# FINAL REPORT

Formative review of the Gender at the Center Initiative's activities

*March 21st, 2023*

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## ACRONYMS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AFD | Agence Française de Développement | IIEP | International Institute for Educational Planning |
| ALIGN | Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms | INEE | International Network for Education in Emergencies |
| ANCEFA | African Network Campaign on Education for All | ILO | International Labor Organization |
| AU/CIEFFA | African Union International Center for Girls and Women Education in Africa | IO | Intermediate Outcome |
| | | IRB | Institutional Review Board |
| CADE | Convention Against Discrimination in Education | KII | Key Informant Interview |
| | | KEQ | Key Evaluation Question |
| CB | Capacity Building | LEG | Local Education group |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women | MEAL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning |
| | | MICS | Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys |
| CESA | Continental Education strategy for Africa | MPI | Multidimensional Poverty Index |
| CPGE | Community of Practice in Gender and Education | NEET | Not in Education, Employment, or Training |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization | NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee | ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| ECW | Education Cannot Wait | OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| EiE | Education in Emergencies | | |
| EM | Evaluation Matrix | OoSC | Out of School Children |
| EQ | Evaluation Question | PMF | Performance Measurement Framework |
| ESP | Education Sector Plan | QA | Quality Assurance |
| ET | Evaluation Team | RESEN | Rapport d'État du Système Éducatif National |
| ESA | Education sector analysis | | |
| ESP | Education sector plan | SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| FAWE | Forum for African Women Educationalists | SERAT | Sexuality Education Review and Assessment |
| FCDO | UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office | SGBV | School-related gender-based violence |
| GAGE | Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence | SIGI | Social Institutions and Gender Index |
| GBV | Gender-based violence | SWEDD | Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend |
| GCI | Gender at the Center Initiative | | |
| GII | Gender Inequality Index | TES | Transforming Education Summit |
| GEMR | Global Education Monitoring Report | ToC | Theory of Change |
| GER | Gross Enrolment Rate | ToR | Terms of Reference |
| GES | Gender Equality in Education Snapshot | UIS | UNESCO Institute for Statistics |
| GPE | Global Partnership for Education | UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| CPR | Gender Programmatic Review | | |
| GRESP | Gender responsive education sector planning | UNGEI | United Nations Girls' Education Initiative |
| | | UNICEF | United Nations Children Emergency Fund |
| HLSC | High Level Steering Committee | | |
| | | WB | World Bank |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education is a foundational leverage for changing mindsets and behaviors. Advancing gender equality in and through education is therefore recognized as critical to foster progress towards gender equality in society. Achieving gender equality is about making a real difference in all spheres of women's lives. It involves a substantive shift not only in the proportion of men and women under specific indicators, but in the deeper dimensions of societal norms and sense of identities – to be valued and respected equally, regardless of gender. Since the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action there has been considerable progress, but gender inequalities persist. Gains are also fragile as COVID, humanitarian crises and growing backlash against gender equality reaches those facing intersectional forms of exclusions, such as minority groups, girls in rural areas, etc. It is in this context that centering gender in and through education becomes critical for progress in all other measures of human development to unlock the potential of learners in all their diversity. More explicit and active commitment is needed to address the gender-based barriers, stigma and discrimination that hold learners back from fulfilling their right to education and future life, work and leadership opportunities.

The Gender at the Center Initiative was developed in 2019, by 5 of the G7 Ministers of Education and Development, in collaboration with civil society and multilateral organizations to support gender equality in and through education. The Transforming Education Summit elevated gender equality to the top of the political agenda through the launch of the Global Platform for Gender Equality in and through Education. From 2020 to 2023, the GCI has been implemented in eight sub-Saharan countries, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, led by Ministries of Education and a CSO consortium formed by the African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and Plan International, as well as the African Union for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU-CIEFFA), the G7 Donors and the Technical Partners (UNGEI, GPE, UNESCO, UNESCO-IIEP, and UNICEF). These organizations coming together for the GCI Alliance.

A mid-term review of the Gender at the Center Initiative's first two years of implementation was commissioned to better understand the Initiative's successes and limitations, and to identify areas of improvement in planning for the future. As GCI targets long-term changes, the implementation period considered is of course very short. The review was developed to use an inductive and participatory approach, to identify emergent outcomes, and ensure that the findings are useful to a wide range of stakeholders in the GCI Alliance. Data collection included interviews with 34 individuals within 19 organizations, as well as group discussions with representatives from ministries of education, civil society, and technical partners in all 8 countries.

![CAYAMBE EDUCATION]

*GCI Program Summary*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project title** | Gender at the Center Initiative |
| **Country / areas** | 8 beneficiary countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)<br>Actions targeting the global and regional (African) levels |
| **Total budget** | / Total Budget: 12,1 M USD (6,6 M USD under UNGEI and 5,51 MUSD under IIEP)<br>/ Donors: France (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and AFD), United Kingdom, European Union, Germany, Italy. |
| **Duration** | First phase from 2019 until the end of 2023 |
| **Overall objective** | Reduce gender inequalities in and through education through a combination of initiatives led at the global, regional, and country levels |
| **Specific objectives** | / Improved gender equality mainstreaming by Ministries bridging supply and demand for gender equality in education,<br>/ Improved enabling environment and transform social norms in support of gender equality mainstreaming. |
| **Activities and results** | / Tools and Methodologies (GES, EIE-Genkit, training courses…)<br>/ Technical assistance (Gender analysis of education sector, transformative leadership, Conceptual approach for analysis on gender in budget processes, several country support and reviews)<br>/ Training and CB (446 civil society actors strengthened and 667 MoE staff trained)<br>/ Research and Action<br>/ Collaboration and knowledge exchange:<br>/ Awareness raising and advocacy: Over 2 million people sensitized on gender equality in education through radio spots, television debates and community engagement. |

*Table 1: GCI Program Summary*

*Summary of findings*

Overall, the evaluation found that GCI has been designed to fill an important niche in gender equality in and through education. Its broad approach of working both within ministries and civil society, through partnerships, is one that most people find valuable and relevant. There is currently insufficient investment in gender equality in and through education in the countries involved, and GCI has made some important in roads in certain areas of intervention.

However, two major areas for improvement were identified as necessary for GCI to be able to fulfil its critical mandate. The first is refinement in the initiative's strategy, to fine-tune the desired results, and build a collective vision among all stakeholders about the purpose of the initiative. This will not only generate a more theoretically sound theory of change, but will also promote collective ownership and stronger partnerships, due to clearer roles and responsibilities. The second is a resolution of various structural problems the initiative has faced, such as issues in coordinating national-level engagement, a concentration of resources at the global level, challenges in moving resources at an appropriate rate, and a politically driven selection of countries. When these two areas are resolved, several more minor technical issues are likely to then fall into place.

## / Relevance

There was tremendous consensus that GCI is highly relevant, in that it meets a critical need faced by all the participating countries who are committed to strengthening gender equality in and through education. Furthermore, GCI's integrated approach of working both with ministries of education, and with civil society and other actors to support an enabling environment for gender inclusion has been viewed as a key strength of the program. GCI has invested considerable energy in partnership building and relationship strengthening among other key activities, and this has demonstrated effectiveness through the current widespread acknowledgement of the relevance of GCI's work, which was really built over the last 3 years. The primary limitations to the relevance of GCI come through weaknesses in its operational delivery model, which has limited coordination capacity at a country level. In other words, the Initiative is constrained in the degree to which it can adapt activities to changing contexts.

## / Effectiveness

GCI has been extremely effective[1] in putting gender on the agenda and building awareness and support for the idea that education sector planning should not be gender blind. Furthermore, the initiative has catalyzed collaboration on gender in the education sector planning space in a way that was not taking place before. Training has been very highly rated by members of ministries of education, not only for skills development, but also for its role in convening and promoting issues of gender in and through education. At a country level, limitations in operational or coordination arrangements were reported. Furthermore, certain delays in the first two years of operations, in securing committed funding and setting up internal systems, limited the Initiative's effectiveness in the period under study.

## / Efficiency

GCI has achieved significant results with limited resources, and several factors in GCI's program design have limited its efficiency, such as limited decentralization. There have also been contextual factors, such as COVID-19 breaking out right at the launch of the Initiative, and a delay in donors delivering on commitments. However, several actions could be undertaken to improve efficiency, including focusing more resources at local level work.

## / Sustainability

GCI's sustainability is heavily reliant on two major markers: its partnerships, and leadership from ministries of education. From this perspective, the evaluation results are particularly promising, because these have been two definitive strengths of the initiative. However, strengthening and concretizing support from GPE and UNICEF remain important for GCI's long-term planning. GCI has already managed to carve a relevant strategic niche for its work which speaks positively to its sustainability, and invested in partnerships that will carry forward the work of the initiative. The creation of concrete tools is also a sustainable result: the participatory gender diagnostic has become a point of reference for many, and the GES toolkit also provides important support.

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[1] As GCI was not initially conceived as a set of costed activities, therefore effectiveness considerations are based on preliminary achievements rather than on expected results.

/ Conclusion

The Gender at the Center Initiative has played an important strategic role in garnering support for gender equality in and through education at local and global levels, as demonstrated by the Freetown Manifesto. Since its inception, it has already changed discourse and debates in this area. Furthermore, it has invested significant resources in setting up the partnerships, relationships, and systems to deliver on its mandate.

Gender equality in and through education is a particularly strategic area of work at the moment. Data systems are improving in their disaggregation, and there is growing recognition and prioritization of intersectional forms of exclusion, with a global agenda to Leave No One Behind. There is a growing research base indicating that inequality at all levels, with gender inequality being particularly prevalent, are slowing progress on all forms of human development. Finally, the Freetown Manifesto is only one example of an increasing political will to invest in gender equality in and through education. GCI, in three short years, has already gained considerable traction in ensuring this issue is a priority, and there is considerable potential to build on this progress through careful planning, reflecting on lessons, and building towards GCI's strengths in this space.

To do this, GCI must address a few challenges. It is important that GCI refines its identity and ensure that it remains unique and complementary to other initiatives in the space. This requires growing beyond a somehow narrow focus on investing in gender responsive sector planning bearing in mind the holistic definition adopted, while still defining results that are reflective of the indicative's mandate and capacity. There are several ways of approaching this, and a collaborative strategic planning process that can inform future work of GCI is central to moving forward in a way that removes the barriers experienced so far in efficiency and effectiveness but play to the Initiatives strengths of relevance and sustainability.

*Summary of Lessons Learned and Recommendations*

1. **Restrategizing**. GCI has learned a lot about its strategy in its initial years of implementation. The theory of change and results framework could all be improved and maybe simplified, and as GCI moves into a next phase, a structured process should take place to do this. Particular attention should be given to partnerships. Furthermore, attention should be given to building up from a country level and building on some of the key successes of GCI. The evaluation team recommends that the Freetown Manifesto guide strategic decision making for the next phase.
   a) The structure and architecture of GCI should be revised to better align to the current needs of the program. The current structure and resources are far too centralized, and specific attention needs to be given to integration, and defining linkages with existing initiatives.
   b) GCI should revise its theory of change to both better match the ambitions of GCI's results to the scale of the initiative, as well as to more clearly carve out the strategic contribution of the initiative. This will help clarify the boundaries of the initiative for partnership building and ownership. This should include a refinement of GCI's programmatic focus, with clarity on targeting specific interventions that will strategically contribute to GCI's mandate.
   c) The programmatic and geographic focus of GCI should be refined, with clarity on targeting specific interventions that will strategically contribute to GCI's mandate. These programmatic focus areas should be defined from a combined process of considering country demand, as well as emergent results from research conducted in the first phase. GCI should carefully

consider the appropriateness of activities focused on planning and tool development. There is a general need to shift support away from planning, and to ensure there is sufficient capacity for implementation, but this has implications for both the resourcing and the structuring of the network and should be done with consideration for alignment to the policy cycle. A national approach is not appropriate to many of the issues GCI is aiming to address. However, GCI is not well equipped to work in a structured way at a school, district, or otherwise localized level. These is a need to either adjust the ambitions of GCI, or the structure of the Alliance, so that there is an alignment on this issue.

d) GCI should develop a partnership strategy that is in line with both its strategic and sustainability requirements. Deliberate, planned, strategic linkages should be built with organizations that could have complementary mandates.

2. **In country operations.** The processes of country selection, coordination, and activity delivery need to be reworked. This is already in progress, but specific decisions should be guided by certain updated strategic decisions, to ensure there is an alignment between overall strategy, and operational delivery mechanisms.

a) GCI should significantly expand its in-country presence, while being cautious not to duplicate existing structures. Methods for this could include making explicit and standardizing the roles of country focal persons, broadening the responsibilities of a wider range of GCI Alliance members, or having roles and responsibilities that could be resourced and taken up by existing national actors. Specific decisions should be made with consideration for other initiatives that may have common operational requirements as GCI, as profiled in the report above.

b) The capacity of LEGs is not of consistently high enough quality and not inclusive enough to local CSO-NGO capacity to be the primary coordination mechanism. GCI should consider different models of country engagement, including involving countries in specific activities, or communities of practice, based on their context and needs. Decisions such as deeper engagement with fewer countries, or broader engagement with many countries should be made according to the revised strategic direction.

3. **GCI has achieved several notable successes**. However, the current 'story' of GCI's work isn't collectively held even by key role players in the initiative. In moving towards the second stage, GCI should work on **a consolidated narrative** of both strategy and progress.

a) There should be an integration (including the workplan, budget, and theory of change), that includes the work of capacity building within ministries as well as the enabling environment work with CSOs, in an integrated way. This should also be reflected in the operational structure.

b) GCI should strengthen collective ownership of the Initiative's finances, including more transparent, collective financial follow-up. This will lead to increased accountability for results across all members of the Alliance, as well as to beneficiary countries.

c) Diagnostics carried out in GCI's first phase should be used to identify areas that would be appropriate for developing communities of practice or structured knowledge production that would directly inform ministerial practice.

## 1. CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

### 1.1 Gender disparities in education and their monitoring

Education is a foundational leverage for changing mindsets and behaviors. Advancing gender equality in and through education is therefore recognized as critical to foster progress towards gender equality in society. Achieving gender equality is about making a real difference in all spheres of women's lives. It involves a substantive shift not only in the proportion of men and women under specific indicators, but in the deeper dimensions of societal norms and sense of identities – to be valued and respected equally, regardless of gender.

Gender parity, measured statistically through female-to-male or girl-to-boy ratio, remains a key measure for assessing gender inequality as well as progress in other specific indicators. Gender parity in education around the world has improved over the last quarter of a century since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action, a landmark commitment by 189 countries to advance the rights of girls and women. Between 1995 and 2018, the percentage of countries with gender parity in education rose from 56 % to 65 % in primary, from 45 % to 51 %t in lower secondary, and from 13 % to 24% in upper secondary education[2]. Despite this great progress, gender-related barriers continue to combine with other socioeconomic barriers to prevent girls and boys (and women and men) from accessing and benefiting from quality education and learning opportunities.

The 2020 Global monitoring report has confirmed the necessity to go beyond gender parity at school and adopt multi-dimensional insights with regards to where gender inequalities and equalities are in education and how change processes can be tracked. Therefore, gender equality in and through education is also about equality of chances and of opportunities for girls and boys: this involves equal access to schools, safe access to schools, equal treatment at school by the teacher, by the school staff, access to separate latrines with water, by eliminating gender stereotypes in the curricula, the end of gender-based violence at school, and an increase in the number of female teachers and directors.

Broadening the perspective, key factors outside education system institutions are also to be included. As demonstrated by OECD's SIGI reports[3], reforms can have limited traction unless cultural, social and religious norms and structures are taken into account. This involves considering the broader social and economic contexts (gender norms and institutions) and key education system characteristics (laws and policies, teaching and learning practices, learning environment and resources), and then capturing how they reproduce gender inequality or support gender equality in schools. In other words, equality is understood as "expanding freedoms, opportunities, agency and valued outcomes without penalties associated with gender"[4].

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[2] UNESCO. 2020. Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: A new generation: 25 years of efforts for gender equality in education. Paris, UNESCO. Retrieved at: https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/2020genderreport
[3] Social Institutions and Gender Index, 2019 Global report, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/bc56d212-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/bc56d212-en consulted in 02/2023
[4] Unterhalter, E., Measuring gender equality in education, London, 09/2015, https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1507938/1/Beyond%20%20Gender%20Parity%20in%20measuring%20gender%20equality%20in%20education.pdf

At country level, the Gender Inequality Index[5] tends to confirm that high gender inequality is more frequent in low human development countries. Within the 31 poorest countries, 28 are located on the African continent, and most of them rank between 127 (Burundi) and 170 (Yemen) in terms of gender equality. In addition, within and across countries, multiple social, economic, and structural factors impact the most marginalized. For example, gender inequality may be particularly marked in rural or conflict-affected areas, among the poorest households, or for children who have disabilities or are members of an ethnic minority.

In this context, adequate data sources to monitor gender equality progress and capture differentiated gender barriers and situations are not yet fully available, with existing sources (mostly DHS and MICS household surveys) failing to address key dimensions such as gendered questions on the quality of work or quality of learning outcomes. Although the demand for more and better gender data is on the rise, gender gaps in statistical systems have not been fully addressed. A recent review[6] of over 100 data stakeholders revealed that most efforts to support gender data take place at the international level, demonstrating a need for increased advocacy efforts at the regional, national, and local levels to support the production, but more importantly the use of gender data.

