function on each other that balances the risk of ministries being influenced too strongly by individual agendas. There were several

examples that showed that when CSO and NGO networks coordinated with a clear message, they were able to exert significant influence to include more gender transformative elements in education planning documents. These groups were often able to ensure that plans engaged with root causes of issues, such as social norms, rather than just responding to symptoms of discriminatory practices.

Donors and research partners have the power to drive the agenda on gender equality. While donors and research partners were found to effectively put and keep gender on the agenda in education planning in many countries, this was also seen to have significant shortcomings. Often donor-driven agendas could only be sustained with external funding and were driving one-sided accountability (up and out of the country, rather than down and to a wider coalition of interested players), reinforcing North-South and colonialist power structures (see recommendation).

Voice

Two key themes are explored under this heading: (i) the role of gender expertise in planning processes and (ii) as the service users of education, how young people and communities are involved in planning processes. This relates to the third quadrant from the conceptual framework:



Gender expertise

Research Context: Gender mainstreaming & gendered institutions

Since the widespread engagement with gender mainstreaming², feminist activists and scholars have been divided into two camps: (i) those who see the benefits of gender being embedded across policies, institutional processes and structures, and (ii) those who see mainstreaming as a way of de-politicising the movement, removing its independence to challenge the root causes of inequality and to draw attention to the power of patriarchy (Cornwall 2007; Derbyshire, Dolata and

² Credited to have been promoted at the UN conference on women in Beijing in 1995

Ahluwalia 2015; Mukhopadhyay 2004). Despite many governments adopting gender units in various forms, the reality is that many of these departments are under-resourced and excluded from senior-level decision-making forums, rendering them ineffective (Eyben and Turquet, 2013). As with any public bureau, it is recognised that much depends on leadership, funding, access to top decision making and relationships with external bodies. Gender mainstreaming also presents a challenge of diluted accountability where everyone shares responsibility for gender equity commitments, but nobody is tasked with getting it done (Mukhopadhyay, 2004).

There is also the common factor within institutions that many gender experts inside government ministries are women which is a key factor when examining how effective they can be within deeply patriarchal institutions. Researchers have found that there are many aspects of bureaucracies which can operate to suppress women's voices or their effectiveness with informal institutional rules operating to exclude women from decision making fora (Chappell and Waylen 2013). The solution is not to assume more women automatically results in more commitment to embedding technical solutions to address gender equality. Evidence points to the importance of finding 'critical actors', both male and female, in significant roles who actively seek to progress gender equality ambitions (Childs and Krook 2009).

In this section we will examine where the gender expertise is positioned and how their voices are heard in the planning processes.

Results

Despite the presence of gender divisions or departments to promote gender equality in several countries, many stakeholders indicated they are weak and under-resourced. Several countries recognised the positioning of gender divisions – low in the hierarchy – meant they were often excluded from the key forums for final planning processes, as these were reserved for those in more senior positions (Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Mauritania.) Although Mozambique features a cross cutting department with gender responsibilities across multiple departments, the low numbers of staff in this department leave its capacity over-stretched, with staff unable to join all the working groups for planning. Sierra Leone has one post in the education ministry 'gender unit', which inevitably is not able to provide technical support to all the education divisions within the ministry for planning or delivery purposes. In Niger, siloed strategies for women and girls' education and a separate general education plan means these two strategies were not well coordinated, and the general plan therefore lacked gender dimensions. Katsina State in Nigeria is restructuring its gender expertise to have a cross departmental gender committee rather than isolated gender representatives in each department. Department leads are aware that this could split responsibility across more than one director, which might reduce visibility and impact of gender initiatives, but are hoping this strategy is more effective.

In many of these contexts, gender advisory roles were fulfilled by women, which perpetuates the view that gender is a women's issue only. These roles were often in junior positions, which has further cultural implications in male-dominated and hierarchical spaces resulting in women's voices and their gender expertise in planning being minimised. Committees were often dominated by men, in Niger the technical planning committee ratio was 12 men to 1 woman and Mali it was 15 men to 1 woman. Experiences were shared in Mali of gender advisors being silenced in planning workshops as there were, 'more pressing issues than gender'. These examples demonstrate how hierarchy and gender norms compound to silence voices that are promoting progress in embedding gender equality in education.

Half the countries in the study (Sierra Leone, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria) mentioned a network of gender 'champions' or 'focal points' are positioned within various ministries and regional bodies. These are existing staff members who are asked to take on additional responsibilities of promoting gender across their team and within their work. Stakeholders reported that they were often poorly trained and lacked expertise on gender and had little time to execute their additional responsibilities on top of their main roles. Similarly, many stakeholders reported that nomination to gender focal point status was not contingent on expertise and even self-reported that they felt under-qualified to take on these roles (see box below from Sierra Leone).

In many of the planning processes covered in this study gender expertise from technical partners, CSOs and NGOs offered a vital complement to ministry gender capacity. An example of this is the external gender expertise that was used in the Sierra Leone education sector analysis, technical working groups and draft plan validation. The external expertise in Mali however was given a limited scope to operate. External gender experts were only invited to the technical working group that applied to gender and inclusion rather than being included across all working groups, such as the one that dealt with teacher training, where there were significant gender dimensions to resolve. Internal ministry gender experts were limited even further within planning fora, reportedly being told to 'keep quiet' as there were other more pressing priorities than gender. These controls do not apply to external gender experts who have an opportunity to generate more evidence on the role the gendered lens plays in education effectiveness.

The presence of women is often seen as a proxy for gender expertise being included in planning exercises. In Sierra Leone the fact that the planning leadership was women led was often conflated by KII interviewees as evidence of significant levels of gender expertise being part of decision-making discussions.