## 1.2 International commitments and leverages for action

Education has massive transformational power to change mindsets and behaviors and foster a more gender-responsive environment. Education decision makers have a key responsibility to address these remaining gaps and monitor the achievement of SDG 4 (quality education) and 5 (gender equality) in terms of gender parity and equality in achievement, transition, completion, and learning outcomes. On the African continent, these commitments are complemented by the African Union's 2016-2025 continental education strategy for Africa[7] on gender parity and equality. They are detailed in Annex 2.

To ensure the achievement of those ambitious objectives, education decision makers involved in the formulation, planning and implementation of education policies are to increase their capacities and abilities to promote gender equality in decision-making, planning and management of education. In practical terms, such shift should include a better understanding of the issues and challenges of gender equality in and through education, identifying and analyzing gender-related education data as well as identifying concrete strategies and actions to address gender disparities in education at the right scale.

The accelerated mobilization on gender equality in and through education is materialized in the launch of a new global platform for Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's empowerment in and through education monitored by the SGG4 HLSC and presented during the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022.

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[5] GII is a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market. See https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII consulted in 02/2023
[6] https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/State-of-Gender-Data-Financing-2021_FINAL.pdf
[7] https://ecosocc.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2021-09/continental-strategy-education-africa-english.pdf
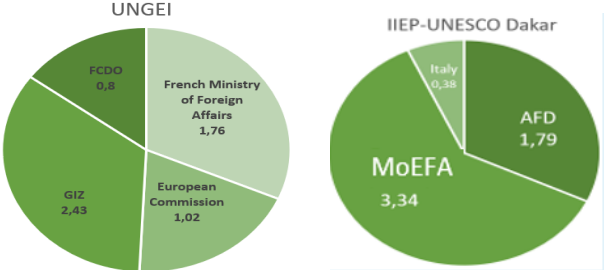
## 2. SUBJECT OF THE REVIEW: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE GCI

### 2.1 Data Sheet

The Gender at the Center Initiative (GCI) was developed and launched by the G7 Ministers of Education and Development in collaboration with multilateral and civil society organizations committed to advancing gender equality in and through education. The Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment issued at the G7 leaders' summit in Biarritz, France, in August 2019[8] gave a new momentum to ensure education for all girls and boys a provided powerful support for the GCI. As a multistakeholder initiative, GCI supports the leadership of ministries of education (MoEs) and other national actors to advance gender equality in education. The data sheet proposed hereafter gives an overview:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project title** | Gender at the Center Initiative |
| **Country / areas** | 8 beneficiary countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)<br>Actions targeting the global and regional (African) levels |
| **Support / programable amount by donor in million USD** | / France (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs),<br>/ United Kingdom,<br>/ European Union,<br>/ Germany,<br>/ Italy.  |
| **Coordinating agencies** | / UNGEI,<br>/ IIEP – UNESCO Dakar. |
| **Technical partners** | / GPE,<br>/ UNESCO,<br>/ UNICEF. |
| **CSO consortium** | / FAWE,<br>/ ANCEFA,<br>/ Plan International. |
| **Inter-governmental organisation** | AU-CIEFFA |
| **Duration** | First phase from 2019 until the end of 2023 |
| **Overall objective** | Reduce gender inequalities in and through education through a combination of initiatives led at the global, regional, and country levels |
| **Specific objectives** | / Improved gender equality mainstreaming by Ministries bridging supply and demand for gender equality in education, |

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[8] https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/05/e8aa2525311a98227c935900abefdce7eb911896.pdf

| | |
|---|---|
| | / Improved enabling environment and transform social norms in support of gender equality mainstreaming. |
| **Activities and results** | / Tools and Methodologies<br>  o GES toolkit,<br>  o EiE-Genkit,<br>  o Training course on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV),<br>  o Gender participatory diagnostics,<br>  o Gender mainstreaming in education sector analyses and plans.<br><br>/ Technical assistance<br>  o Gender analysis of education sector and ESA (Nigeria gender analysis of education sector, Sierra Leone ESA gender chapter, Burkina Faso participatory gender diagnostic, conceptualization of participatory gender diagnostics in Mali and Niger, Mauritania gender sensitive ESA),<br>  o GES Toolkit rapid assessment (Mali and Chad),<br>  o Conceptual approach for analysis on gender in budget processes (2 GCI countries),<br>  o Support joint sector review (Niger),<br>  o STEM strategy for higher education (Nigeria),<br>  o Preventing SRGBV in Mozambique.<br>  o Regional training on Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality in Education in Senegal and Sierra Leone,<br><br>/ Training and CB (446 civil society actors strengthened and 667 MoE staff trained)<br>  o Short course on GRESP for French-speaking (2020) and English-speaking (2021) MoE staff,<br>  o CSO staff trained on Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning (GRESP)<br>  o Support the development of data collection tool on SRGBV in Niger,<br>  o National training Gender-Responsive Education Planning and Transformative Leadership (Nigeria),<br>  o Country-level training of CSO actors on Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning (8 GCI countries),<br>  o Training on SRGBV (Mozambique).<br><br>/ Research and Action<br>  o Desk study on Gender norms & Education in 8 GCI countries,<br>  o Study on gender and skills (8 GCI countries),<br>  o Desk study on female school principals (14 countries – 3 GCI countries),<br>  o Study on gender and education in crisis setting,<br>  o SWOT analysis on gender mainstreaming in education sector planning (8 GCI countries).<br><br>/ Collaboration and knowledge exchange:<br>  o French and English speaking MoE communities of Practices,<br>  o Mapping cross-sectoral collaboration between MoE and other ministries in 8 GCI countries,<br>  o High-level meeting for Ministers and Permanent Secretaries in Sierra Leone.<br><br>/ Awareness raising and advocacy in 7 GCI countries:<br>  o Freetown Manifesto endorsed by 8 GCI countries,<br>  o Over 2 million people sensitized on gender equality in education through radio spots, television debates and community engagement. |

*Table 2: GCI Program Overview*

## 2.2 GCI's approach and Theory of Change

The backbone of GCI's approach is to address gender equality in and through education holistically, considering, but not limiting itself to issues of gender parity. GCI embraces building capacity within ministries of education, while also creating an enabling environment through working with civil society and other actors to build leadership and change a culture of gender blindness or exclusion. This approach is rooted in gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP)[9] and contributes to the advancement and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals **4 and 5**, and the gender targets of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa.

The GCI's objectives respond to the ambition to promote gender equality "in and through" education as a response to the above-mentioned multidimensional approach, and to concretely understand the institutional foundations that reproduce inequalities and that can support equality. These institutional foundations comprise both political and economic processes, socio-cultural norms and policy and management regimes; the GCI objectives are formulated as follows:

**Improved gender equality mainstreaming by Ministries**
- Strengthened institutional systems and processes within MoE
- Strengthened technical capabilities within MoE
- Strengthened capacity of MoE to change internal organizational culture
- Strengthened cross-sectoral dialogue between ministries

**Improved enabling environment in support of gender equality mainstreaming**
- Strengthened capacity of national- and local-level civil society organizations
- Improved coordination for GE in education through LEGs
- Improved policy and practice dialogue for GE and education at national, continental, and global levels
- Improved coordination and collaboration among global GCI Alliance Development Partners
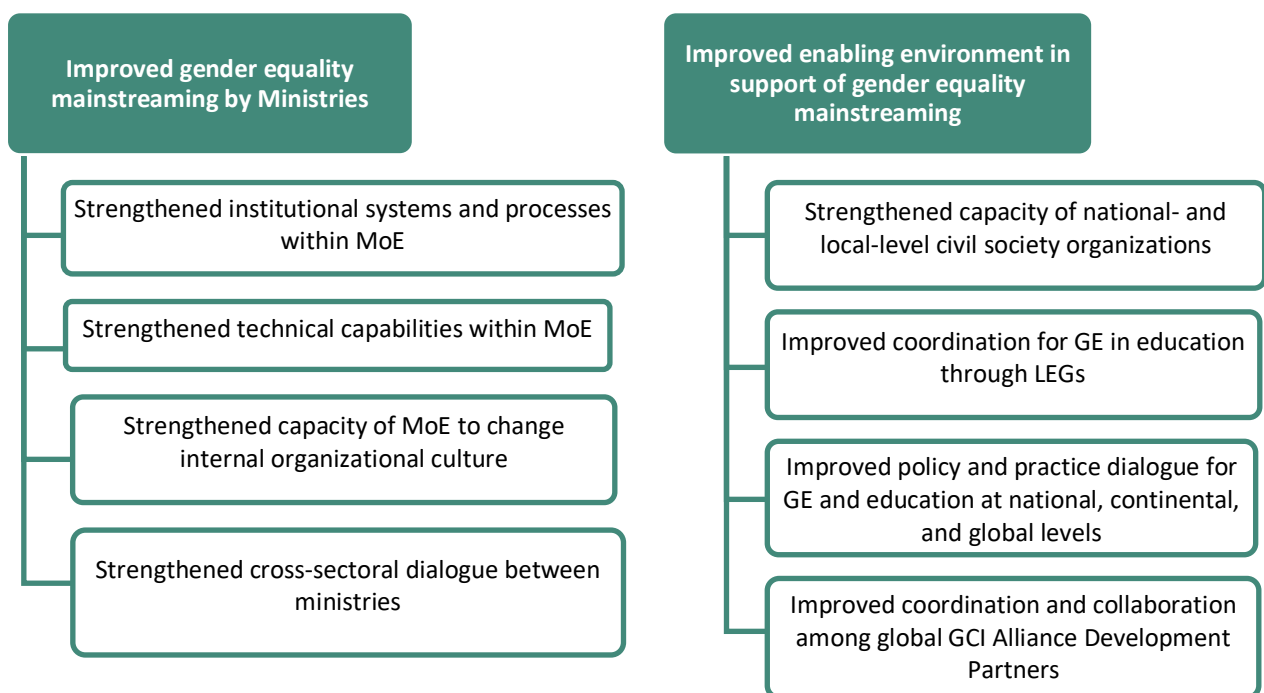
*Chart 1: GCI objectives*

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[9]     https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-09-ungei-gpe-policy-note-gender-responsive-education-planning_0.pdf     and     https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidance-developing-gender-responsive-education-sector-plans

These ambitious objectives are enshrined in the following Theory of Change:



**Improved gender equality in and through education** (including in relation to enrollment, progress, learning, safe and healthy education environments) due to:
- Strengthened equity, efficiency and funding of education sector (including for gender equality-specific measures)
- Gender-responsive approaches to teaching and learning applied at all levels (reduced supply-side barriers)
- Reduced demand-side barriers including in relation to transformation of social norms

*Gains for girls & boys, women & men*

*Behaviour changes*

Ministries of education effectively **mainstream** GE into the design, implementation and monitoring of education sector policies and plans while **providing leadership** on addressing supply- and demand-side barriers to gender equality in education in collaboration with other relevant ministries (e.g. finance, gender) & non-state actors

Government & non-state actors **coordinate** their actions

2- Non-state actors (e.g. EDPs, CSOs) **engage** in evidence-based policy analysis, coordinated policy dialogue and sector monitoring, to **raise awareness** among citizens and community leaders, **influence** the public discourse on GE in education, and **hold** governments/each other **to account** on progress on GE

**Other influences:** efforts of actors outside of GCI, contextual influences

Gain assumptions

Behaviour change assumptions

*Capacity changes*

Ministries of education have stronger **technical capabilities** (knowledge, skills, frameworks and systems), and **conducive internal cultures** (awareness, incentives, processes) to mainstream GE into their work

Government and non-state actors have access, and are able to contribute, to new or strengthened **coordination mechanisms and processes** for gender equality in/through education

Non-state actors have stronger **technical capabilities** (awareness, knowledge, skills) and **motivation and incentives** (e.g. through partnerships) to engage in evidence-based policy analysis/dialogue for GE in education

Capacity change assumptions

*GCI inputs*

Activities both those (i) facilitated by UNGEI and IIEP, including, but not limited to, training, technical assistance, advocacy, funding to support and engage with key education sector stakeholders; and those (ii) of other GCI Alliance members, including, but not limited to, sector financing, advocacy at central & local levels, collaboration and knowledge exchange.

**Issues to address:** Persistent supply- and demand-side barriers to gender equality in education access, quality and learning

*Chart 2: Theory of Change*

GCI addresses both demand and supply of education, and the proposed **transformational approach** is based on three strong assumptions:

/ Transforming social norms both within governments and communities will tackle the roots of gender inequality and **bridge supply and demand** for gender equality in education,

/ Change is achieved through a **3-level approach** (individual, organizational and institutional) and through technical capacities and political leadership strengthening of both state and non-state actors,

/ **Partnership** is key to achieve gender equality in education, defined as an alliance of key education groups working effectively together at the global and country levels[10].

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[10] This assumption is also a key premise of the Global Partnership for Education.

## 3. PURPOSE AND USERS OF THE REVIEW

### 3.1 Purpose of the review

The evaluation purpose is to assess the GCI's achievements and lessons learned and provide recommendations to the UNGEI/IIEP coordination, CGI Alliance, country focal points and other members on how GCI might adapt and strengthen its structure (including its management, operational, and partnership models and program modalities), processes, systems, and strategy to have the most impact on improving gender-responsive education. Furthermore, the review locates the work of GCI in the broader context of gender and education architecture globally, regionally and nationally.

As per the ToR, the formative evaluation is intended to be flexible and "lean" and to shape lessons learned and existing room for improvement, rather than measure the achievement of targets and indicators defined by the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF). It will focus more on the initial progress and lessons learned from GCI, identifying appropriate actions to: (a) address issues or problems in GCI implementation, and (b) strengthen actions and dynamics that show potential for success. This light mid-term formative evaluation hereafter referred to as a review also provides key information to GCI donors and other partners to guide future strategic and funding decisions. The principle of beneficiary/participant engagement and the behavioral independence of the evaluation were considered as two important criteria.

GCI contributes to the intermediate outcomes and overall impact, however it cannot be deemed accountable for their achievement: causality between activities, country outcomes and broader development results are not specifically part of the present review, although the ET examined the extent to which beneficiary outcomes have been achieved in a broad sense and how likely GCI contributed to those outcomes.

As a utilization-focused evaluation, this review feeds into the monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning work of GCI. This includes speaking directly to the initiative's Theory of Change, and performance measurement framework in the development of evaluation questions and data collection tools. Through the active participation of core GCI staff, and engagement with the reference group, this alignment was further strengthened.

### 3.2 Scope of the review

**Thematic scope**

The formative evaluation has relied on both activity reviews, expenditure analysis, and a comprehensive analysis of pathways of change. The review considered planned and unplanned results, both positive and negative, and what implications these have on the theory of change and results framework. GCI's position within the broader gender and educational institutional ecosystem was also considered.

**Geographical scope**

The review focused on the 8 pilot countries, although it also considered regional and international dynamics as they are relevant to GCI's results, context, and future planning, but not the individual country context of each participating country.

For instance, the Gender-Responsive Education Planning Training Program launched by IIEP as part of the initiative reached 34 African countries, and radio spots, television debates and other awareness raising activities may have reached a higher number of geographical areas.

**Chronological scope**

The review focuses on activities implemented since 2019 until the end of 2022 and relies on technical and financial data made available before 30 January 2022. But the actual implementation only started at the beginning of 2021 due to the time required to set-up the governance of GCI and the delays caused by the Covid-19.

## 3.3 Uses and users of the review

The primary audience of the review is the GCI coordination, its hosts UNICEF and UNESCO, and the broader Alliance. Secondary audiences are global actors in the education sector as well as GCI partner countries. Users of this assessment and expected uses of the assessment are outlined below:

| Users | Uses (how the findings and recommendations will be used) |
|---|---|
| GCI coordination – UNGEI & IIEP (Evaluation commissioner) | *To inform the second phase of the strategic plan and ToC as well as revision of strategic documents, Transparent communication to donors and other strategic partners, increased accountability, and visibility of GCI as learning organization* |
| GCI Alliance (Primary user) | *To better understand the value of its commitment, consider any necessary changes, and deepen its understanding of GCI challenges.* |
| GCI present and upcoming donors (Primary user) | *To demonstrate value for money of international support to GCI amongst existing donors and to mobilize further donors and inform further support strategies* |
| Donors of the global education and EIEPC ecosystem and existing networks (Secondary users) | *To inform:*<br><br>/ *Gender responsive education ToC and refine intervention strategies*<br>/ *Major gender responsive education-related needs, challenges, and new developments*<br>/ *Further definition of priorities for the aid and humanitarian-development Nexus.*<br><br>*And to mainstream (into their day-to-day practices) the good practices identified during the evaluation and address the shortcomings that have emerged during the analysis* |
| Beneficiary governments and GCI partner countries (Primary users) | *To inform decisions about applying for future activities and to mainstream (into their day-to-day practices) the good practices identified during the evaluation and address the shortcomings that have emerged.* |
| Non-GCI countries | *To use lessons learned through a variety of channels, including cross-country experience sharing* |

*Table 3: Users and use of the assessment*

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Evaluation criteria

Criteria considered during the evaluation process are presented in the evaluation matrix at Annex 1. They include five OECD/DAC[11] criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability.

Gender mainstreaming and human rights dimensions are integrated into all evaluation criteria.

### 4.2 Evaluation questions

Following the initial desk review phase, the initial Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ) from the ToR have been adjusted to improve their relevance.

Likewise, in some instances, sub questions were added to the main overarching Key Evaluation Questions to unpack the evaluation topic. The list of KEQ organized per criterion are detailed in the evaluation matrix in Annex 1.