Box 9: Good Practice Example from Nigeria

In Nigeria, both government and civil society gender experts participated in the stakeholder consultations during the planning process. These experts received gender training from UNICEF and included: gender desk officers from the State Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB); civil society gender experts such as High-level Women Advocates (HLWA); representatives and members of the Civil Society Action Coalition of Education for All (CSACEFA) and staff of the Ministry of Women Affairs. However, these participants were mainly trained on advocacy and influencing rather than on supporting the analysis of gender issues and the development of strategies to address these issues. Therefore, stakeholders felt that there was a need for stronger technical gender expertise to provide inputs into the planning process.

Box 10: Comment from stakeholder on gender capacity

“Senior staff are not gender experts; we are given gender responsibilities as an ‘add on’ to our existing roles. We would really benefit from technical training on gender to be able to deliver on these expectations” - Sierra Leone

Analysis

Gender expertise is undervalued as a technical area of expertise, and often positioned in a way that prevents significant change (see recommendation). There is no clear example of whether cross cutting or dedicated gender departments operate more effectively, but it is clear that respected, valued and senior gender expertise is needed. It is vital that institutional analysis allows detailed consideration of the financing and positioning of gender expertise to indicate why

efforts may fail, rather than dismiss efforts to embed gender mainstreaming wholesale (see recommendation). Feminist researchers highlight that whatever structure is used, they may be undermined in the interests of maintaining a patriarchal status quo in institutions and in society generally. In the current climate of gender backlash, there are instances of gender units being dismantled or repurposed to promote 'family values' that encourage women to have more children³. Gains made in the institutionalisation of gender in education need to be maintained with better investment, political positioning, evidence of impact shared and installation of policies that cannot be reversed.

Better women's representation and leadership within planning spaces is crucial to demonstrate equality of access to decision-making positions but it should not be assumed that this is the solution to installing gender expertise. 'Critical actors' who support gender equality could be men or women. These critical actors can be developed and supported through ongoing training in gender equality and how these principles can be integrated through their roles.

Gender focal point structures represent a real opportunity to engage with gender across departments. These responsibilities however must come with adequate training, time, and technical support to maintain quality and engagement (see recommendation). These are all dependant on adequately resourced gender units to be able to coordinate and deliver this.

External bodies of gender experts have an opportunity to provide technical support or generate an evidence base which planning processes can respond to. An evidence base that illustrates the value of integrating a gender perspective to education effectiveness can contribute to raising the profile of how gender expertise can help deliver on high level promises for more equitable education.

Voice of young people & communities

Research context: Participation

Participation is one of the guiding principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child expressed as the 'right to be heard' which includes the role of duty bearers to listen and respond to children's views. Although progress is being made to make space for children's views in development, there are still fundamental barriers at every level of society to children exercising their civic rights and being part of decision making fora (O'Kane, Trapp, Watt and Morgan, 2019). Participation models feature various stages in purposeful participation from manipulation and tokenism to the more meaningful shared decisions, or youth-initiated decision making. The midpoint in these models which fulfil the expectation of childrens' 'right to be heard' is often the target for broad consultations that ensure people are

³ Examples include Eastern Europe and Latin America where women's departments are being re-mandated to promote traditional 'family values' including encouraging women to have more children (Goetz 2020; Krizsan and Roggeband 2020).

consulted and informed about how their input would be used (Shier, 2001). Models examining children's rights propose that children should be guided by Space, Support and System Change; this includes creating safe spaces for young people in decision making, providing support from adults, and encouraging system change to addressing structural inequalities that dismiss children's voices (Johnson, Lewin and Cannon, 2020). This section will therefore examine whether children and communities as service users of education systems are given space and support to influence education system planning.

Results

Young people and communities were included in many broader consultation processes, but approaches were inconsistent and often limited in regional and stakeholder diversity. Deeper investigation would be needed to know whether consultative spaces allowed girls' and marginalised voices to be heard adequately. CSO representatives in Burkina Faso and Chad felt that youth and community consultation processes were inadequate, which they felt risked undermining support for operational delivery when the plans were launched. Similarly, CSO networks in Nigeria echoed the inadequacy of stakeholder consultation as they were aware the real decisions were being made outside of these fora. In Mozambique, stakeholders saw regional events as 'presentation workshops' rather than places where contributions were invited and systematically fed through to planning. Efforts to extend consultations to marginalised groups or areas were not mentioned across interviews. Significant regional consultations were held in Niger with parents through school management committees, women's CSOs and local government, but young people were not systematically included. More diverse consultations across regional locations were held in Sierra Leone which was then collated and presented to higher level workshops. Although some broader consultations occurred in Chad that involved CSOs, time constraints were listed as reasons for decision making to be concentrated around ministry actors at a central level.

At the smaller scale, high-level planning events or working groups young people were notably absent, although sometimes they were represented by coalitions or other bodies. In Nigeria, a youth representative attended in his capacity as a facilitator of a UNICEF programme, but key informants were variable in their accounts of whether youth associations or organisations of people with disabilities were invited to take part. In Sierra Leone, youth coalitions were invited to contribute to sector analysis evidence building but were not invited to the subsequent working group planning events.

Box 11: Good Practice Example from Mali

The voice of the communities was considered, through the participation of School management committee/ Comites de gestion scolaire (CGS), students-parents association/ Association des Parents de Eleves (APE) and educational advisors at the level of the town hall in the decentralized workshops. Students and young people were involved at the end of the process through their unions who were invited to the PRODEC II presentation workshop. In addition, some preparatory studies for PRODEC II, in particular the gender study, held consultations with representatives of local authorities, school principals and girls.

Box 12: Comments from stakeholders on youth participation:

"Young people weren't included in the writing chapters of the ESP working groups; this is all about them; they should have a much greater role." - Sierra Leone.

"MINEDH people designed the plan and presented it to us, with no intention to significantly alter it based on the feedback they would receive. People with Disabilities should be included in this kind of design work". - Mozambique

"We need to talk to people more closely to define activities in line with needs. Go to the grassroots." - Chad

Analysis

Accounts of youth and community consultation are inconsistent and reveal that attendees often felt these processes had limited influence. The lack of a systematic approach to broader consultation was notable within the studies, with several examples of events occurring in capital cities rather than regional or local areas where education challenges might be more complex and where a wider diversity of children and community members may have been able to contribute. There were several examples that could be seen as tokenism, where children, young

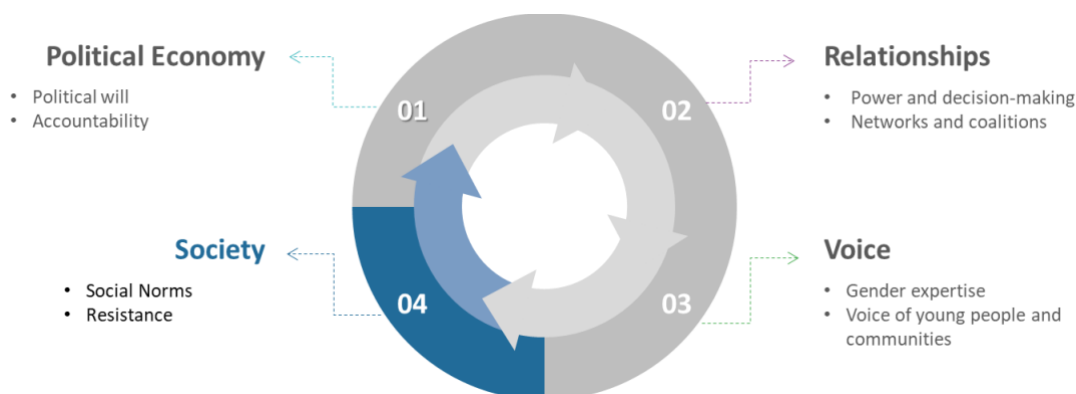
people and community views are sought but little effort was made to feedback how these were integrated and if they ultimately influenced decisions made by high level officials (see recommendation).

Learning from studies regarding youth and community participation are echoed in various interviewees' statements that effectiveness of delivery will be compromised if actors are not engaged in the design of development solutions affecting them. Young people fulfilling youth representation roles should be supported to ensure adequate processes are followed to collate views from the wider group. Considering the key role local communities and student networks play in mobilising support for education sector change this represents a missed opportunity for planners to engage and motivate actors more meaningfully (see recommendation).

Society

As the root cause of many gender inequalities, this fourth quadrant of the conceptual framework will consider two key dimensions of social norms within planning. Firstly, how social norms are discussed within planning exercises as a challenge to be addressed. Secondly, as key norm holders at institutional and local level, how religious and traditional leaders are included in planning exercises.

Resistance to social change is also examined within this section. This is understood to be an effort to maintain the patriarchal status quo. This relates to the fourth quadrant from the conceptual framework:



Social norms

Research Context: Gender & Development and Social Norms

The era of 'Gender and Development', which emerged after the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, tried to shift the vision of women's development away from seeing women in isolation of their social context to a broader vision of development that recognised people were embedded in relationships and society where power and gender norms acted as constraining factors to broader life

choices that involved access to resources and agency (Connell 2005; Kabeer 1999). This shift of perspective is an important backdrop to current development design yet is often overlooked in favour of the easier to measure changes to individual outcomes.

Social norms are understood to be the implicit informal rules or codes of conduct that the majority of people follow and have a powerful impact on developmental change. Norms play a vital part in the realisation of human rights and defining girls' and boys' education opportunities and outcomes. While evidence has shown that norms take a while to shift, are uneven and unpredictable, and can take time to translate into concrete behaviours, it is undeniable that they have the power to catalyse change if gate keepers are intentionally engaged in efforts to make progress (Harper et al. 2020). Whilst there are many actors involved in maintaining norms, studies emphasise the key role religious and traditional leaders play in promoting or resisting new norms. This influence is particularly notable on debates around dimensions of gender equality, such as ambitions for girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and child marriage, especially in countries where many schools are run by faith-based institutions (Diamond 2022; Harper et al. 2020). Using education to encourage critical thinking and dialogue with young people around harmful and discriminatory norms has been shown to be a powerful route to shifting attitudes and behaviours for gender equality (Harper et al. 2020). Models of Gender Transformative Education addresses these potentially limiting gender norms at all levels from policy levels, to teachers and teaching practices, within school environments and in the way young people and communities are encouraged to reflect on their own biases (UNGEI, UNICEF, Transform Education Plan International 2021).

Results

Evidence on the role of gender norms on gender equitable education systems is being overlooked in planning. Education sector analyses that informed education planning processes often highlighted the role of social norms played in influencing education success, particularly for girls (Sierra Leone, Mali, Mozambique, Chad, Nigeria, Niger). However, despite discussion of the role of social norms at these early stages of planning, this did not translate into concrete interventions in education plans (Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger) or into log frame indicators to allow progress to be measured (Mozambique). In Niger and Mali, although there was some discussion of the role of social norms in education effectiveness, this was limited, with actors assigning the responsibility for change to the community-level rather than something that could be addressed at a systems level. In Mozambique, discussions on social norms shifted responsibility to families to change issues such as child marriage rather than an examination of how norms could be addressed through the education system through policy or other interventions.

Interviewees reported that religious and traditional leaders could play a significant role in shifting gender norms, yet they seemed to play only a minor role in many planning exercises. Accounts from several countries indicated the missed

opportunity to engage religious and traditional leaders more intentionally in early stages of the planning processes (Mozambique, Chad, Burkina Faso). There were several accounts of leaders being part of the broader community consultation processes (Mali, Sierra Leone) and a much smaller number being within the more influential working groups or final planning processes (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mauritania). In unstable political environments, such as Mali or Niger, stakeholders reported that government bodies are reluctant to challenge religious or traditional practices, as these could be seen as political and damage personal careers. In Mali, debate about how the age of marriage or sexuality impact on girls' education were avoided for fear of being rejected by religious institutions who have widespread political support. Also, there were accounts from several sources that described how religious institutions had exerted power through media campaigns and could even get people in senior ministry positions sacked. This complexity means that engagement is inconsistent despite their importance.