### 4.3 General approach

Conducted under severe time constraints between December 2022 and February 2023, the review adopted:

/ A participatory approach, ensuring broad ownership and full stakeholder engagement,

/ A policy-relevant approach, bearing in mind the consequences of future policy choices for the systemic improvement of gender equality in and through education,

/ A utilization-focused approach, which acknowledges that the current phase is meant to strengthen a coordinated, context-responsive approach that can be built on as the initiative evolves,

/ A systematic approach that aims at clarifying key choices and pathways of change in an already complex setting.

The ToC and initial GCI assumptions were considered as the main theoretical framing. These results were interrogated through an outcome harvesting technique, which is a complexity-responsive evaluation approach which, rather than focusing on progress towards predetermined objectives, collects evidence around what has changed in the broader landscape, and then works back to understand the role of the intervention. The advantage of this approach is that it includes all changes; positive and negative, unintended, or planned, direct or indirect. Particularly in an initiative that is nascent and exploratory or has different levels and scopes of implementation of activities across different contexts, an outcome harvesting method helps to support shared learning. Outcome harvesting is done through an iterative process of identifying outcomes through engagement with documentation and evaluation participants, structured substantiation, and collective analysis and interpretation leading to collective ownership of the key outcomes. These were then further substantiated based on the data gathered from all sources in the evaluation.

The data collected for the purpose of this evaluation combined qualitative and quantitative sampling and analysis techniques generally used in mixed-method studies. The starting point was desk research, including an extensive literature review and an exhaustive review of the project's documentation and platforms, as well as a detailed analysis of all the training modules[11] OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. DAC Development Assistance Committee

## 4.4 Data collection methods

The evaluation team used a mixed methods approach that combines the review of secondary data with.

The data collected for the purpose of this evaluation combined qualitative and quantitative sampling and analysis techniques generally used in mixed-method studies with primary data collection using mainly qualitative approaches.

An important set of secondary data and documentation was also analyzed as part of the desk review and is listed in annex. The starting point was desk research, including an extensive literature review, updating sources of country baseline studies when possible and an exhaustive review of GCI-related documentation and platforms, as well as an analysis of the training and planning tools.

Primary data were collected in January and early February 2023.

Overall, the data collection included the following operations, with detailed data collection tools presented in Annex:
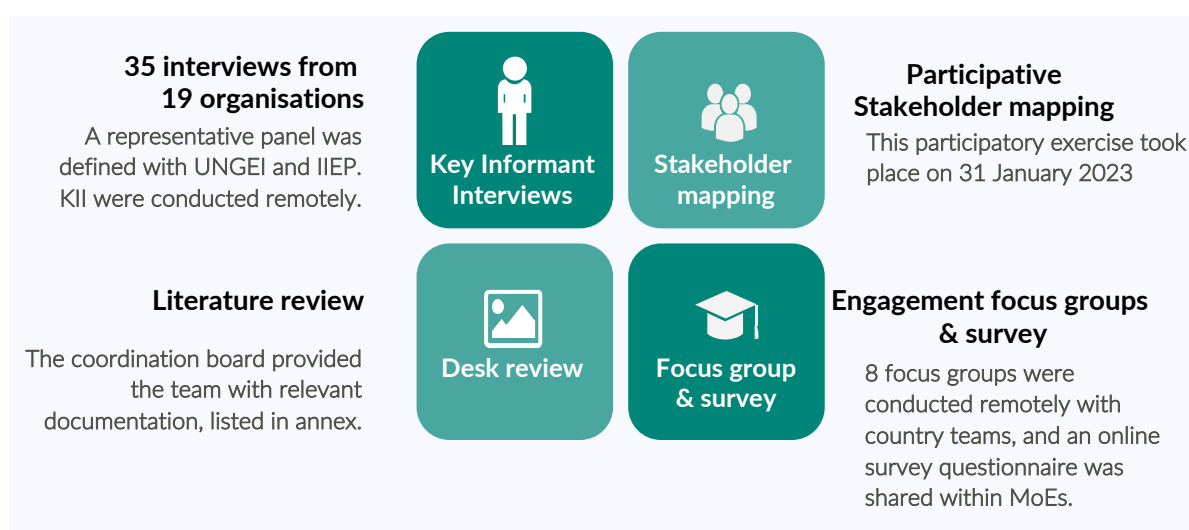
**35 interviews from 19 organisations**
A representative panel was defined with UNGEI and IIEP. KII were conducted remotely.

**Key Informant Interviews**

**Stakeholder mapping**

**Participative Stakeholder mapping**
This participatory exercise took place on 31 January 2023

**Literature review**
The coordination board provided the team with relevant documentation, listed in annex.

**Desk review**

**Focus group & survey**

**Engagement focus groups & survey**
8 focus groups were conducted remotely with country teams, and an online survey questionnaire was shared within MoEs.

*Chart 3: Data collection operations*

A first round of data analysis was conducted in an iterative manner on an ongoing basis, to allow the evaluation team to be responsive to emerging results and outstanding questions. Key triangulation operations were carried out collectively at this occasion, serving the core components of the final evaluation report. The preliminary findings, presented hereafter, were shared, and discussed with the reference group.

## 4.5 Limitations and mitigation measures

One of the major challenges of our research was the timeframe imposed by the initiative's schedule. This constraint was predicted among main risk factors during the inception phase, and contingency plans were foreseen by the team, in accordance with UNGEI. These contingency plans were successfully put in place, and the review was completed without a compromise in scope or quality. However, it did significantly limit the possibility for a more engaged participatory process. Additionally, it did limit the scope to take into account activities and results that took place in 2022, since the 2022 Annual Report was only received after data collection had already been completed. A number of the challenges identified already have mitigation measures that are in place as a response, particularly

linked to the inclusion and resourcing of the work of CSOs in the initiative, but these could not always be reflected in the report.

The efficiency analysis was made complex by the difficulties both IIEP and UNGEI had disaggregating financial data by country. The funding made available to IIEP for GCI activities has been mainly merged into "usual" IIEP activities and was not always easy to track. It is worth noting that the project was not conceived as a set of costed activities therefore effectiveness considerations are based on preliminary achievements rather than on expected results.

Challenges regarding in country-level engagement was an additional challenge. While half the evaluation team is based in Africa, poor quality digital access compromised the quality of participation, particularly from ministerial participants, and local CSOs. These inefficiencies were overcome through creating multiple methods of engagement, and logistical efforts by all parties, but the challenges encountered reenforce the findings of a need for stronger country coordination. Where this was strong, access to participants and the quality of engagement was much better than in the countries where it was weak.

A reluctance or limited capacity to participate was another risk identified at the inception stage, and it did pose some degree of challenge, particularly in encouraging engagement with in-country actors, or role players in the broader gender and education sector without specific knowledge of the program. It was a limitation, in that the reach of participation did not reach its full potential, but the data collected was nevertheless robust. The reluctance to participate therefore is not seen as a limitation of the evaluation, but rather a finding, reflecting the ways in which the Initiative is owned and viewed by different stakeholders.

Finally, a last risk identified at the inception stage was bias in interviews, from participants or the evaluation team. On that, all evaluation participants should be able to celebrate the culture of learning that has been carefully and deliberately built within the Initiative. The open, critical, and engaged contributions from all sides of the initiative pave a strong foundation for positive change in the Initiative.

## 5. FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

## 5.1 Findings

Overall, the evaluation found that GCI has been designed to fill an important niche in gender equality in and through education. Its broad approach of working both within ministries and civil society, through partnerships, is one that most people find valuable and relevant. There is currently insufficient investment in gender equality in and through education in the countries involved, and GCI has made some important in roads in certain areas of intervention.

However, two major areas for improvement were identified as necessary for GCI to be able to fulfil its critical mandate. The first is refinement in the initiative's strategy, to fine-tune the desired results, and build a collective vision among all stakeholders about the purpose of the initiative. This will not only generate a more theoretically sound theory of change, but will also promote collective ownership and stronger partnerships, due to clearer roles and responsibilities. The second is a resolution of various structural problems the initiative has faced, such as relatively un-coordinated national-level engagement, a concentration of resources at the global level, challenges in moving resources at an appropriate rate, and a politically driven selection of countries. When these two areas are resolved, a number of more minor technical issues are likely to then fall into place.

### RELEVANCE

**To what extent do the GCI's objectives and design respond to the needs of girls and boys in and out of school and may continue to do so?**

GCI's core relevance is that it responds to a critical need in all participating countries. This gives the initiative a clear strategic alignment. Furthermore, the combination of intermediate outcomes, which bring together work within Ministries of Education and civil society to build support for prioritizing gender equity in and through education, was widely considered a strength of the initiative, and this design ensured its relevance. Limitations in the programmatic design and implementation, including uneven national coordination capacity, a mismatch between the scale of the problem (which is often very localized) and the programmatic implementation (which is at best at a national level), and operational challenges in getting resources to NGOs that work more locally, occasionally limited the scope for the programmatic adapt and remain relevant to country needs. While these needs were strongly considered in the design phase, a lack of adaptability and dynamic feedback mechanisms have left gaps.

**1.1 How is the support offered by GCI relevant to the needs of the countries?**

1.  The support offered by GCI includes online and face to face trainings, country gender diagnostics, development of assessment tools etc., on country's demand. All the country representatives interviewed agreed that the activities implemented by GCI are in line with the countries' needs. Several reasons explain this unanimity: the needs are important; therefore, activities are quite likely to match a need. In addition, activities have been jointly planned together with the GCI team and the ministries of Education. This planning exercise has been done in compliance with the national education sector plans that had already identified the needs. *"There is still a need for training, so you can't say that there are activities that don't fit"*, member of a Ministry of Education[12].

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[12] Interview with country representative

*"In a systemic way, GCI has responded to our country's needs; we have been waiting for an international initiative for a long time", member of a Ministry of Education[13].*

2. Another area with strong agreement was the value of working on both demand for and supply of gender equity in and through education. Linked to the model of working holistically with both ministries and civil society, this seems fundamental to GCI's strategic niche, and there is widespread acknowledgement that this is valuable. Two areas around this were seen as in need of strengthening. One is that while GCI does focus on both supply and demand, these focal areas are not always effectively coordinated, so the full benefit of the model isn't always realized. With stronger integration, this would be solved. The other is that it would be beneficial to expand the systems approach to also consider the entire education supply chain, down to the level of the school. This would allow for more effective and granular work.

3. In terms of matching the needs of the countries, GCI is highly relevant when considering its mandate broadly, but there have been three limitations to its relevance. One is that while there is a general alignment between the needs in the country and GCI's intervention, the needs are far larger than GCI's scope and capacity, and it's not always clear that concrete interventions are determined by a strategic process of selection or prioritization. In GCI countries as on the African continent, the primary barrier to school access, participation and retention for boys and girls is poverty and GCI has not been explicit about the ways in which it has taken this important contextual issue into consideration. A second issue is that due to operational challenges implementing in-country activities by GCI, it hasn't always been possible, within the original timeframe, to carry out activities that were identified as relevant and eager to address key barriers identified at national or at local (school) level. These activities will be implemented in 2023 once the CSOs receive the funds. Finally, the third limitation is that GCI's focus on gender in education sector diagnostic and planning (GRESP) left little space to implementation of gender interventions and analysis of their respective impact. While this is a need for stronger gender-responsive planning in-country, most ministries have larger deficits in implementing, which GCI is not structurally well-equipped to address.

**1.2 How is the combined achievement of intermediate outcomes 1 and 2 likely to generate more ambitious change in countries than the sum of their respective impacts?**

4. While there is widespread agreement that the two intermediate outcomes are both complementary and critical, and that they should continue to work together, there was a relatively even split among evaluation participants, somewhat aligned to the organizational culture of their host institution, between those who believe that the two intermediate outcomes are setting the bar high as a way of achieving ambitious change, and those who believe that since the primary scope of intervention of GCI is around integrated education sector planning, the intermediate outcomes should reflect this scale of results more directly.

5. There was however a high degree of convergence among evaluation participants that the combination of two outcomes in GCI's theory of change was important, and that they collectively strengthen each other. "It doesn't make sense to work only with the ministries, or only with civil society. They have to work together."

6. The specific country dynamics are important in considering the complementarity between the two outcomes as well; in some contexts, national level advocacy was needed to move gender up the agenda of ministries of education. In other countries, the ministries of education were already championing a gender agenda, but civil society was an important intermediary with communities

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[13] ibid

at a local or school level. In no context was the importance of either outcome questioned by participants from any organizational background.

7. However, there was also a consensus that as GCI is currently designed, there is not sufficient scope or integration of both outcomes for them to play their role in contributing to ambitious change and/or identify the most efficient leverages for action under MoE leadership to address gender barriers and change social norms. "One of GCI's most important ambitions is its holistic, integrated approach. Getting ministries of education, donors, and civil society to plan together is a game changer. Unfortunately, it hasn't yet managed to achieve progress against these silos."

**1.3 Does the governance and coordination structure in place (UNGEI/IIPE coordination, GCI alliance and governance) meet the issues and ambitions targeted by GCI? What have been its strengths and where are the gaps?**

8. The Gender at the Center Initiative is implemented in eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by a multi-stakeholder partnership, the GCI alliance. The GCI Alliance is made of technical partners: UNGEI, UNESCO-IIEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Global Partnership for Education; the intergovernmental organization, the African Union International Center for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (UA/CIEFFA); a consortium of three CSOs - Plan International, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA); five of the G7 donors and representatives from Ministries of Education in the eight beneficiary countries. As GPE underlined, "developing country partners have cautioned strongly against adding new parts to the global education architecture", therefore the proposed structure of the GCI as a network is innovative. GCI is built as a partnership, understood as a "collaborative relationship between entities to work toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed division of labor", and although this structure raises specific coordination challenges, it is highly relevant to avoid the upsurge of new actors in an already complex institutional architecture.

9. The coordination of the Initiative is jointly held by the United Nations Girls Education Initiative - UNGEI, which is already a partnership in itself, and the International Institute for Educational Planning, IIEP UNESCO. The governance is structured as follows:

/ The **GCI board** gathers all the partners and meets annually,

/ The **executive committee** gathers representatives of all GCI Alliance constituency groups and meets every three months. Each constituency group as well as the AU/CIEFFA has a representative.

/ **Constituency groups** (ministries of Education/donors/CSOs/technical partners). They meet once a year and on demand,

/ **GCI focal points** are appointed in Ministries of Education[14].

In terms of communication, there is a biannual newsletter shared among the partners and constituency groups can call for ad hoc meetings to discuss a specific topic.

10. The architecture is globally considered appropriate to the size and the ambitions of the project. The structure is considered rather *"adapted and agile considering the size of our respective organizations"*. But the methodology can be improved.

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[14] The ET was not provided with a detailed "job profile" for the focal points.

11. There have been successes in coordination; specifically at a global level, a culture of trust and sharing has been deliberately cultivated, so although there are occasional oversights or gaps in communication, it has generally been possible to resolve differences without negative effects on the initiative. This is particularly important given the amount of time and effort that went into negotiating and defining the relationship between these two organizations, and building a feminist principles-based, genuinely equal partnership. Considering the importance of coordination in relation with the partnership structure of the initiative, these successes are to be underlined. The joint ownership and collective effort between UNGEI and IIEP took significant effort to put in place, and a result is a robust collaboration.

12. There have been some recent gaps in coordination, probably due to more established patterns of collaboration between the lead organizations, that have left some Alliance members feeling under-informed,[15] and who call for a return to regular and frequent planned meetings between the two organizations, as was the case earlier in the project. *"The communication could be improved. Opportunities for collaboration are certainly missed".* However, even with these gaps, there is widespread recognition that the board and constituency groups are engaged and communicate well.

13. The challenge that remains in strengthening the coordination further is around focusing on integrating between the work of UNGEI and IIEP. While there was an initial success in carving out distinct niches of work, now a key identified weakness in the program coordination was attributed to the distinct work planning between UNGEI and IIEP. While the two organizations invested heavily in carving out their respective areas of work, there is a need to revisit the extent to which the goals of the initiative are being met by keeping the areas of operation so distinct.

*"I have the feeling that the two coordinating agencies' work plans are more parallel than coordinated. There is little connection between the two"[16].*

14. The review also demonstrated that the two lead organizations need to invest more in maintaining a shared view about the strengths, weaknesses, and overall goals of the initiative. "There is a discrepancy between UNGEI and IIEP discourses in communication tools". This does not help the consistent branding of GCI, or clarity among external stakeholders about it as a consistent initiative. As one role player described the situation, "Does GCI have a unique niche? I think it does, even if it's not yet filling it. But I also think if you ask IIEP and UNGEI what this niche was, you get two different answers. That's a problem. Communication is good, but you can't communicate away a structural problem." This is further reflected in situations where the organizational identities of UNGEI and IIEP seemed to take priority over the initiative itself. While this isn't inherently a problem, it could be desirable for the identity of the initiative to evolve over time in such a way that individual members of the alliance have an incentive to promote its identity.

*"For example, in Nigeria UNGEI had scheduled a training on transformational leadership. IIEP worked with them and integrated gender sensitive planning. Both organizations presented themselves as an entity."*

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[15] KII
[16] ibid

15. However, it's important to point out that there was considerable improvement in GCI's internal coordination during the first phase. Initially, a considerable amount of energy needed to be invested in clarifying roles and responsibilities and building a common culture and understanding of what gender equality in and through education should refer to, and this has largely been successful.