Box 13: Good Practice Example Niger

In Niger, Qu'ranic theologians from major religious institutions have brought about real change in recent years by actively supporting girls' education through their teachings at the mosque. Due to low literacy rates in Niger, religious leaders play a significant role in informing and influencing community engagement with new ideas. However, there are limits to this support for gender equality; topics such as ending child marriage and promoting sexual and reproductive health still do not have widespread support.

Box 14: Comment from a stakeholder on addressing social norms:

'The ESP does not address social norms clearly enough. Opportunities for the Ministry to directly engage traditional leaders to support girls' education were missed. We consider these engagements key as they will make a significant difference to more transformative progress on gender equality in education.'" - Sierra Leone

"There is a very low understanding of how gendered social norms influence results, on top of other more tangible barriers. If these go unaddressed, then the root causes of exclusion will remain, and it is likely that progress will be only in numbers and not on quality" - Mozambique

Analysis

Despite the growing evidence base and understanding on how social norms create or obstruct progress on gender equality, education planning still gives very little attention to engaging with social norm change at a system level. Social norms seem to get excluded from planning processes in favour of more tangible measures that can be recorded and reported on easily (see recommendation). The implications are attention and resources are shifted back to the individual metrics of success such as access and learning outcomes rather than capturing progress on more transformative change in attitudes and norms.

Engagement with religious and traditional leaders in planning is sporadic and often at early, general phases of consultation. Respondents believed they were very influential and often 'very committed' to engaging on issues of gender equality. Yet, they often held strong views on the need to maintain gender status quos or restrict girls' education engagement. If brought on board however, their support of girls' education and broader issues on gender equality could be transformative. Including senior religious and traditional figures who champion changes for girls at the system level could influence more leaders to voice support for girls' education within districts; this inclusion could also help air concerns and identify blockers so they cannot derail plans later (see recommendation). It is recognised that these negotiations are complex and time intensive but valuable in tackling discriminatory norms. Looking over a longer time period in Burkina Faso for example, respondents noted that since 2000 whenever local leaders are engaged directly, progress has been made in changing cultural and social norms.

Resistance

Research Context: Resistance and gender backlash

All systems and institutions are made up of individuals who embody attitudes to gender that have been formed through their experiences and their upbringing. Efforts to challenge gender norms and discriminations may materially change the power and control of the very actors involved in these efforts (Waylen, Celis, Kantola and Weldon 2013). Given this, male and elite domination of political and education ministry posts is significant as it may be that these actors feel they have the most to lose if gender and other inequalities are addressed, resulting in their resistance to change. There is a concerning increase in examples of backlash or resistance to progress on gender equality in many contexts globally in part because of the unequal gender norms and power dynamics maintained by actors who should be driving change (Goetz 2020). Understanding the character and dynamics of this resistance is vital for preventing and reducing resistance within these political processes.

Backlash and resistance to efforts to address gender inequality are shown to manifest in a number of forms including denial of the problem; disavowal of

responsibility; inaction; appeasement; co-option; and repression. Notable resistance strategies range from passive blocking techniques that attempt to maintain the status quo, to strategies that minimise or co-opt change efforts, or techniques that are actively aggressive or violent in attempting to restore the old order (Flood, Dragiewicz and Pease 2021).

Results

Lack of progress on gender equality was often blamed on the limitations of budgets not being able to stretch to address issues driving gender inequalities. Respondents from Chad indicated limited progress was due the need for significant prioritisation processes, being faced with extreme scarcity of resources. Nigeria also features examples of bills that had made progress through planning and consultation and then were stalled at the stage of budgeting and final approval.

Resistance is often manifest through misunderstanding the technical role gender equality plays in education effectiveness, preventing actors from engaging constructively. In Mozambique, respondents indicated that gender is still seen as an issue that can be dealt with separately through an isolated gender division rather than understanding how it cuts across all divisions and activities. In Mali, the concept of gender is often interpreted as 'women standing up to men' which automatically creates an antagonistic atmosphere where only one party can win. Gender experts also repeatedly see the inaccurate conflation of 'gender' with 'girls', which is then used to dismiss gender input based on the assumption that it will exclude boys. In Mali, gender issues are dismissed as 'folklore' as they report girls and boys are always considered, demonstrating the superficial engagement and understanding of the technical solutions gender equality expertise can offer education. In Mauritania, Ministry stakeholders report that violence in urban centres is nearly non-existent as people have all been sensitised, again showing a limited awareness or engagement with how gendered violence manifests. As a result of this dismissal of the problem the bill on gender-based violence in Mauritania, which was proposed in 2012, has still not been passed.

Gender equality is also resisted on the grounds of it being a Western concept which is a threat to local culture. Development partners in Mozambique and Nigeria observed that resistance to gender equality was pervasive throughout ministries at all levels, from central, provisional and district levels seeing it as a threat to their culture. In Chad, stakeholders reported a varied engagement on the promotion of gender equality with attitudes in large cities and central ministries beginning to shift, while rural areas are still resistant to more progressive attitudes.

There were several examples of stakeholders reporting that supportive attitudes to gender equality were performative and not deeply held. This was backed up with examples that despite several countries committing to targets⁴ for women's roles

⁴ Recruitment targets for women within Ministry posts- Mali (33%) and Chad (30%) Niger (25%), Nigeria (35%)

in the ministry, interviews indicated that men in Mali and Nigeria were reluctant to make space for women, seeing their engagement as a threat to their own positions. Actors in Nigeria reported resistance to the bill to redress gender balance in leadership as a demonstration of hidden power to stall progress on the affirmative action bill that aimed to have 35% of education positions filled by women which could have a direct threat on men's positions. Stakeholders reported that while men publicly support this bill, they 'go behind' to influence inaction on this bill which has been waiting for approval for over three years.