*"There is a lack of coordination and identification of where we are going and how. At the beginning, it was difficult to understand who is doing what, but it is improving. We also need more regular recap on what is being done, through a communication that speaks to everyone, not only technical but that could be used outside the institutional partners".*

16. There is a gap between GCI's political vision, which is of country-led processes, and the investment in coordination and alignment of efforts at the country level. "In 2019, the inaugural meeting was in Paris. What does that tell you?" While there is recognition that in the 3 years since inception the initiative has done a lot to decentralize and invest more in local coordination, there are several constraints, including limited resourcing, which has kept GCI from being meaningfully country-led. This should be carefully considered in the design of a second phase since national ownership is central to both effectiveness and sustainability.

17. At the same time, donors have different interests, priorities, and engagement with the implementing organizations.[17] As a result, they have different levels of information, both at a global level, but also at a national level. In certain situations, for example, donors have a stronger country presence than either implementing agency of GCI does, and their access to information about the local context and education sector makes this gap in GCI's information at a global level seem particularly problematic. These gaps in information flow can occasionally undermine some of the hard work invested in partnership building and should be addressed through both a strategic reconsideration of both in-country coordination and multi-scalar coordination, and also through more strategic investment in internal communications. For some participants, having all these members together in an alliance, ministries, donors, CSOs, PTFs with the opportunity to exchange, is an asset. *"Donors have a more active level of interaction than in more traditional projects. They can give their opinion, think like actors. It is not a classic initiative, but rather a movement where everyone contributes with their opinion, their expertise, their commitment".*

18. Due to GCI's origins, and the inability of donors to provide sufficient support to fund country-level activities in the initiative's initial phase, disproportionate resourcing has been given to the international and regional level coordination. Local anchoring is seen as too weak by all stakeholders. "*At the global level, we can see how it all fits together, but we lose this multi-actor dynamic at the country level*"[18]. This is the main weakness of the initiative, acknowledged by all the stakeholders, coordinating agencies, donors and of course, country representatives. "*At the country level, there is no very strong link. It is more the case at global level*"[19]. Therefore, on the ground, GCI is not developed enough. *"Decentralization of the project is not enough accomplished either. We need to bring on board local CSOs and decentralized officials. This is where more change can take*

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[17] ibid
[18] ibid
[19] ibid

*place and the most difficult level to capture"[20].* A critical strategic decision for GCI is about how it should be decentralized to better achieve its objectives. This should be based on a reflection of the efforts that were made to work at national and local levels during the phase under review, as well as experiences of other initiatives, presented later in this report, that may share certain similarities in goals or structures.

19. The architecture is seen as appropriate overall, but coordination can be improved by **integrated programming, and regular meetings between the two organizations, with communication reaching beyond the implementing organizations, through to the whole Alliance. A local presence** must be systematized, whether it is through a coordinated partnership with existing organizations with a local presence, or the development of a new, dedicated, country coordination mechanism. "It is not appropriate for GCI to expect country-level results, while working primarily from Dakar. We simply know that doesn't work." However, the most appropriate way of doing this depends on a number of strategic decisions the initiative still needs to make.

**1.4 – Is the selection of the 8 pilot countries relevant to the objectives of the Initiative? What alternative or additional criteria could have been considered, or could be considered for a second phase**

20. All the stakeholders agreed that the initial choice of the countries was the result of a political decision, made at the G7 summit where the G5 Sahel coalition was invited. All the selected countries agreed to participate in the project, and they are undoubtedly countries with significant need for advancing gender equity in and through education, but this top-down process contradicts the project's philosophy to be country-led, and demand-aligned.

21. Currently, there is a batch of countries in the Sahel region, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, which are French speaking, and three "others", Nigeria and Sierra Leone, both English speaking but also West African, and then Mozambique, both the only country from a different region, and the only one which is Portuguese speaking. Partner countries are then distinct by population, language, geographic location, level of development, and also institutionalization of education sector planning. The table below gives an overview of this diversity:

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[20] ibid

| Data | Burkina Faso | Chad | Mali | Mauritania | Mozambique | Niger | Nigeria | Sierra Leone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BACKGROUND** | | | | | | | | |
| Population (Million, acc. To WPP) in 2021 | 21,8 | 16,9 | 21,6 | 4,6 | 32 | 24,8 | 211 | 8,3 |
| Fertility rate (WPP) in 2021 | 4,77 | 6,26 | 6 | 4,4 | 4,6 | 6,8 | 5,2 | 4 |
| Human Development Index in 2021 | 0,449 | 0,394 | 0,428 | 0,556 | 0,446 | 0,4 | 0,535 | 0,477 |
| HDI Rank/191 in 2021 | 184 | 190 | 186 | 158 | 185 | 189 | 163 | 181 |
| GNI per capita PPP in 2021 | 2118 | 1364 | 2133 | 5075 | 1198 | 1240 | 4790 | 1622 |
| Population below poverty line in 2021 | 41,4% | 42,3% | 41,9% | 31,0% | 46,1% | 40,8% | 40,1% | 56,8% |
| Population in Severe multidimensional poverty | 65,3% | 64,6% | 44,7% | 38,0% | 49,9% | 76,3% | 26,8% | 28,0% |
| Expected years of schooling in 2021 | 9,1 | 8 | 7,4 | 9,4 | 10,2 | 7 | 10,1 | 9,6 |
| **GENDER EQUALITY** | | | | | | | | |
| Gender Inequality Index (2019/**2021**) | 0,612 **0,621** | 0,71 **0,652** | 0,671 **0,613** | 0,62 **0,632** | 0,523 **0,537** | 0,642 **0,611** | 0,534 **0,68** | 0,644 **0,633** |
| Rank /170 | **157** | **165** | **155** | **161** | **136** | **153** | **168** | **162** |
| Life expectancy for women | 57,5 61 | 52,6 55,4 | 58,5 60,1 | 63 66,2 | 58,5 60,1 | 61,3 63,6 | 53,5 55,2 | 53,5 55,1 |
| Women in parliaments | 11% | 15% | 9,5% | 20,3% | 41% | 17% | 5,8% | 12% |
| Adolescent birth rate (per 1000) (**2021**) | 132 **131** | 157,9 **138,3** | 169,1 **150,1** | 84 **78** | 146,2 **165,8** | 154 **170,5** | 105,4 **101,7** | 112,8 **100,9** |
| % Child marriage (15 to 18) | 29,9% | 67,0% | 51,5% | 37,0% | 48,0% | 76,3% | 43% | 29,9% |
| Violence against women | 12% | 29% | 35,5% | NA | 22% | NA | 17% | 49% |
| SIGI  2014 | 0,2819 (High) | 0,4665 (V. High) | 0,5164 (V. High) | 0,3954 (V. High) | 0,1375 (Medium) | 0,4415 (V. High) | 0,3911 (V. High) | 0,372 (V. High) |
| SIGI  2019 | 32% (Medium) | 45% (High) | 46% (High) | NA | 24% (Low) | NA | 46% (High) | 48% (High) |
| SIGI  Ranking 2019 among African countries /54 | 7 | 20 | 22 | 46 | 2 | 48 | 21 | 26 |
| **GENDER AND EDUCATION (baselines, 2017)** | | | | | | | | |
| % girls among children enrolled in pre-primary | 49% | 49% | 50% | NA | NA | 50,4% | 49,4% | 52,5% |
| % girls among children enrolled in primary | 49% | 44% | 46,6% | 50,8% | 48% | 45,6% | 47,5% | 50,6% |
| % girls among children enrolled in lower secondary | 52% | 37% | 46,4% | 50,6% | 49,1% | 42,5% | 47,0% | 50,1% |
| % female teacher population in primary education | 48% | 20% | 32,0% | 35,0% | 47,0% | 55,0% | 53,0% | 31,0% |

*Table 4: Selection of comparative GCI country data*

In terms of size and population, the differences are huge and led to very different implementation process. For example, Nigeria targeted state level interventions, while other countries had a national focus. In terms of HDI, all countries are considered to have a low human development index score, except Mauritania. The GII in 2021 was above the average for low human development countries (of 0,577) for Mozambique. Child marriage, recognized as a key barrier to girls' education, varies from 29,9% (Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone) to 76,3% (Niger). Between 2014 and 2019, the SIGI improved for most GCI countries except Mozambique, and the ranking of GCI countries in 2019 on the African continent varies from 2 (Mozambique) to 48 (Niger). The percentage of girls enrolled in lower secondary education in 2017 as reported in the baseline reports varies from 37% (Chad) to 52% (Burkina Faso).

22.     The lack of language consistency poses a challenge to the collaborative sharing and efficiency of the project by the inevitable time delays and resource demands of translating all materials and contact engagements into Portuguese, in addition to English and French "knowing that it is also difficult to recruit for only one country"[21]. Many stakeholders think that Mozambique is isolated in the initiative, not only because of the language but also because of geography, and the lack of pre-existing relationship between the ministry, UNGEI, and IIEP. Evaluation participants from Mozambique said, "I really think we have a lot to share in this initiative. The area of gender equity in education is one where I think we have been very active, and we have many ideas. We've developed a model of working with children who are displaced, to make sure girls can stay in school in areas affected by conflict, and we would like to exchange with other countries. But it is hard to find a platform, because of the issues of language, distance, maybe the context is different. But we really want to engage."

23.     "It would have been easier in terms of communication and exchanges with partner countries and TFPs to have an objective justification on the choice of countries, whatever it is (percentage of

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[21] Key Informant Interview

girls in secondary school, the extent of the gender gap etc. ....). It weakens the GCI model, not being able to justify it". On the other hand, stakeholders also acknowledge that the selection brings together peers who are not used to meeting and exchanging, precisely because of the language or the distance, so the potential for innovation through learning is increased. This reinforces the finding that country selection must be aligned to GCI's overall objectives.

Most participants agreed that a mix of criteria should inform the country selection for the next phase of GCI. One of the most important criteria that was identified as critical for including countries in a second phase, is that of political will. This has definitely been a factor that has defined whether GCI would be able to gain traction at a country level, and investment in institutional capacity within Ministries of Education, as well as meaningful progress towards an enabling environment requires political leadership. It is also more efficient to build on something which is already in progress at a country level, than to have to push for foundational institutional setup work to be done, when the will may not be there. Signatories of the Freetown Manifesto should be given particular consideration, as this provides a framing for enacting political will, and allowing civil society to call for accountability.

24.     The peer exchange component of GCI was widely seen as potentially one of the most effective, and under-utilized possibilities. "We know real development doesn't happen through outside technical assistance. It happens through peer learning." Several country focus groups identified specific initiatives or activities that countries would like to share or learn from others. A potential for peer exchange or learning should also be a potential criterion. This could include specific shared technical interest or prioritization of co-piloting common tools, for example.

25.     Some participants suggested a significant shift in country engagement. Role players with a global mandate questioned why GCI was only operating in Africa, when several countries in Asia face as much need, and maybe have stronger institutions for engagement. Others questioned why the program is only being implemented in countries where there is a parity gap in educational attendance, when there is much, much more that could be done for gender equity in and through education. There were suggestions to bring in countries that have achieved parity, to work on innovation around integrating play-based curricula challenging gender stereotypes, for example, or other critical areas around gender equity in and through education.

26.     The challenge in identifying the best strategy to select countries for the next phase, points to a lack of refinement in GCI's current strategic planning. When the objectives of the initiative are refined and clarified, and the theory of change clear, then the most appropriate approach to select countries will be apparent.

**1.5 – Given the changing political, socio-economic, security, and health contexts in the pilot countries, to what extent has GCI adapted to maintain its relevance?**

27.     GCI launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, although not designed in this context, it had to immediately adapt to the situation and implemented its first activities online. On one hand, this led to certain setbacks, such as delays in hiring some initial staff in the initiative. On the other hand, working virtually allowed more participants to attend the trainings than would have been possible with the initial budget provided. While remote work did allow the initiative to launch, most of the participating countries face significant challenges with connectivity and were eager for a return to face-to-face meetings.

28. Regarding the political contexts, the situation has become tougher for the international community in Burkina Faso and Mali; bilateral military cooperation with France in Burkina Faso, and bilateral multidimensional cooperation in Mali, has been stopped. Since French funding is no longer allowed, activities there have been put on hold. Contact has nevertheless been maintained with technical counterparts despite the political restrictions. The context of fragility and conflict in these countries has absolutely affected the landscape of gender and education, and while GCI seems to have a lot of awareness of and sensitivity to this, it hasn't managed to have a planned and strategic programmatic response.

29. GCI has tried to respond to local contexts, but a weakness in local coordination capacity has limited this in practice. This is both due to limited resourcing to support in-country staff, the uneven capacity of Local Education Groups in many countries to play a convening role, and finally limited capacity for the initiative to clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and institutional support required for the GCI focal people. Many countries identified peer learning as a possible tool to overcome this challenge, but it was clear during country engagements that being responsive to national demand is not enough; GCI should endeavor to be far more decentralized and locally led in its planning and coordination. "We have a huge challenge of displacement, but not a lot of international partners cooperating on education understand how to work in this context (group discussion)."

30. Much of the changing national contexts in the pilot countries have resulted in setbacks to gender equity, making the work of GCI even more relevant. However, it has also meant that the institutional capacity to achieve GCI priorities has been weakened. There is a need to consider what this means for the nature of GCI's involvement, as so far, the general model has been to invest more in countries with the capacity to request and dedicate resources to GCI-related priorities. "The context of crisis has done so much to our girls in school. It is not that we aren't invested in GCI, that it isn't our priority. But when it is not safe to travel outside the capital, when girls can't go to school because they are afraid, the nature of our work must change (KII)." This sentence also underlines the importance for the initiative to pursue its focus on both supply and demand of education, with the demand being challenging to scope in a crisis context.

**1.6 – Looking ahead to a second phase of GCI, what gaps would need to be filled or adaptations made (in terms of the overall coordination mechanism, technical assistance to countries, and creating an enabling environment for the education sector to support gender mainstreaming) to enhance the relevance of the initiative at the country, cross-country and global levels?**

31. GCI's interventions appear overwhelmingly relevant to the country, regional, and global level needs. This is due to the large scope of needs, and the relative responsiveness of GCI. Its relevance is demonstrated through the significant progress GCI has made in galvanizing political support for gender equity in and through education, including political championing.

32. To strengthen the relevance of GCI's work, fine-tuning, and building clarity and consensus about the focus and scope of GCI's work, will be an important next step. The current work of GCI is broadly relevant at a high level, but the capacity of the initiative is insufficient in scope and scale to meet its higher-level objectives, and some, such as 'creating an enabling environment for the education sector to support gender mainstreaming', are quite broad. GCI needs to go through a

process of strategic selection and alignment between its resources, its mandate, its structure, and its planned results. Carefully defining this will ensure that its relevance extends beyond the current broad match between GCI's mandate and vision, and the need within country, and ensure that the relevance extends down to a granular level of program design and in-country implementation.

33.     Looking ahead to the second phase of GCI, the initiative would benefit from considerably refining its strategic objectives and aligning its operational model around these. This would allow for more precise planning around relevance, and more deliberate decision-making and clearer communication around GCI's programmatic delivery structure. According to one evaluation respondent, "I have a general idea that GCI is probably doing a lot of great work at the country level. But it hasn't really been systematic. I think it's been good, that they can try things out. But now it's a bit hard to know what has worked." Several other respondents raised similar questions about GCI's planning processes. "Is it responsive, or is it ad hoc? It's hard to tell."

34.     There is a feeling among role players that "gender equity in and through education is an area where the whole world is well placed to leap ahead very quickly. We have a lot of disaggregated data now. There is a lot of political backing; Donors have gender accelerators, GPE has tools; Everything is lined up." This was re-iterated by several participants. "It's an idea whose time has come, and that's proving more important than anything else. GCI is set to succeed because of that, everyone agrees the cause and the timing are too good for it to fail." This illustrates the widespread consensus on the relevance of the initiative.

## COHERENCE

### How well did GCI fit in country sector policies, cross-sector intervention and at a global level?

GCI has generally had strong coordination with international interventions, but the coordination at a country level has been uneven. The coordination capacities in the education sectors nationally different considerably in the 8 countries, and GCI's ability to coordinate and maintain coherence with the national mechanisms reflect this unevenness. Extra investment in coherence at the country level is required, since this is an area where GCI has had relatively weak coordination capacity. Some of GCI's work needs realignment or redefining according to the priorities and ways of working of members of the alliance, particularly GPE and UNICEF.

**2.1 - To what extent does the support offered by GCI align with the priorities and sector coordination mechanisms of the countries?**

35.     There is unevenness in the alignment of GCI's support to existing coordination mechanisms, and this comes from two different places. On the one hand, there is tremendous variation in the structure, strengths, and weaknesses of the national sector coordination mechanisms (LEGs), and at the same time, there is variation in the way GCI offers its support. As a result, it is difficult to draw conclusions or identify consistent patterns in implementation, and its alignment to sector coordination mechanisms. Some activities appear to be more consistently valued by certain stakeholders than others. For example, ministries consistently provided positive feedback about the high-quality training offered by IIEP. This seems to be more valued than the creation of the tools.

**BOX 1: Tools and global goods made available by the GCI community**

The project left two key global goods to inform analysis of gender issues in and through education referring to the main available data sources:

- The **GES toolkit**, for "mainstream" education planning purpose, is a diagnostic tool based on 6 areas and 38 indicators from different data sources designed to support education planners and practionners to conduct a rapid assessment of gender equality in and through education.
- The **EiE Genkit**, a core resource package for gender in education in emergencies and crisis context to support international and national humanitarian and development education actors in making EiE interventions more gender-responsive following a logic of "triple Nexus" all along the programing cycle.

36.     Piloted in only two countries so far, the GES toolkit was rarely referenced by in-country stakeholders, but which many of the key GCI coordinators pointed to as particularly important. The tool is indeed considered as a key achievement and was conceived to be users' friendly and based on a wide range of available data sources (including UIS, WB, OECD, GEMR, UNICEF, OECD, UNESCO HER Atlas, Global Coalition to protect Education from Attack, World Policy analysis Center, GPE, UNDP). The diagnostic tool is based on 6 main chapters including: Education opportunities, Gender norms and practices, institutions outside education, education laws and policies, education system, education outcomes, available from different international databases which are not of current use so far within education ministries. In addition, most of these data/indicators[22], cannot be disaggregated at a regional/district scale, which makes it difficult for the toolkit to be used to address regional disparities for all chapters. The GES tool is therefore mainly seen as an eye-opener to see where the country stands and as an invitation to MoE to include more relevant indicators on gender equality in education than a tool for planning concrete gender action falling within the scope and mandate of education ministries decision-makers in the field.

37.     At the same time, the limited degree of national-level implementation of GCI's work makes it difficult to draw conclusions or identify patterns in the alignment between sector coordination mechanisms and the work of GCI. Because of the importance of GCI's agenda in all the pilot countries, it's clear that the work of GCI is relevant and valued to the sector coordination mechanisms. However, even within national coordination mechanisms, there are many priorities. Gender based violence, conflict and fragility, child marriage, early pregnancy, many issues are critical, and it isn't possible for GCI to work deeply on all of them in each country.

38.     As GCI moves forward, there seem to be a few considerations about the scope and nature of the support provided, with each pathway having advantages and disadvantages, and the two obvious pathways not being necessarily mutually exclusive. One pathway would be to program the country-

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[22] It is probable that only data on education opportunities will be available at a decentralized level, and probably not all of them (national learning assessment for example are not available in all countries)

level offers of GCI a bit more, which would have the advantage of greater efficiency, and some degree of comparability or ease of learning across different national contexts. Another pathway would be to be nearly exclusively responsive to national demand. This could potentially deepen engagement in contexts that are well positioned to make progress with GCI's agenda, although there may be other, more efficient mechanisms of specific draw-down assistance.

**2.2 - To what extent does the support offered by GCI align with the existing policy cycles in the country?**

39.     The support offered is in line with existing policies of the countries since the work plans have been developed jointly with the country teams. Regarding policy cycles, GCI did its best to respond to the ad hoc needs as a criterion to set priorities among the countries and fit into the education planning process. For example, in Mauritania, they are in the process of developing the ten-year strategy and the RESEN, the national diagnostic of the Education sector. An innovative education sector analysis exercise was carried out in Sierra Leone as well as a wide gender diagnostic in Burkina Faso. So GCI focuses on supporting this process. But alignment seems to be often incidental rather than planned. One informant suggested developing multi annual GCI-country work plans rather than annual. First, it would optimize the time dedicated to the exercise and secondly, it would allow a more specific alignment with policy cycles.

40.     One innovative suggestion to the country selection question, is to provide different baskets of activities to countries at the times that they are in different places in their policy cycles. So, in the year countries are developing their education sector plans, there might be direct mediation, investment in monitoring, etc. In the year leading up to this, there could be more investment in advocacy, etc. At the moment, this alignment is ad-hoc based on a country's own responsiveness to their policy cycle but integrating this into programming would be one possible way of strengthening this.

41.     Another suggestion widely reported among country participants is for GCI interventions to consider not only the planning process, where analysis has unquestionably progressed a lot, but also the implementation of gender interventions and identify links between the micro, meso and macro levels.

**2.3 - Have the activities been defined in a participatory manner and in complementarity with the programs of field actors?**

42.     "GCI is very good at sharing and listening to their constituencies." The activities of GCI have been defined in a work plan developed together by the GCI and the ministry of Education. This was not initially foreseen in the GCI strategy but has been added at the beginning of the project. This has led to some delays in the implementation of activities but also to a bigger ownership and better alignment of GCI activities. Nevertheless, "requests made by the countries are not always clear, not always aligned with GCI mandate. This then needs to be requalified".

43.     On the other hand, it seems that activities are not defined in complementarity with the programs of the field actors. Stakeholders recognize to work in silos most of the time and are not aware of what the other actors actually do, even sometimes between UNGEI and IIEP. This means that ensuring complementarity, and avoiding duplication, is the responsibility of the ministry of Education. *"If coordination is not desired from the ministry, it is impossible, for any donor, to*

*coordinate with each other. Only the Ministry can say yes or no to an activity. Donors cannot impose if the Ministry has a clear wish to do otherwise".*[23]

44.     There is generally consensus that GCI operates in a participatory manner, with open communication and good will. However, the quality of participation has lacked in certain areas. Civil society groups in particular feel as though they have not been fairly included in the initiative as a whole, although not specifically at the planning phase. "We planned together, and agreed on activities, but when we were looking at the governance and risk register, it was very difficult to have insufficient funding or unpredictable funding accepted as a risk. And yet here we are, having received less than a tenth of what was planned for the country. We are always called to participate, and we want to show up, but consultation requires resourcing. And the playing field is not equal (KII)." While this case is an outlier in the scale of the challenges faced by one national organization, it is illustrative of more widespread challenges faced by many CSO partners in their engagement with GCI, albeit to a lesser degree. In 2022, GCI was able to accelerate disbursements to CSOs so that implementation is now beginning in earnest, but there was significant damage to relationships and trust that will need attention.

**2.4 - To what extent has GCI succeeded in complementing rather than duplicating other interventions and programs with similar objectives? What are the recommendations for improving this complementarity, and how can coordination and the search for synergies with local actors be improved?**

45.     Although intervening in an already complex and very dense network of gender-related project and programs, by all accounts, GCI does not duplicate any other education related initiative. One of the major points and even an advocacy objective for some donors was to avoid duplication with the GPE, and fitting into existing structures, notably LEGs, whenever relevant[24]. Innovative with its two-pronged approach, GCI intends to create or improve the cooperation between Ministries of Education and CSOs and put all the types of actors at the table. So, its modus operandi is therefore quite new and holistic. *"GCI is an innovative approach in education in the holistic and systematic sense. It is not an activity but an ambition to transform the whole educational system. It focuses on the root causes of inequality and works on gender norms while other initiatives work on campaigns, on the surface. It is the only initiative with a fundamental focus".* In that sense, it is quite original.

46.     Coordination is an issue that should remain on GCI's agenda as an ongoing area of consideration, given the growing focus of official development aid on gender issues and the commitment of donor countries and organizations to increasingly match the DAC gender equality policy marker criteria and qualitatively track their policy and financial flow targeting gender equality[25]. As an example, the partnership EDIFIS recently launched by AFD will support the upsurge of DAC-2 multi-dimensional projects in the Sahel region, with huge potential for successful

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[23] KII

[24] GPE recognized the highly mitigated added value of LEGs to foster and improve dialogue and partnership in education, mostly due to their co-existence with other coordination structures, notably clusters, and to structural communication and information sharing processes. In line with its strategy GPE 2025, the GPE issued a new guidance to improve the efficiency of LEGs in November 2021 based on self-assessments, and GCI supported this improvement process in Mali and Chad.

[25] The DAC gender equality policy marker is based on a 3-point scoring system: *Principal* (Marked 2) means that gender equality is the main objective, *Significant* (Marked 1) means that gender equality is an important objective, and *Not targeted* (Marker 0).

cooperation on the education component. On the whole, this should bolster the work of GCI, but could mean that capacity will be required on an ongoing basis around issues of coordination.

47.     In parallel, the Fonds Genre Sahel funded by AFD, in the six Sahel countries, from 2021 to 2024 intends to support CSOs in their initiatives to reduce gender inequalities (i), to sustainably improve the socio-organizational, financial and gender capacities of CSOs in the Sahel (ii) and to contribute to a better articulation of civil society actors, as well as to the capitalization of good practices in gender (iii). The support to civil society might indeed be the more difficult to coordinate as initiatives are numerous and fragmented without any global coordination. A mapping of existing projects might seem tedious but is the only safeguard to duplication.

48.     At times, however, GCI's Alliance members lack a common understanding about the initiative as a whole. This is seen as a threat to coordination, with effective coordination needing to start at all levels within GCI Alliance member organizations This happens in two ways. One is when different role players do not necessarily communicate sufficiently within GCI and therefore do not have a shared vision about specific activities, or alternatively, when multi-level coordination is weak. This is particularly an issue given GCI's weakness in country-level coordination, an area where some GCI Alliance members are strong and effective. For example, "take technical assistance from IIEP in Dakar. So many GCI supporters have in-country educational technical advisors, and these people don't understand why Ministries are being told by GCI to go to Dakar. It can undermine the collaboration (KII)." Consideration should be given to how GCI can leverage these strengths of alliance members to address some of its own capacity gaps.

49.     The challenge to its originality comes in the coordination and operationalization. The absence of robust local anchoring inhibits the initiative from creating bridges and interactions with other initiatives to avoid duplication. This means that at the global level, it is not redundant, but locally as it involves the same actors, even in a different way, duplication remains a risk, particularly if local activities are to be upscaled.

**2.5 - How has GCI partnered with key global and regional initiatives, including but not limited to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW)?**

50.     The relationship between GCI and GPE specifically is close, with GPE sitting on GCI's board, but both are still negotiating the nature of the partnership.

51.     GCI has both strengths and weaknesses in its partnership with other global and regional initiatives. In general, GCI has actively reached out and sought partnerships related to its mandate, particularly at a global and regional level. Other initiatives seem to view the mandate and scope of work of GCI as narrower in scope than GCI's own espoused view. When it comes to a broad partnership to promote gender through education sector planning, global and regional initiatives find value in the work of GCI, which is a clear leader in this area. Here, GCI has the widespread support of GPE and Education Cannot Wait, as well as global education funders and other multilateral role players. GCI is considered a high-visibility initiative that "created a buzz" and that the attention GCI has given to gender in education has been "remarkable and unprecedented."

52.    The weakness has then been in following up this high-level political will with institutional mechanisms and programmatic work. On GCI's intermediate outcome level result areas, there has been less clarity from regional and global partners about how best to interface with GCI. This may be linked to other issues of coordination, which will be discussed further in other sections of the report. But as one representative of a global initiative pointed out, "Its work is very important, but it doesn't fit neatly with our existing mechanisms." The relationship between GCI and Education Cannot Wait is also of great interest, particularly given the context of fragility in many of the pilot countries. The publication of the EiE-Genkit aligning with INEE minimum standards indicator framework[26] is an important step and GRESP exercises for populations affected by emergencies could be further informed by improved coordination with EiE actors, materializing the "Triple Nexus"[27] logic. Unfortunately, the scope of the study did not allow to undertake a survey on the use of the EiE-Genkit guidance, little information is available on the integration of this important knowledge product into mainstream project planning practices. The pilot test carried out in 2021 in South Sudan and Uganda with a funding from ECW allowed to confirm the value, relevance and practicability of the kit.

53.    Going further, considering partnering with education cluster members might be of use in the country and eager to ease in-country coordination. Similarly, relationships could be built with other initiatives with greater clarity about the areas of mutual benefit.

**2.6 - To what extent has GCI connected with actors beyond the education sector to work cross-sectorally, and/or to what extent could and would these partnerships have benefited the Initiative?**

54.    GCI has had some successes in broadening what may have started as a rather narrow technical conversation about education sector planning, to include a wider range of stakeholders that play roles in supporting gender transformation. A few examples have included prioritizing initiatives on child marriage or early pregnancy, which has demanded collaborations with departments of health, traditional authorities, religious leaders, and others who wouldn't previously have been considered core stakeholders in education sector planning processes.

55.    Most evaluation participants agreed that this has strengthened education sector planning considerably. However, it also seems that this has often happened in ad hoc ways, as the need arises, and that then maintaining these partnerships, in a context where institutional capacity for core business is already stretched, has not always been possible. There is considerable scope for a growth in partnerships that would benefit the initiative. However, these would need to be cultivated based on shared objectives.

**2.7 - In the perspective of a second GCI phase, how could GCI build more efficient and change-generating partnerships with these actors and more broadly with technical and financial partners working in the fields of education and gender equality?**

56.    This is a critical question for GCI to resolve as it moves forward, and it is as much about the focus of GCI's strategy than it is about efficiency in partnership building. One important consideration is that while GCI has struggled with multi-scalar implementation, locally, nationally, regionally and

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[26] https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/INEE%20Minimum%20Standards%20Indicator%20Framework%20v2.0%20EN%20LowRes.pdf

[27] The « Triple Nexus » includes humanitarian-development, development-peace and humanitarian-peace.

globally, many of GCI's partner organizations have these multi-level operations as well but are often much larger than GCI. Establishing operational partnerships with organizations that have in-country presence, such as UNICEF, for example, is critical not only for efficiency, but also for effectiveness, which is also being threatened by a lack of systemic in-country coordination. However, these operational relationships will only make sense if there is a clear strategic alignment, and well-defined roles and responsibilities.

57.     If GCI were to adopt an identity that looks more like a movement, with a lean secretariat that would coordinate already ongoing work at a national level, it would allow for greater decentralization of resources. This would be a significant step towards making partnerships more efficient. Alternatively, if GCI were to invest heavily in public sector capacity building, they could partner with actors mandated in this space, such as national schools of government. At this stage, it is evident that GCI has invested a huge amount in partnership building, at that there have been many successes. However, to take these partnerships to the next level, GCI needs to refine its strategic focus, to clarify the ways in which other organizations can engage with the work of the initiative.

Is GCI support likely to effectively promote gender equality in and through education?

GCI support has already had a considerable impact on ensuring gender is on the agenda of education sector planning processes. It has already managed to significantly shift norms at a national level, with planning processes being generally gender-blind, or integrating only limited gender interventions, to a widespread, shared expectation in several countries that all education sector plans should include gender. This is a significant achievement that should be celebrated. The challenge GCI is faced with is not so much to determine whether GCI will promote gender equality in and through education, but what aspect of this the initiative can effectively contribute to. The possibilities are considerably broader than the resources, so strategic trade-offs are needed to decide what the most effective program design could be.

**3.1 - Has the governance and coordination structure in place been effective in implementing the initiative? If so, what are the main strengths? And if not, what are the levers for effective governance for a second phase? Specifically, does the GCI Executive Committee effectively support GCI members? Could it do more, or less, or do things differently?**

58.    At the global level, the governance and coordination structures seem to work, even if a "break-in" time was necessary to properly define the respective responsibilities among the two organizations." There was a shift because GCI started its activities later than the presentation phase. Some communication tools were only made last year. It did not help to be visible". This gives the impression that the project was rapidly set-up to respond to the political will, even though the technical and human resources were not ready at that time.

59.    The theory of change is another area where evaluation participants had a range of different views. While there was consensus that the two pillars of working in a holistic way with Ministries and civil society is critical, there were other areas where there was less consensus:

  / First, the intersectoral nature, which was an important element of the work with ministries, is not always achieved. Where it has been, it has been a strength of the program, but this isn't something that has been systematically implemented,

  / Secondly, the link between ministries and civil society, based on the Local Education Groups, varies considerably in practice from country to country, and is not always a viable model of engagement,

  / Third, while the model of working with both ministries and civil society was applauded, in practice, the implementation of activities is often in parallel, losing the strength of this integrated program design, and,

  / Finally, the current theory of change is very ambitious, and the capacity of GCI isn't commensurate with the broad goal of organizational culture change, nor are the capacities of both MoEs and CSOs to identify the right leverage for action.

60.    Regarding the LEG, they worked together with GCI on the data by improving data collection and analysis. In some countries, they developed the GES toolkit with LEGs. *"GCI allowed them to address gender in their meetings and improved their advocacy. GCI worked annually on the LEGs annual report, to compile all the activities done. It is an opportunity both to review them and to put*

*this issue on the agenda. But it is not easy to do from a distance. LEGs are not as active and operational in every country. In some countries, GCI has worked with gender groups instead". (KII)*

61. In addition, GCI is presented as a no cost initiative for the country, or the CSOs, but it requires time that not all stakeholders are able to independently resource. "*We are not as important as we would like to be. Then it is very different if we work on an activity requested by the ministry who mobilized to find the financial resources".* The strengths of GCI are the innovative and holistic approach that gathers the main educational actors and allows them to talk together, notably ministries and CSOs. But this unifying approach is occasionally undermined by the lack of integration between the work of UNGEI and IIEP, with notable exceptions such as UNGEI's participation in Gender Rapid Assessments and Transformative leadership with MoEs. This separation in the two pillars of GCI's work is often exacerbated at a national level and integrating them is a critical programmatic design priority.

62. For effective governance, the local representation of GCI - as itself, not as UNGEI, nor as IIEP - is key. It will help GCI gain visibility, it will also help to make the relationship between civil society and ministries more permanent, to build the intersectoral linkages. CSOs as well need better local anchoring, as well as meaningful investment and support. Considering the results targeted, many actions are implied at a local level, but not necessarily supported or resourced. Resources to support meaningful CSO engagement in their grassroots work would contribute substantially to GCI's objectives.

**3.2 – With the first results observed, has GCI been able to strengthen the capacities of ministries of education, civil society actors and more generally sector dialogue actors in terms of gender equality in and through education in the 8 selected countries? If so, what are the main successes identified, particularly in light of the sector planning cycle?**

63. Globally, trainings were appreciated, notably the one dedicated to gender transformative leadership because it was something quite new and original for the beneficiaries. Short course on gender responsive educational planning delivered over three months offers in-depth work on gender issues that is not just sensitization nor advocacy but also has a technical component based on country data.