Box 15: Comment from a stakeholder on attitudes towards gender:

'Men accept the problem, but don't yet address it.' - Nigeria

Analysis

Analysts of social norm change explain that people experience 'social sanctions' for behaving outside the accepted norm, which can result in performative attitudes being displayed whilst old attitudes remain and manifest through a variety of resistance techniques. Several country reports found that high level Ministry officials voice verbal support for gender equality efforts to be in line with ministry policies, yet behaviours continue to include denial of the problem – examples include- diminishing the prevalence of violence against girls in Mauritania; blocking techniques to maintain the status quo through silencing gender experts in Mali planning (reported in gender expertise section); and active strategies to block progress against the bill on women's recruitment in Nigeria; and stalling tactics on the Mauritanian bill on gender-based violence.

Other reasons for resistance such as scarcity of resources and misunderstanding of gender could also be seen as passive resistance techniques to maintain the status quo. Deeper discussions need to be had to examine whether these were being used to block progress or whether they present opportunities that could be resolved with the appropriate training and technical support (see recommendation). Certainly, several stakeholders in Nigeria saw the excuse of constrained budgets as an 'umbrella' under which passive resistance was being exerted.

Rejection of gender justice as a Western idea is something that social change advocates have been addressing for some time. The remedy for this method of resistance, that often claims men are having a crisis of identity due to the growing

feminisation of society, has been through active engagement of men and boys in issues of inequality, injustice and oppression demonstrating how equality benefits the whole of society (Otieno 2022). Awareness of gender backlash approaches as described in the research context section above, is useful to analyse whether these methods are being used systematically and to help develop a collective approach to dismantling them (see recommendation).

Implementation

This study primarily focuses on the planning process rather than the implementation of the plans being developed. While one question on the translation of plans into action was included in interviews, the findings were light touch on this area. A further study that focuses on this transition would be valuable to understand where blockages occur and what can make a plan more likely to be faithfully implemented (see recommendation).

Responses in this study indicate there is a relationship between technical gender input in planning processes and more intentional presence of gender equality efforts in education interventions. In Mali, where political will and Ministry budgets restricted gender expertise at planning phases, the action planning and budgeting process also omitted aspects that would have made education systems more gender-responsive, such as more gender balanced teacher recruitment and gender-responsive pedagogy. It was also reported that 'gender initiatives' in the Mali plan, such as support for a GBV project, would only be implemented if financed by external technical and donor partners.

In contrast, planning processes that included more intentional gender expertise across a broader remit of the plan did result in more gender-sensitive implementation, although various blockers could still limit effective delivery. Where political will encouraged debate and integration of gender expertise into planning, such as in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, plans featured some gender equality interventions. In Sierra Leone, these were often activities that were gender-sensitive, but not yet the more ambitious transformative interventions, such as addressing gender norms at a system level. In Nigeria gender-sensitive interventions that had been included in plans also often stalled or were compromised at the point of financing and were not implemented; this form of resistance was common.

The challenge of having insufficient funds to deliver on many plans in general and the gender aspects specifically were quoted in Chad, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Mali, Mozambique, and Niger and was often seen as a form of resistance, suggesting certain actors were not brought along in the planning process. There was also a dependency on donor funding and on local CSO networks to deliver more gender-transformative efforts, such as counselling services for girls on return to school after pregnancy, or childcare support for returning mothers. In Niger, the national strategy for accelerating girls and women's education ('Strategie nationale d'acceleration de l'education des filles et des Femmes' or SNAEFF) sits outside the main education plan and so is vulnerable to being side-lined due to lack of funding and low capacity to deliver. Although technical and funding partners were interested in supporting the Niger plan, there was poor follow up and coordination of stakeholders by the ministry. In Mozambique, initiatives allocated to the gender cross-cutting department were undermined through a lack of commensurate investment in human resources and finance to implement activities. As echoed in the findings in the resistance chapter, further research is needed to explore

budgeting and funding processes in the transition to implementation and whether this is being used as a method of resistance, or if there are ways to ensure this transition is more effective.

Inclusion in planning exercises was often described as a valuable way to ensure key people were supportive of implementation stage of the education plan. The need for better cross-sector coordination in planning was cited specifically as a key opportunity in Burkina Faso and Chad for ensuring better delivery.

A final area regarding implementation that would benefit from further research was captured in Mali where stakeholders reported that implementation of gender elements of the plan was often filtered through actors' own beliefs on gender equality as they passed through different levels of bureaucracy (see recommendation). This issue, identified in research as 'worker discretion' (Goetz 1997) or 'street level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980), highlights how policy level intentions are interpreted through the lens of actors' experiences, and are often compromised by delivery pressures and individual attitudes, resulting in delivery being significantly altered from original policy intention. This finding also supports a theme that came through many reports of the importance of deeper gender training and dialogue within and across teams and political levels, including with people who deliver gender equality programmes in education, to ensure messages and approaches are understood, accepted and consistently upheld.

Conclusion

The analyses presented by this study have enabled a cross-country examination of factors that can accelerate or block progress on gender equality within and through education sector planning. The study has provided an in-depth look into the politics and power dynamics of education planning processes, and the opportunities to make space for gender equality. While many promising practices were observed, much remains to be done to ensure that education planning processes become truly gender transformative. The study framework has presented 4 inter-linked lenses that indicate where and how education sector planning can be strengthened to be more gender-responsive and ultimately gender-transformative.

The political will lens showed that while high-level policies to promote gender equality exist, they are often not backed up by tangible resources and expertise to translate policies into practice. The study also indicated that coherent and bottom-up accountability systems, based on evidence that considers the full scope of gender equality, are not yet present in the study countries. These accountability systems are vital for building political will and ensuring gender equality results are delivered for children.