*The trainings make the education professionals aware of the gender situation. Before that, they were not aware of the extent of inequalities and thought that parity policies were enough. The advantage of the training is that it is spread over three months, it is not just an awareness raising. We go into the operational side, into detail, we give them tools. It marks them. They can develop new reflexes on how to approach planning. And then it is complemented with training in the pilot countries. Presentation of country data is more effective than advocacy. They usually don't know this data. Can have a lasting impact at the individual and collective level. Needs to be systematized and institutionalized in ministries. (KII).*

The impression from the country's side is that these trainings are really useful and impactful on the mindsets of the ministries executives. *The training on gender responsive education planning gives us skills that impact our ways of doing things now. More people wear gender glasses thanks to permanent advocacy. The training of managers allows the actors of this ministry to change. People are more and more sensitive in what they say. The lines are moving".* What is also highly appreciated is the locally

adapted research and studies like the participatory gender diagnosis. In Burkina Faso, *it has responded to a real need, it has highlighted the bottleneck and the country partners liked it."*

64.     If trainings and research seem to have an impact on mindsets and awareness, it does not seem to have concrete translation yet. *"Many talk about it without really applying it"* says a country representative*. This statement is confirmed by another key informant from the technical partners side: "*They put too much emphasis on the planning and not on the technical aspects and the implementation".*

65.     Still others questioned where training was the most appropriate intervention for capacity building. "It's nice to go to trainings, whether we have too many and they don't work, because our problems aren't poor training. We need real solutions to our resource constraints. It's nice to be trained on gender, but we need women teachers, women principals, women in political leadership." This was echoed by others. "I wonder if training is the right thing to do. If the real problem is that our [education sector planning] processes are not inclusive, or not resourced, wouldn't we be better off investing in these processes?".

66.     In general, trainings were seen as effective less because of the ways in which technical skills were built (although this was also valuable), but more because of the convening role they played, in bringing together people who may not have necessarily been part of gender equality in and through education. The Transformative leadership trainings for example were delivered to mixed country task forces formed with both education specialists and finance coordinators who then committed to jointly taking forward the agenda. After the training, all stakeholders were able to see their role and contribution, which opened the door to follow-up collaborative engagements and the development of integrated work.

This is where the local presence of GCI can make a difference by accompanying the follow-up of the implementation, and engagement with processes that are meant to stem from the trainings. There has been considerably less investment in training for the CSO consortium members, but some work on this has been done, since training for the consortium members has been delivered in all 8 countries. They work on the basis of a work plan jointly elaborated with GCI. Considering the very limited resources, they stay at the national level without being able to reach the field where changes are needed and can come from.

67.     In terms of dialogue, the work of GCI is particularly visible since gender seems to be on the table now and is considered a topic that cannot be disregarded. "*Before that, talking about it was a problem, but now we can. Everything that has been done is also due to all these activities that have been conducted (Country focus group).*

On the partners side, the feeling of an open dialogue is also there*: "There will be no going back, we will no longer have an Education Sector Plan without disaggregated data. The issue of disparity reduction will always be on the table. There is a global movement and gender is at the top of the political agenda",* says a technical partner.

**3.3 – What were the enabling conditions for effective implementation of GCI activities at the country level? What has hindered the effective implementation of GCI activities at the country level?**

68.     Political, security and social context differs greatly from one country to the other but based on the testimonies received, these are the common favorable conditions for effective implementation of GCI activities. Political will, as in any other project, is critical. As said by a technical partner, *"it is quite different when we work at the request of a Government who mobilized to raise the funds"*. Nothing can be done without the will, the support and the implication of the ministry. This condition can even be a selection criterion for candidate countries. In Niger, where the political will is strong, GCI launched at the government request a large work on gender-based violence at school. The political will and by extension the way the word is spread within the ministry is also an important condition for trainings to reach the appropriate beneficiaries with the appropriate power of action.

69.     The presence and support of GCI donors in the country also helped. In a country where GCI does not have local representation, the AFD for example, helps the GCI representative in mission to set-up the meetings (Chad). The very first enabling condition for GCI's work is the acceptance of cooperation with the implementing partner or the donor by the partner country. This is currently not the case in Mali nor in Burkina Faso and it significantly impedes implementation of the initiative at a country level.

70.     The absence of a GCI representative or a GCI team on the ground is also a hindering driver for GCI activities implementation acknowledged by all the partners.

"GCI has a configuration problem, there are missing links in the chain to complete the mechanism".

"A local presence is needed to push further with the MoEs to take ownership of what they have learned with the initiative".

"What has been missing is a presence in the countries. It is not easy to coordinate at the country level from afar. We coordinated with the donors at the headquarters but did not succeed in coordinating at the country level because we did not have the means".

71.     Another obstacle is the budget. "There was no money to implement the whole package even in one single country". Money towards CSOs was also missing, refraining them from implementing their work plan.

72.     The turn-over within the ministry is a hindering driver even more impactful as it is out of partners' control.

73.     The initiative has been built on a pack of services offered that countries can request. This pack is contextualized and based on countries' jointly identified needs. But this on-demand method has strengths and weaknesses, but in aggregate, the program will likely need to shift away from being entirely responsive, and rather build a more coherent, strategic menu of activities that countries can choose to engage it.  *"It is good to respond to different needs. The problem is that it often remains ad hoc, which we do. The country's needs have been communicated by the government (GBV at school in Niger, gender planning in Sierra Leone) but is it strategic and are we taking the best of what we can offer? We need to think about what we wanted to do as an initiative at the beginning and what it implied in terms of change and capacity building to activate these levers. I have the impression that*

*the way chosen is not strategic".* (KII). The approach may seem fragmented. On the other hand, when demand comes from ministers, the results are more sustainable.

74.     Social norms remain the number one enemy and the most difficult to tackle. The theory of change is addressing them through the CSO component but the means and even the methodology that does not foresees grassroots level training, are too weak to reach the objectives so far.

**3.4 – To what extent is GCI improving coordination on gender in education through LEGs under the leadership of the MoE?**

75.     There are a few structural challenges LEGs are facing that limit the extent to which GCI can systematically improve coordination on gender through this mechanism. The effectiveness of LEGs depends considerably on the specific country contexts, and the unique constitution of the LEGs in the countries concerned. In many countries, coordination within the education sector is already quite good. In these situations, GCI has often had success in keeping gender a top priority within the education sector, and this is something that was widely commended. In country contexts where coordination in the education sector has already been relatively weak, GCI has not reliably been successful in improving it. While it may have helped, coordination in the education sector seems to have many causal drivers outside of the control of the GCI.

76.     One challenge of having GCI's entry point to coordination being through the LEG is that LEGs are so uneven in their inclusiveness capacity. "LEGs completely depend on the personnel engaged. There's no incentive and no accountability, so when LEGs work well, it's due to good luck." Other participants had similar views. "Does civil society participate in LEGs? It's not clear. Sometimes." What this demonstrates is that without a process to understand roles and responsibilities in some detail, LEGs may not be an appropriate default option to play this role in GCI's delivery mechanism.

77.     Similarly, there were contexts in which the link between GCI, the LEG, and the Ministry of Education were quite tight, but other situations in which, for example, the GCI focal person did not feel well-empowered to champion gender within their own ministry. This further points to a need for great clarity on roles and responsibilities. In places where there is widespread good will, enthusiasm around integrating gender in the education agenda within Ministries, then the GCI focal person is often effective in a convening role. But this can't be assumed to be the case, and GCI should carefully interrogate the function of these various bodies and revisit the most effective structure to deliver on this function.

**3.5 - To what extent are GCI's efforts influencing or tending to influence policy and practice dialogue on gender in education at the national, continental and global levels? How can lessons from different countries and at global level be distilled and translated into recommendations for progress? Has the budget for the gender unit within the MoE increased?**

78.     GCI has had considerable success in centering gender in education planning discourse globally and to promote a holistic vision of gender equality, beyond gender parity in education access and achievement. There was significant unanimity that the Initiative has been game-changing in the way gender mainstreaming has now been normalized in the global education planning space. There is a similar feeling that, while to a lesser extent regionally and nationally, GCI has created a level of support for the mainstreaming of gender that was not there prior.

79.   Furthermore, there was widespread acknowledgement that the Freetown Manifesto[28] demonstrated a level of political will on gender equity in and through education that could not have formerly been guaranteed. This strong display of political support for the mission of GCI has opened many doors for continued engagement, which will need to be considered in the second phase.

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**BOX 2: The Freetown Manifesto**

The Freetown manifesto for Gender-transformative leadership in education was developed in Sierra Leone in May 2022 and had the purpose to build a momentum for gender equality in and through education and rally partners around a shared vision on gender-transformative education. It was drafted by 13 countries at Minister level and commits to transforming education systems, pedagogies, institutions and mindsets for gender equality.

The manifesto includes 4 key commitments: More gender commitments in education sector plans (i), citizen inclusive data gathering on OoSC adopting a gender lens (ii), provide learning spaces for girls affected by crisis (iii) and increase multi-sectoral efforts (iv). The Manifesto was presented by the Ministers of Education of Niger and Sierra Leone at the Transforming Education Pre-Summit in Paris (June) and was highlighted at the Transforming Education Summit (TES) in September in New York. Several countries expressed their interest to sign the manifesto since then and UNGEI and GPE shall follow-up on new signatories and explore options to disseminate in other regions.

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80.   At this stage in GCI's implementation, distilling lessons from different countries into recommendations for progress is difficult, because there hasn't been a large degree of standardized programming of GCI's work. There is emergent evidence from country focus groups and the survey within ministries that investment in gender at MoEs has increased, but it isn't possible yet to empirically confirm, or determine the scope or scale of this increased investment.

**3.6 – What are some considerations for scaling up GCI to the national/regional/continental levels in a second phase?**

81.   With regards to GCI's ambitions, those are unanimously considered high for several reasons: its limited resources, both financial and human, its potential result which can only be seen in the long term, and the creation of a global partnership to reach a very local impact. *"There is a high institutional positioning with a cascading approach while the targeted results are on the ground. There is a kind of disconnection between the theory of change and the expected changes".*

82.   There seems to be a broad strategic trade off to be made between working deeper and more narrowly, with the possibility of achieving really meaningful results in just a few countries, versus having lighter touch engagement in more countries. Participants were reasonably divided between the pros and cons of either option for further extension, with some advice for increasing GCI's impact through the country selection process.

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[28] https://www.ungei.org/freetown-manifesto

**EFFICIENCY**

Was the GCI cost-effective and did GCI deliver results in an economic and timely way?

**4.1 - To what extent have GCI resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been used and committed efficiently, i.e., converted into meaningful results within a reasonable time frame, given the changing national needs and contexts in GCI countries?**

83.    This has not been a strength of GCI, but there are a few explanatory factors, and reasons to believe that GCI may be in a place to build efficiency. Among other things, the first stage of GCI does not lend itself inherently to the conversation of resources into results for two reasons. One is because the process of shifting institutional priorities and building support for the work of GCI takes resources itself. But also, during initial, exploratory stages, resources that under normal circumstances would have been diverted to results, were focused on understanding the context and needs, designing interventions, and measuring the emergent results. On IIEP's side, the process of expanding the office in Senegal and hiring up staff to work on GCI took time, as could be expected, and on UNGEI's side, there were substantial delays in getting resources particularly to country level civil society stakeholders. There are all understandable inefficiencies, that should be expected as reflecting the start-up phase of the initiative.

84.    The budget allocation for IIEP shows quite similar amount spent on staff expenses and on activities which tends to mean that, as implemented, the project is not cost effective enough.

Some of these challenges can be attributed in part to the timing of the initiative, which was just starting up when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and multi-level coordination efforts all had to shift plans and reconfigure methods of implementation.
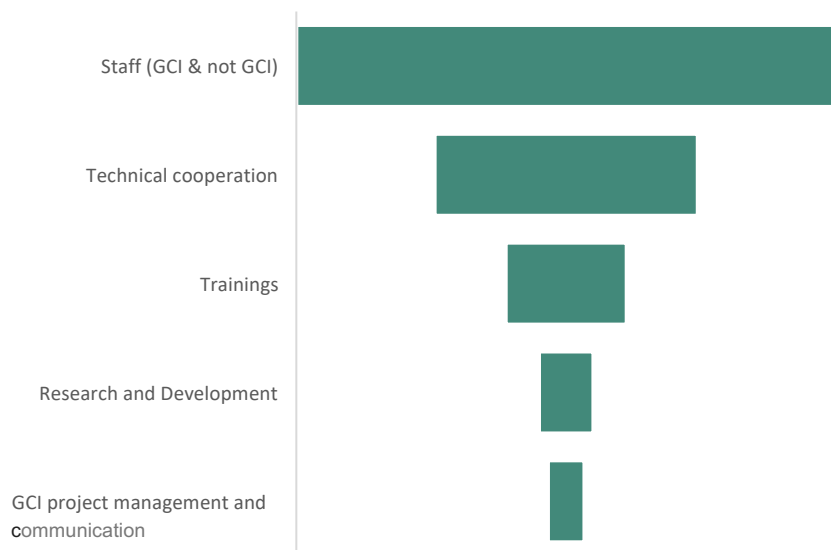


*Chart 4: GCI Budget allocation - IIEP*

So far, a number of specific budget lines of IIEP's planned expenses have been underused and some to a substantial extent (ex. Summer school: 65 000 spent in 2020 vs 252 000 planned or GCI activities: 200 000 spent vs 588 000 planned). We can see that this gap tends to reduce at year 3 which suggests both that planning within GCI is improving, and also that the effects of COVID-19 are minimizing. Nevertheless, the label "GCI activities" should be further specified as all activities are supposed to be GCI activities within the GCI budget.
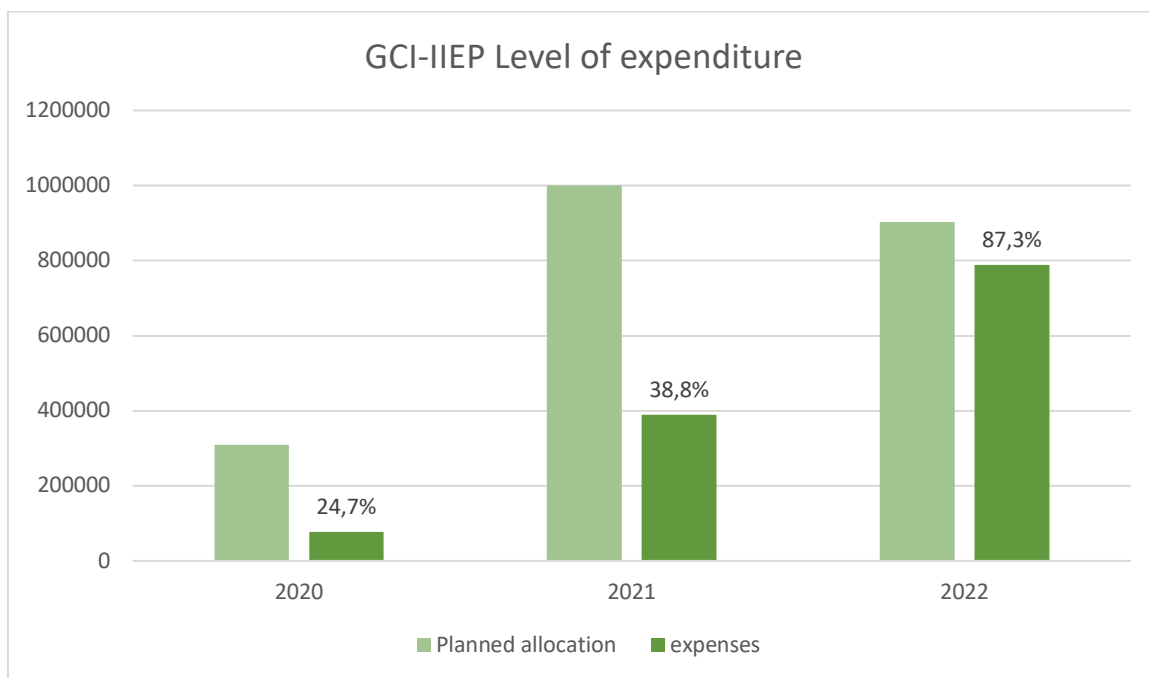
*Chart 5: GCI - IIEP Level of expenditure*

On UNGEI side, the organization dedicates half of its 5 335 681 USD budget to system strengthening and MoE support, meaning that its mandate is not only focused on CSO support for which only 1 112 829 USD is spent (Global and national advocacy and capacity and movement building). This situation would require a close coordination with IIEP to ensure coherence among all GCI activities.

The remaining budget, 1 690 396 USD, dedicated to staff and evaluation coordination costs can be considered commensurate; it encompasses all the staff expenses, as it represents 31% of the total budget.



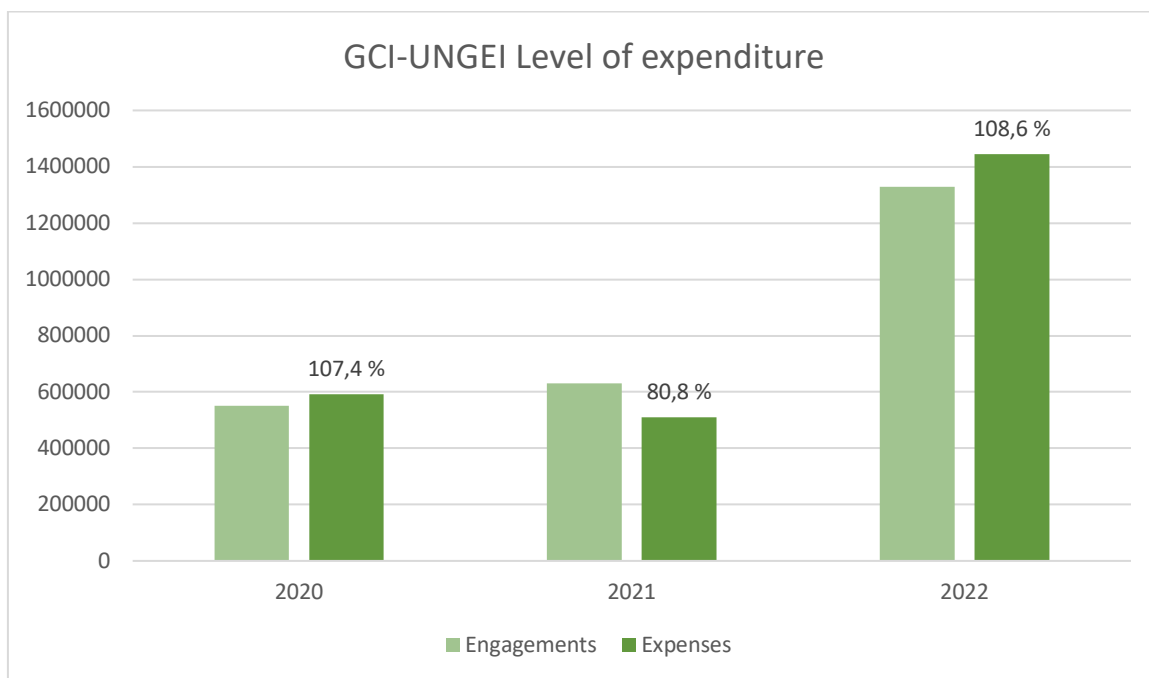*Chart 6: GCI - budget allocation - UNGEI*

*Chart 7: GCI - UNGEI level of expenditure*

The expenses dispatched among the three partners CSOs: ANCEFA, FAWE and Plan international, are as follows:
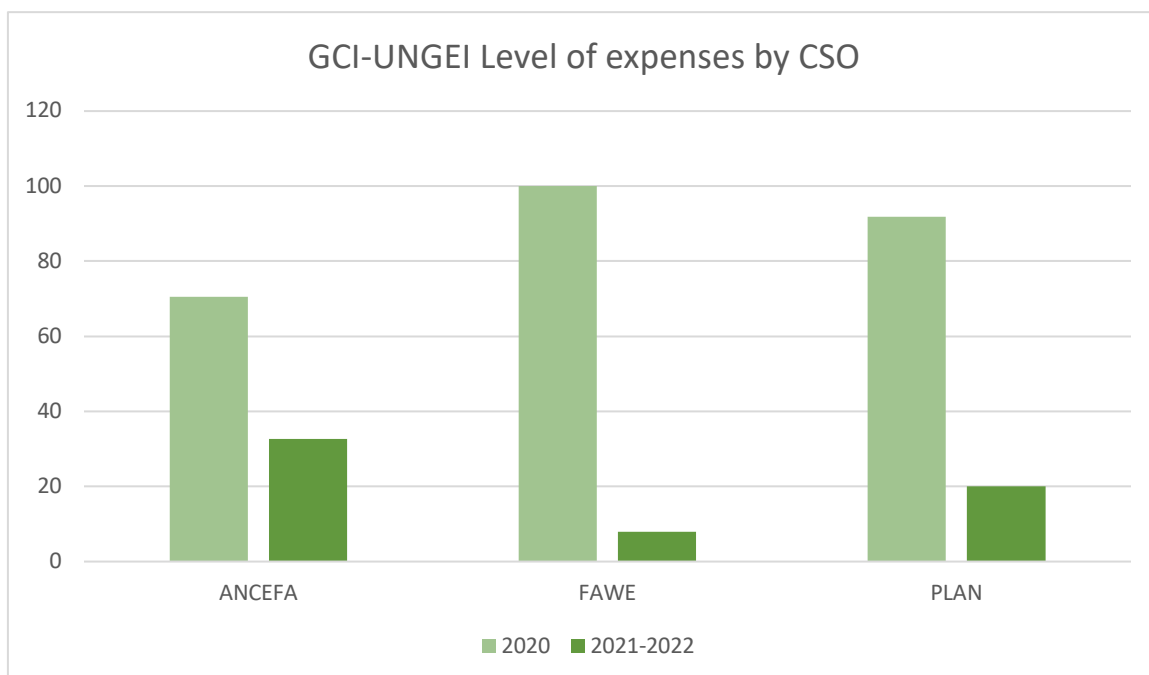


*Chart 8: GCI - UNGEI level of expenses by CSO[29]*

/ ANCEFA is responsible for Mozambique, Chad and Mauritania,

/ FAWE is responsible for Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali,

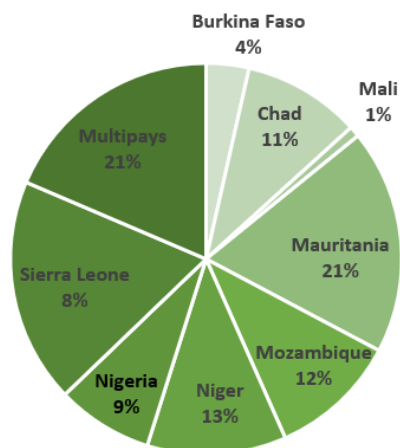/ Plan International is responsible for Niger and Sierra Leone.

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[29] The largest part of CSO expenses were made in Q1 2023.

85.     Disaggregating expenses by GCI country was not possible for the overall budget. However, IIEP suggested such a repartition of its share (composed mainly of staff costs), as follows.
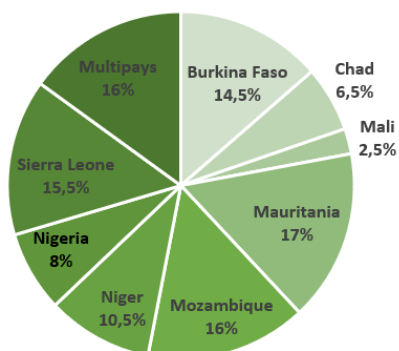


IIEP   - Expenses by country 2021
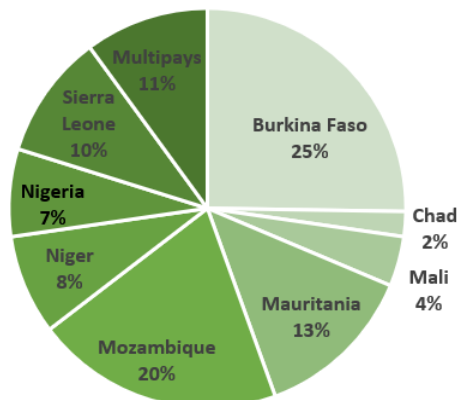


IIEP   - Expenses by country 2022



IIEP   - Expenses by country 2021-2022

Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique and Sierra Leone are the countries where the most has been spent. We can observe that despite its linguistic isolation, a special effort has been made for Mozambique. The political situation in Mali and Burkina Faso is also reflected in a decrease in project expenses. In Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone, expenses are justified by specific activities implemented such as the regional training on Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality in Education. In Mauritania where substantial expenses have been made over the two years, a gender sensitive Education Sector Analysis has been developed, and the country has received support for its review of is education national system (RESEN) and the formulation of its 10 years policy. But the difference with other countries remains high.

Regarding UNGEI expenses by country, at the time of this evaluation, a relatively limited number of activities have taken place at a national level, so it is still quite early to consider the efficiency of systems for converting funds to results. There seems to have been several positive steps in this regard, with potential for this efficient conversation to be prioritized in the future.

**4.2 - Have the financial resources made available for the implementation of the initiative been commensurate with the challenges and ambitions of GCI? What recommendations would you make to best calibrate the ambitions for change with the means available for a second phase?**

86.     The financial resources available are very limited compared with other initiatives with similar ambitions (see comparative analysis with SWEDD of Spotlight below), and an important step as GCI moves into a second phase is renegotiating the focus and scope of activities possible given the resources available, with the anticipated results. One significant shift in GCI's original design logic was a limitation in the level of resources available at the country level, due to the overall level of

funding available. An initial intention for substantial country level funding wasn't realized, and this shift from GCI supporting structured national implementation, to focusing on the provision of training and technical assistance, complemented with certain regional programming, implies significant changes in the feasible results.

"Either we increase the resources, or we reduce the ambitions" said a key informant.

Evaluation respondents put forward two potential options for responding to this, although there may be others that the leadership of GCI could consider. One is to focus more tightly around ensuring that education sector planning is gender responsive, with an idea to offer solidarity with wider debates, or support other initiatives that consider organizational culture and institutional capacity.

Another would be to focus particularly on political opportunities to play a catalyzing role. This is one result where participants thought GCI had been particularly effective, and in contexts where there was significant political opportunity, GCI has demonstrated some of its most significant wins. The importance of the Freetown Manifesto was widely acknowledged, and GCI was seen as playing a particularly strategic role.

A third would be to focus on innovative piloting efforts, which could be carefully documented and monitored, to assist governments in priority setting, and to coordinate with donors to finance implementation and upscaling of activities with demonstrated effectiveness.

**4.3 - What efforts were taken by GCI to adjust to challenges in the context of COVID-19 pandemic?**

87.     GCI was launched during the pandemic, so the implementation of activities already included the adaptation to the new situation. The trainings were run online which had the positive effect of allowing for more participants and led to reduced expenses linked to missions in the countries, but there were limits based on connectivity. COVID-19 did delay some start up activities, particularly those including travel. It penalized the project though, in terms of visibility and how the project had to make itself publicized. Without any representative on the ground and without in situ meetings, it was difficult for GCI to become real. However, on the whole, GCI was able to adjust effectively at a difficult time.

**4.4 - How have GCI Alliance partners engaged and effectively supported GCI, allowing economies of scale?**

88.     GCI alliance partners have definitely supported the activities of GCI, but this doesn't seem to have led to economies of scale. Firstly, since GCI is still at an early stage, scaling is a bit premature. However, more significantly, many of the alliance partners supported the activities of GCI to compensate for operational inefficiencies in the flow of resources, or a lack of available resourcing for activities. On one hand, this illustrates the ownership of GCI, and the extent to which its mandate is prioritized by partner organizations. At the same time, this has led to some questioning of GCI's capacity, and perhaps an inclination to rescope the partnership with GCI.

A decision should be made about what steps should be taken to invest in operational efficiency on the part of GCI, versus rescoping the initiative to play to its current capacity and strengths.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### Are the benefits and outcomes of the GCI long-lasting and likely to continue benefiting girls' education?

The sustainability of GCI hangs on two things: its partnerships, and its strategic focus. GCI is responding to a need and has the potential to contribute considerably to long term change for the benefit of gender equity in and through education. However, these changes will not happen with the current setup. There have been noteworthy achievements so far, but their sustainability is still dependent on resourcing for implementation, and a refined strategic focus, to ensure a strategy that is commensurate with resources.

**5.1. To what extent are the results obtained so far likely to be sustainable? Has the support provided, and the tools developed been designed with sustainability in mind?**

89.	The sustainability of the results obtained is likely thanks to the fact that GCI is directly targeting the system through the people working in it. As such it is likely to create sustainable change. It works on the system, through planning, budgeting, capacity building which are sectors with a long-term impact.

90.	The international approach is also a powerful lever for high level leadership and has the ability to "create a movement" like a technical partner said. *GCI works on substantive issues. With the Freetown manifesto, leaders made a political commitment to gender equality. These people are now able to lead changes in ministry. Regarding these feminist leaders, something profound has changed in their conception. As a result, they developed gender-sensitive plans. And these results remain because they are valid for five or ten years."*

91.	Identifying the root causes of inequalities and analyzing the social norms is a condition for lasting results if the activities are based on the findings. A study in itself does not have the power to change anything but can feed and highlight activities. "*Through our research on social causes and our advocacy, we played a role in the adoption of a more feminist agenda. Many of our partners decided to adopt this agenda".*

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**BOX 3: The report on social norms and girls' education**

This paper is a literature review of existing studies on gendered social norms that serve as barriers to girls' education in GCI countries, and presents broad findings from an in-depth literature review, including the ALIGN digital platform funded by the Gates Foundation and managed by ODI and the GAGE program.

The research presents an overview of social norms, and recommendations on program strategies that can change or challenge social norms that affect gender equality in education: i) capability building, ii) fostering individual agency, iii) supporting empowerment. The paper also recognizes the key role of teacher unions and the importance of micro-level (school) approaches to drive real change on social norms and appeals for more research be carried out to understand which powerholders have the potential to support change.

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92.     The relationship between ministries and CSOs has been strengthened, according to both partners, which is likely to be sustainable in the sense that when standards are set-up, it is difficult to move backward. *"GCI also strengthened the links between the ministries and civil society, which is invited to the ministry much more often."*

93.     The creation of concrete tools is also a sustainable result: the participatory gender diagnostic has become a work tool for authorities and their partners, the GES toolkit which helps to collect data as well. "*It has created some awareness about certain data, and stimulated dialogue. And it is starting to be adopted by other actors. Negotiations with GPE are ongoing to implement it in other countries. In that sense, GCI has been an incubator for some tools, tested in pilot countries. This happens to the Freetown Manifesto which is now disseminated in other countries, including in Asia*."

**5.2. To what extent can the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of country education systems allow for continuity of results delivered through GCI over time in GCI country contexts?  What would be the recommendations for selection of partner countries for a second phase?**

94.     It is currently too early to speak of the continuity of results meaningfully, when relatively few activities have taken place at a country level. The potential for the sustainability of results seems quite high, particularly given the high level of ownership of activities by partner organizations.

95.     In looking forward to a second phase of GCI, evaluation participants offered many recommendations in how to select partner countries. While there was a nearly unanimous agreement that need should be an important consideration, there was also a widespread feeling that all countries needed to put gender at the center of education, in different ways given their context. Most participants recommended that 'political will', or 'demonstrated interest and investment' in gender equity in and through education should be an important priority, with several rationales. One is that in order to meaningfully build lasting capacity within the ministry, high level political leadership was important. Niger was often put forward as an example where GCI has had real, concrete successes, in large part due to political champions who are invested in the mission of GCI.

**5.3 - Has GCI mobilized further resources for promoting gender equality in and through education from other MoE financial partners to support its efforts?**

96.     It is still early for this result to be realized, but there are early indications that this will be seen, to a limited degree, through the work of GCI. GCI has had success in catalyzing a 'virtuous cycle' in MoEs, who prioritize gender in education sector planning, and therefore invest financial and human resources more in this agenda and may therefore have more capacity to raise funds or drive collaborative activities in this area of work. Survey respondents from ministries of education unanimously agreed that as a result of GCI, ministries of education had invested a little bit more in gender.

**5.4 – Are there indications that GCI has generated lasting changes in UNGEI and IIEP's planning or program design?**

97.     According to many interviewees, IIEP has seen substantial changes in its approach as a result of GCI, and that itself was seen as an important result. *"Change is sustainable for the Dakar team. There is a more holistic understanding of how to take gender into the education sector, some topics were not covered in the sectoral analyses before. Mainstreaming will definitely remain. Internally, this impact is also noticeable. It is not only the sensitivity of the people but their skills on gender have*

*increased". KII. "For IIEP, the change is even deeper because before, the organization was not strong on gender nor had the will. But thanks to GCI now, a strong gender team influences IIEP as well.*

98.     The progress with UNGEI is less visible since the team was already dedicated to gender equality but GCI has led to some changes as well: "*UNGEI was focusing on advocacy at the global level and now implements activities in countries and has an impact on the ground.*"

## 5.2     Preliminary conclusion

The Gender at the Center Initiative has an important strategic role to play in garnering support for gender equity in and through education at local and global levels. Since its inception, it has already changed discourse and debates in this area. Furthermore, it has invested significant resources in setting up the partnerships, relationships, and systems to deliver on its mandate.

Gender equity in and through education is a particularly strategic area of work at the moment. Data systems are improving in their disaggregation, and there is growing recognition and prioritization of intersectional forms of exclusion, with a global agenda to Leave No One Behind. There is a growing research base indicating that inequality at all levels, with gender inequality being particularly prevalent, are slowing progress on all forms of human development. Finally, the Freetown Manifesto is only one example of an increasing political will to invest in gender equity in and through education. GCI, in three short years, has already gained considerable traction in ensuring this issue is a priority, and there is considerable potential to build on this progress through careful planning, reflecting on lessons, and building towards GCI's strengths in this space.

In order to do this, GCI faces a number of challenges. It is important that GCI refine its identity and ensure that it does not duplicate other initiatives in the space, while at the same time growing beyond a narrow focus on investing in gender responsive sector planning.  There are several ways of approaching this, and a collaborative strategic scenario planning process that can inform future work of GCI is central to moving forward in a way that removes the barriers experienced so far in efficiency and effectiveness but play to the Initiatives strengths of relevance and sustainability.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1   Lessons learned

GCI has learned many important lessons in its initial implementation. Through the period of implementation, the initiative has been successful in clarifying roles and responsibilities within the alliance, in coming to agreements about how the program of work should be delivered, and in building relationships that will be critical to GCI's success.

i. **Restrategizing**. GCI has learned a lot about its strategy in its initial years of implementation. The theory of change and results framework could all be improved and maybe simplified, and as GCI moves into a next phase, a structured process should take place to do this. Particular attention should be given to partnerships. Furthermore, attention should be given to building up from a country level and building on some of the key successes of GCI.

ii. **In country operations.** The processes of country selection, coordination, and activity delivery need to be reworked. This is already in progress, but specific decisions should be guided by certain updated strategic decisions, to ensure there is an alignment between overall strategy, and operational delivery mechanisms.

iii. GCI has achieved several notable successes. However, the current 'story' of GCI's work isn't collectively held even by key role players in the initiative. In moving towards the second stage, GCI should work on **a consolidated narrative** of both strategy and progress.