The critical lens of power revealed how powerful planning directorates have the ability to invite in or exclude different voices. Examples of planning directors giving 'power to' civil society networks and external gender experts were found, such as consultations with diverse groups, using robust gender evidence for planning exercises, an openness to technical critique from partners, and transparent and iterative decision making. However, these examples are not yet robust or consistent enough in any one country, and in many cases planning directorates maintain power by creating tightly controlled and invited spaces in which few voices can truly speak out.

The potential to use collective power was documented in this study, with examples of strong eco-systems of civil society networks and partners who support the collective effort to drive progress on gender equality. It was clear that these forces have the power to open up or create spaces and influence planning processes, but that much more can be done to support them to do this consistently.

An analysis of the voices included in planning showed how gender expertise within the ministries, often held by women working in deeply patriarchal environments, was at a significant disadvantage: minimised and excluded as individuals, first, and faced with a lack of interest in their technical area, second. Young people and communities were also not often given a platform or supported to influence the planning efforts that directly affect them.

Restrictive social and gender norms were widely acknowledged as playing a vital role in girls' educational exclusion, yet in planning these issues were rarely given enough attention. This was compounded by the inconsistent involvement in planning spaces of key norm holders such as religious and tradition leaders.

Resistance to progress on gender equality was noted in various forms across the study and needs to be captured and analysed to ensure this is being addressed systematically.

In conclusion, this study has identified a series of weaknesses, but also strengths within education sector planning to meaningfully integrate gender equality. Despite the many challenges that remain, significant strengths and opportunities have been identified that could be acted upon to make progress towards more transparent and intentional commitments to gender equality in education. The recommendations below highlight some of the areas in which action can be taken to ensure education becomes truly gender-transformative

Recommendations

Political will & Accountability:

- ✓ Underpin political commitment to gender equality with intentional funding and resources, including gender expertise at senior levels and adequate numbers of gender specific posts that are given a remit to engage with all areas of education planning.
- ✓ Ground education sector planning in education sector gender analyses and other robust evidence. The GCI [Gender Equality Snapshot Tool \(GES\)](#) is a good starting point for assessing gender equality in and through education.
- ✓ Set up coherent accountability mechanisms at all levels of the education system and across sectors, based on well designed, sex-disaggregated indicators to track progress.

Gender expertise within Ministries of Education:

- ✓ Organize gender equality training across ministries to engage leadership and planning staff on how their roles can contribute to challenging gender inequalities in bureaucratic cultures and in planning processes.
- ✓ As demonstrated through the gender expertise mapping, nationally accredited courses on gender & development at tertiary level or as part of professional development would help build a pipeline of gender expertise at national level and raise the profile of this area of expertise. These opportunities need to be relevant and appealing to both men and women.

Inclusion of civil society and partners:

✓ Design transparent planning processes that ensure consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including gender experts and grassroots voices, with a focus on inclusivity in terms of gender identity, age, ethnicity, disability and other factors.
✓ Ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and include opportunities for debate, feedback on how input is considered into key decisions and shared ownership of outcomes.
✓ Foster alliances between ministry gender units, civil society networks and gender activists to leverage technical support and advocacy on gender equality issues.
✓ Support civil society coalitions to convene specific gender and education working groups, within existing LEG structures or independently, to create a collective voice to advocate for impactful inclusion of gender equality throughout sector planning and implementation.
✓ Support young people to be part of consultation and decision-making. Systematic efforts – perhaps through coalition building – must be made to ensure that youth representatives can collate views from young people and are able to represent these in adult dominated forums in ways that are welcoming and not tokenistic.

Social Norms:

✓ Commission and collate good quality, nationally specific research on gender and social norms and the role they play in education, to understand where and how key opportunities to shift norms can be included in education planning.
✓ Engage context specific norm holders such as traditional and religious leaders in ongoing dialogue and in education planning specifically to explore ways to transform social norms at a system level.
✓ Track and analyse evidence of resistance or backlash (within the system as well as in the community) to progress on gender equality efforts and integrate the learning into training and awareness raising initiatives.

Further Research:

More research is needed on:

- | |
|---|
| ✓ The institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming mechanisms in government bodies and what factors lead to more effective gender units. |
| ✓ The process by which translation of education plans into budgets and implementation plans happens to understand where and how blockages arise to delivering on gender equality commitments. |
| ✓ The role of 'worker discretion' - how gender equality projects and intentions are filtered from policy level to actions on the ground. |

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Annexes

Annex A: Planning processes analysed in this study

Mali: ESP 2019-28- PRODEC II. Completed 2019.

Mozambique: ESP 2020-29. Completed 2020.

Sierra Leone: ESP 2022-26. Due to be completed 2022.

Niger: ESP transition plan 2019. Completed 2019.

Nigeria: Katsina State. GPE planning exercise 2021-30.

Burkina Faso: Strategic Plan for primary & secondary (PSDEBS) 2021- 2025. Completed 2021.

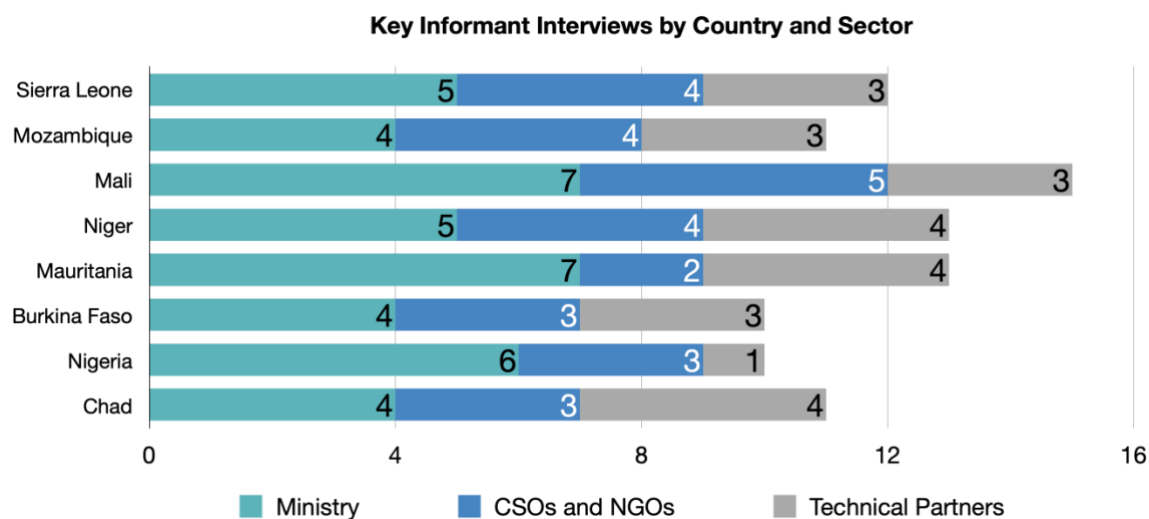
Chad: Interim Education Plan (PIET 2) Completed 2021.

Mauritania: Action plan budget process 2019-21 (PNDSE II). Completed 2018.

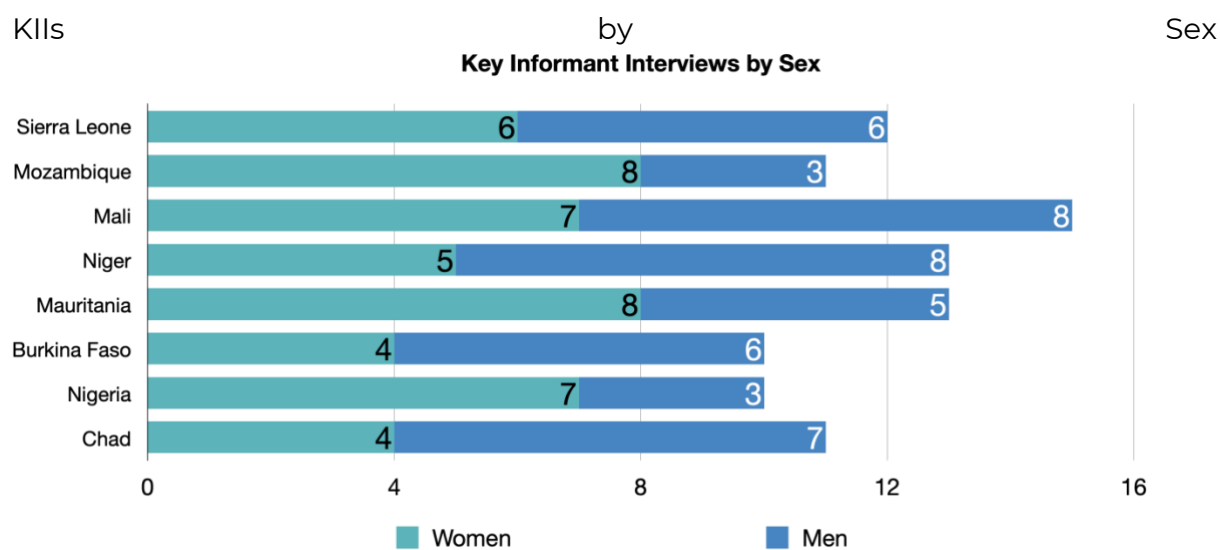
Annex B: Key Informant Interviews distribution by sector, country and sex

Countries	Total interviews
Sierra Leone	12
Mali	15
Mozambique	11
Niger	13
Burkina Faso	10
Mauritania	13
Nigeria	10
Chad	11
TOTAL	95

KIIs by Country and Sector



Technical partners include external consultants involved in planning processes.
See individual country reports (Annex E) - for KII details by country.



Annex C: National signatories and global conventions

	UNESCO Convention against discrimination in Education (CADE)	National policy on gender equality	Education policy on gender equality and inclusion	SRGBV / Policy on corporal violence	Policy banning FGM	Policy banning Child Marriage	Policy on adolescent pregnancy and right to education
Sierra Leone	ratified CADE	There is no specific national gender policy.	(1) Sierra Leone has an Education Sector Analysis, 2020 that has a section specifically addressing gender. (2) The Education Sector Plan, 2022-2026 contains gender equality strategies. (3) The National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, 2021 addresses the right to education for children with disabilities and vulnerable adolescent girls.	(1) The country COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan focuses on specific actions to mitigate risks of GBV, early pregnancy, tackling gender norms and support girls’ retention in education. (2) In 2020, the government also launched a task force on school-related GBV to address high rates of SRGBV experienced by learners and girls in particular.	No policy information found	(1) The country has a ' National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage, 2018-22 ' that guides prioritisation of evidence-based interventions to reduce adolescent pregnancy and child marriage. (2) The Child Rights Act, 2007 sets the minimum legal age for marriage at 18 years. (3) The Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, 2009 allows underage children to marry with parental consent regardless of minimum age limit.	(2) Under the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools, 2021 , pregnant girls’ and adolescent mothers’ right to education is reaffirmed without conditions and restrictions. (3) In 2020, the country also revoked its ten-year ban on public school attendance for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers.

Mali	ratified CADE	<p>(1) Mali has a National Gender Policy that frames the work of the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>(2) The review and revision of the National Policy on Girls Schooling is underway.</p>	<p>(1) The country education sector plan, 'Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation et de la formation professionnelle deuxième génération (PRODEC II), 2019-2028' includes strategies to address gender gaps in education, promotion of gender-responsive learning environments and facilities, social mobilisation on girls education and initiatives to combat violence.</p>	No specific information found	No policy information found	<p>(1) There is no national strategy to end child marriage in the country.</p> <p>(2) The Mali Family Code (2011) sets the minimum age of marriage at 16 years for girls and 18 years for boys.</p>	<p>(1) Mali has a conditional re-entry to school policy for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers.</p>
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Niger	ratified CADE	(1) There is no specific national gender policy.	(1) Niger has a National Strategy on Girls' Education and Training. (2) Niger does not have an inclusive education policy.	(1) Niger accepted the recommendation to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning corporal punishment in children's education in the Universal Periodic Review of Niger in 2011 . (2) The country has a National Strategy for the Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence (2017-21) (3) There is also a national decree the, ' Decret présidentiel pour la protection, le soutien et l'accompagnement de la jeune fille ' for protecting and supporting schoolgirls.	No policy information found	(1) There is no national strategy to end child marriage in the country. (2) Under the Civil Code (1993) the minimum legal age for marriage is 15 years for girls and 18 years for boys. Exceptions exist for minors to marry with parental consent.	(1) Niger has a National Strategy on the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy (2015-20) (2) The country has no specific policy for re-entry or law to protect pregnant girls right to education.
Nigeria	ratified CADE	(1) Nigeria has a National Policy on Gender in Basic Education, 2006 that is currently being revised.		(1) Corporal punishment is not fully prohibited in any setting, including as a sentence for crime (2) Incidences of whipping, flogging, caning is still lawful under state, traditional and/or religious law as a sentence for crimes committed by juveniles.	No policy information found	(1) The country has a multi-sectoral National Strategy to End Child Marriage in Nigeria (2016-21) (2) The Federal Child Rights Act, 2003 prohibits marriage below the age of 18.	(1) Nigeria has a law that protects pregnant girls right to stay in school or resume education. However, there is no policy that stipulates the re-entry process to be followed by schools.

Burkina Faso	ratified CADE		<p>(1) The country national education sector plan, 'Programme sectoriel de l'éducation et de la formation (PSEF) 2012-21' integrates aspects linked to gender and disability noting harmful norms and stigma as major barriers to education for learners with disabilities.</p> <p>(2) There is a specific national strategy that targets girls education, 'Strategie nationale d'acceleration de l'éducation des filles (SNAEF)'.</p> <p>(3) An inclusive education policy is being developed.</p>		No policy information found	<p>(1) There is a national strategy to end child marriage, 'Strategie Nationale de Prevention et D'Elimination du Mariage d' Enfants (2016-25)' for the country.</p> <p>(2) Additionally, the country COVID-19 action plan, 'Plan de response du MENAPLN pour la continuite educative dans le contexte du COVID-19' identifies child marriage as a key risk factor for girls and girls education.</p> <p>(3) A revision of the Burkina Faso Family Code (1989) in 2018, penalises all forms of child marriage.</p>	<p>(1) No specific policy or law exists to protect pregnant girls and adolescent mother's right to education.</p> <p>(2) Under Article 1 of the Constitution of Burkina Faso, the 1974 issued national decree prohibits dismissal of pregnant girls from school.</p>
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Mauritania	Has not ratified CADE	(1) Mauritania's current education sector plan, ' <i>Programme national de développement du secteur de l'éducation (PNDSE II), 2011-2020</i> ' includes a strategy to reduce gender gaps in education and improve girls transition rates to secondary education.		(1) Corporal punishment is not fully prohibited in any setting, including as a sentence for crime. (2) Incidences of whipping, flogging, caning is still lawful under state, traditional and/or religious law as a sentence for crimes committed by juveniles.	No policy information found	(1) No specific law banning child marriages is present. (2) Under the Personal Status Code Act, 2001 the minimum legal age of marriage is 18 years with no exceptions.	(1) Mauritania has a law that protects pregnant girls' right to stay in school or resume education.
Mozambique	has not ratified CADE	(1) Mozambique's education sector plan, ' <i>Plano Estratégico da Educacao (PEE), 2020</i> ' addresses gender as a central theme and includes it as one of the plan's main pillars.		(1) The country expressed its commitment to prohibiting corporal punishment for all its children in the Universal Periodic Review of Mozambique in 2016 . (2) The country has set up a new multi-sectoral mechanism in 2021 for the prevention, reporting, referral and response to violence against children in schools.	No policy information found	(1) A national law criminalising child marriage was passed by the Mozambique Parliament in 2019. (2) The minimum age of marriage is 18 without exceptions.	(1) No specific policy protecting girls' right to remain in school or support to pregnant girls and adolescent mothers exists. (2) In 2018, Mozambique revoked a national decree requiring pregnant girls to study in night-shift schools.

Chad	ratified CADE	<p>(1) The country has a National Gender Policy.</p> <p>(2) There is a five-year 'Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Gender Policy 2019-23'. It focuses on development of initiatives to reduce gender gaps in education, eliminate sexist stereotypes in schools, promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, and combat GBV and other harmful practices.</p>	<p>(1) Chad's education sector plan, 'Plan interimaire de l'education au Tchad (PIET), 2018-20' focuses on inclusion and mobilisation of community stakeholders to transform social norms, incentives for girls school attendance, capacity-building on gender and GBV etc. (2) There is a strategy to tackle the issue of menstrual hygiene management in schools, namely the 'Strategie nationale de l'eau de l'assainissement et de l'hygiene en milieu scolaire 2018-30'. Under it, inclusive and gender-responsive water, sanitation and hygiene programmes (WASH) in schools have been addressed.</p>	<p>(1) The country has an emergency response plan for COVID-19 issued in April 2020, 'Plan de reponse nationale du secteur education a l'epidemie de COVID-19 au Tchad (PRNSE C19)' that recognises GBV and school dropouts as a key risk for girls in particular and proposes a communication strategy focused on sexual exploitation, GBV, discrimination and stigmatisation to address these risks.</p>	No policy information found	<p>(1) No specific law banning child marriages is present. (2) In 2015, The Parliament of Chad approved an ordinance to increase the age of marriage from 15 years to 18 years.</p>	<p>(1) No specific law or policy protecting pregnant girls' and adolescent mothers' right to education is present.</p>
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Annex D: Country Reports

Attached separately.

D.1 - Mozambique

D.2 - Nigeria

D.3 - Sierra Leone

D.4 - Burkina Faso

D.5 - Chad

D.6 - Niger

D.7 - Mauritania

D.8 - Mali