### 6.2   Comparative perspective

Lessons can also be learned from other projects with the same level of ambitions. Hence, we propose to take inspiration from the Spotlight initiative and the SWEDD project with ambitions similarly deeply transformative and with an equally holistic approach. Some general considerations are added on the Muskoka Fund.

**1) The Spotlight Initiative**.

This initiative, launched in 2017, is a five-year program with a budget of 500 M Euros ensured by the EU, aimed at tackling gender-based violence (GBV), with an initial focus on 26 countries. The table below provides an overall comparative approach:

| Similarities with GCI | Differences with GCI |
|---|---|
| / Multi-country program,<br><br>/ Holistic approach targeting the system and the society,<br><br>/ "one UN" approach,<br><br>/ Multilateral,<br><br>/ Same level of ambitions. | / The scale: geographical scope, extent of the target reached,<br><br>/ The budget,<br><br>/ CSOs at the heart of the project, receiving half of the budget,<br><br>/ Presence at community levels through grassroots organizations,<br><br>/ In-country teams,<br><br>/ Objective country selection criteria. |

*Table 5: Some comparative features of GCI and the Spotlight Initiative*

Spotlight achievements include:

/ Nearly 130 million people reached through campaigns in 29 languages in 2021,

/ Throughout 2021, more than 1,000 local and grassroots women's rights organizations having greater influence and agency,

/ USD 179 million allocated to civil society organizations (49% of activity funds) since the start of the Initiative,

/ 122 countries reached by 34 Spotlight Initiative programs.

The project claims an implementation approach anchored in local NGO and CSOs: « Our hope is that this high rate of grassroots funding, coupled with our compelling results, will send a strong signal to other donors on the efficacy of this approach[30]. »

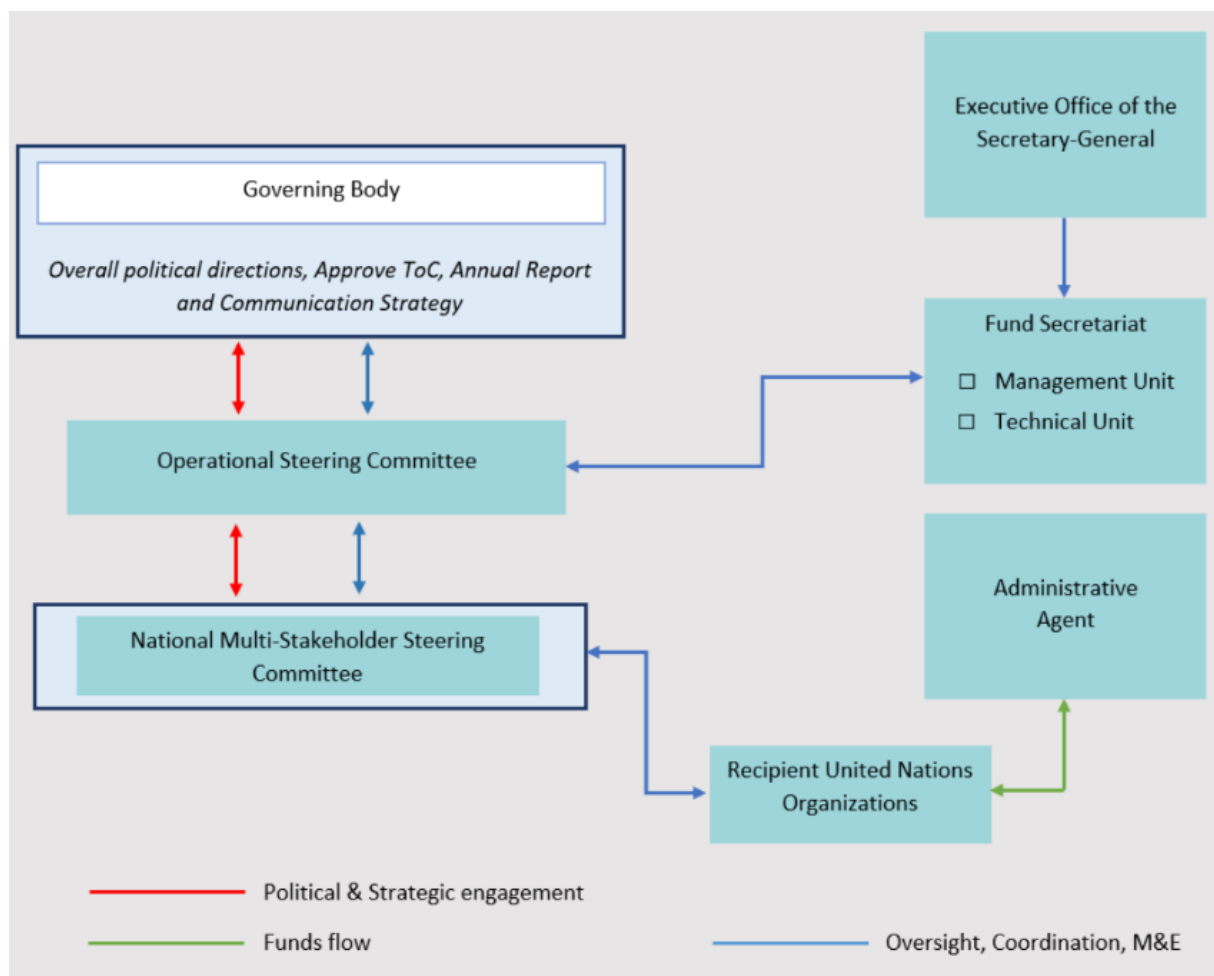Spotlight Governance is described in the below chart:



*Chart 9: Governance structure of the Spotlight Initiative*

**The work with CSOs**

In addition to providing funds, Spotlight works with grassroots and local organizations on program design and implementation, and on participatory monitoring and evaluation. To reach smaller grassroots organizations who cannot always access to funds from traditional donors (due to absorption

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[30] Source: spotlight initiative impact report, 2020-2021, https://spotlightinitiative.org/publications/spotlight-initiative-impact-report-2020-2021

capacity, extensive application, and reporting requirements), the Spotlight Initiative and the United Nations Foundation launched in 2021 the With Her Fund allowing more flexible funding.

Regarding working process, Civil Society National, Regional and Global Reference Groups (CS-RGs) have been established as an institutional mechanism to facilitate systematic civil society engagement throughout the Spotlight Initiative Program cycle. The CS-RGs (national, regional and global) serve a triple function; to advise the Initiative, to advocate and partner for the realization of its objectives and to hold the Initiative accountable for its commitments.

### The CS-RG

/ Is adequately represented in Spotlight Initiative's decision-making mechanisms (Steering Committee) with at least 20% full voting representation,

/ Is invited and allowed to fully engage in multi-stakeholder consultations and meetings,

/ Has clearly allocated resources and support to meaningfully participate, e.g. budgeting CS-RGs' workplans (including transportation and travel costs); providing adequate notice time for meetings and technical review of documents; allowing virtual meeting participation; selecting disability-friendly venues; arranging interpretation for sign language and minority languages (when needed),

/ Is given feedback and timely information on how its inputs may have been considered for the program, including justifications when those may have not been taken into account,

/ Has established mechanisms to hold Spotlight Initiative accountable for its commitments.

The CS-RGs consist of around 15 diverse global/regional/national/local experts on eliminating violence against women and girls, and on gender equality and women's rights more broadly.

Once the CS-RG is established, Spotlight team has to:

/ Review and agree on its mandate and responsibilities,

/ Agree on a brief standard operating procedure to guide the collaboration with the Spotlight Initiative Program Team,

/ Agree on tasks and deliverables for the year including a schedule of meetings and other activities (workplan) with a corresponding budget and,

/ Agree on a modality for selection of representatives to the National/Regional Steering Committee, who will hold **at least 20% full voting membership.**

### The country selection process

It has been agreed that the country selection would be based on a set of criteria, which includes prevalence of the specific form of violence against women and girls in the region (constituting 25% of overall selection criteria) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII) (constituting another 25% of the overall selection criteria).

Remaining 50% applies as follows:

/ Level of government commitment towards ending violence against women and girls (15%),

/ Absorption capacity at national level (10%),

/ Presence and capacity of UN country teams to deliver (5%),

/ Presence and capacity of EU delegations in country to engage (5%),

/ Enabling environment in country in particular for civil society (5%),

/ Existing initiatives on VAWG at regional/country level with the potential to be scaled-up (5%),

/ Possibility to produce 'models' for replication in other countries/ capacity to influence others in the region (i.e. domino or support effect) (5%).

To foster a structured engagement, it is recommended that the CS-RGs and Program Team agrees on collaboration and communication modalities. The outcomes of such agreement may be documented in a jointly agreed standard operating procedure (SOP).

The CS-RG should adopt a workplan with a known corresponding budget. The workplan is best defined locally by the CS-RG, guided by the local context and the group's roles and responsibilities (for more details on the working process, Note - Achieving meaningful engagement and partnership with the Civil Society Reference Groups)

The Spotlight is an inspiring example for GCI as the structure and the ambitions are quite alike and the project can claim meaningful achievements. Recommended improvements are mentioned in the below box:

> **BOX 4: Why is the Spotlight Initiative inspiring for GCI?**
>
> ➢ First, the budget is commensurate with the declared ambitions: 500 million for 5 years, i.e. 100 million per year.
> ➢ CSOs are not beneficiaries but proper partners with clearly defined financial involvement
> ➢ Community level activities are key in this project and this is where impact can be reached.
> ➢ All the concerned levels, global, national and local, are involved and have their place in the governance structure.

**2) The SWEDD project - Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD)**

The SWEDD project was launched in late 2015 in seven countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ivory coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger with the financial support of the World Bank, the technical support of UNFPA and the Health West African Organization (l'Organisation Ouest Africaine pour la Santé (OOAS). This regional initiative also improves children's health and nutrition, strengthens girls' education, and works to end child marriage and other harmful practices.

The overall objective of this initiative responding to a call from the Presidents of the Sahel countries, is to accelerate the demographic transition, trigger the demographic dividend and reduce gender inequalities in the Sahel region. The project has 3 major components:

/ Component 1: Create demand for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and nutritional health commodities and services by promoting social and behavioral change, and the empowerment of women and adolescent girls,

/ Component 2: Strengthen regional capacity to improve the supply of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and nutritional health commodities and skilled personnel,

/ Component 3: Strengthen the project's high-level advocacy and policy dialogue and build capacity for policy development and project implementation.

The table below provides an overall comparative approach:

| Similarities of SWEDD with GCI | Differences with GCI |
|---|---|
| / Multi-country, | / Budget, |
| / Geographical scope, | / Regional presence, |
| / Multidimensional, | / Request of the countries. |
| / Common sector of intervention, | |
| / Level of ambitions, | |
| / Work on social norms. | |

*Table 6: Some comparative features of GCI and SWEDD*

SWEDD claims the following achievements in 3 key areas (women empowerment; health supply chain, and awareness raising):

| Women empowerment | |
|---|---|
| / Over 675,000 girls have benefited from interventions to:<br>  o Maintain girls in school: 106,263 girls and adolescents supported to enroll and stay in school and 102,600 out-of-school and out-of-school girls given a second chance through 3,420 safe spaces,<br>  o Improve life skills and knowledge of sexual and reproductive health: 451 873 new users of modern contraception,<br>  o Expand young women's economic opportunity and financial inclusion: 99 704 girls and young women trained in income-generating activities.<br><br>/ 92% of adolescent girls and women (who are beneficiaries of safe space interventions) have good knowledge about the harmful consequences of child marriage and early pregnancy,<br><br>/ The retention rate of adolescent girls enrolled in secondary schools (benefiting from enrolment interventions in the project intervention areas) is almost at 92% compared to a target of 92.90% by 2024. | **Impacts**<br><br>Increased secondary school completion rate for girls from 35,1% to 40,3% between 2015 and 2018.<br><br>Improved average income of women.<br><br>Decrease in the number of child marriages |
| **Strengthen the supply chain to the last mile and the capacity of health workers** | |
| / Harmonization of product registration and quality control,<br><br>/ 9 200 midwives trained on a regionally harmonized curriculum that promote adolescent-friendly services and community-based distribution of family planning products,<br><br>/ Increase in the number of midwives by 15,2%,<br><br>/ Strengthening of health training through the establishment of 3 regional centers of excellence. | **Impacts**<br><br>+ 4 302 000 additional women on contraception.<br><br>300 million people reached on reproductive, maternal and child health. |
| **Raising awareness among decision-makers** | |
| / Establishment of regional networks: religious and traditional leaders, parliamentarians, youth and journalists,<br><br>/ Close to 13,400 religious leaders engaged by SWEDD actively promote girls and women's empowerment, | |

| | |
|---|---|
| / 7 SWEDD countries have functioning Demographic Dividend Observatories, which benefited from training workshops on integrating gender in their policy and advocacy work, <br> / A programming guide on the Demographic Dividend developed, <br> / Several SWEDD country legal teams of lawyers, judges and parliamentarians have started to implement action plans, <br> / + 483 national experts trained to pilot the national observatories on the Demographic Dividend. | |

*Table 7: SWEDD achievements in 3 key areas*

### Governance of SWEDD Project

At the regional level, the UNFPA Regional Office for West and Central Africa acts as the Regional Technical Secretariat (RTS) on behalf of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC). The RTS provides technical assistance to countries in the implementation of interventions related to the different components of the project. The Secretariat of the Regional Steering Committee is provided by the Coordinator of the Regional Technical Secretariat of the Initiative.

At the national level, the implementation of the initiative is led by a coordination unit comprising a coordinator, a program officer, a procurement officer, a monitoring and evaluation officer and an administrative and financial officer. The coordination unit is supervised by the National Steering Committee (NSC).

The National Demographic Dividend Observatories (NDDOs) are set up to monitor the process of capturing the DD by providing real-time information on population and development issues, with a view to assessing the evolution of the DD indicators. The regional Demographic Dividend Observatory (RDD0O) is the umbrella structure for NDDOs.

> **BOX 5: Why is the SWEDD project inspiring for GCI?**
>
> ➢ First, the budget is commensurate with the declared ambitions: 300 million for 9 years, i.e. over 30 million per year.
> ➢ There is space for community level activities and we can see that this is where impact can be reached.
> ➢ They are interventions at schools, where changes are expected
> ➢ All important figures in the society are targeted by the work on social norms

### 3) the Muskoka Fund

Since 2011, the French Muskoka Fund has been working to improve the health and well-being of women, newborns, children and adolescents in nine countries of West and Central Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad and Togo.

Its creation responds to France's commitment, at the G8 summit in Muskoka, Canada, in June 2010, to strengthen its contribution to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (SRMNIA),

nutrition and the empowerment of women in order to achieve the SDG on improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.

The French Muskoka Fund acts by mobilizing the comparative advantages and complementary expertise of four United Nations agencies: the World Health Organization (WHO), UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Fund for United Nations for Children (UNICEF).

The table below provides an overall comparative approach:

| Similarities of Muskoka Fund with GCI | Differences with GCI |
|---|---|
| / Multi-country, | / Budget (16M per year), |
| / Geographical scope, | / Regional presence, |
| / Multidimensional, | / Collaboration among 4 agencies, |
| / Level of ambitions, | / Targeting another SDG. |
| / Work on social norms. | |

*Table 8: Some comparative features of GCI and the Muskoka Fund*

Muskoka achievements include:

- / - 17% maternal mortality rate between 2010 and 2017,
- / - 22% neonatal mortality rate between 2011 and 2018,
- / 70 000 health staff trained in 10 years.

The implementation of the project has led to the following lessons learned:

- / The personal involvement of the representatives of each agency in the system is essential for strategic support and for the visibility of the system in the countries,
- / At country level, the coordinating agency plays a crucial role in the smooth functioning of the system,
- / The annual technical and financial report common to the four agencies is a very important tool in terms of accountability, visibility and advocacy. It is also a tool for evaluating and improving practices for country teams,
- / It is important to develop and maintain a multi-year vision and to operate within a stable framework of interventions,
- / The involvement of regional global health advisors in the Muskoka mechanism has proven to be a good practice in order to facilitate communication between country teams and embassies.

> **BOX 6: Why is the Muskoka Fund inspiring for GCI?**
>
> ➤ One approach with agencies building a joint programing
> ➤ 10 years of a stable Muskoka team at country and regional levels, of about 100 experts who know each other, interact and share the same methodological tools. This stability has made it possible to cope with the great institutional and political instability, illustrated by the frequency of changes or renewals of the health authorities.
> ➤ The multiannual programing contributes to the sustainability of the program and the coordination

## 6.3    Recommendations

The Gender at the Center Initiative has a strong foundation for moving forward. There is a strong consensus across the GCI Alliance around a holistic approach to gender equality in education in its broadest sense, and there have been a series of national activities that have laid the foundation for implementation. These include diagnostic studies, leadership training, and engagement workshops to build a community aligned to the mission and vision of GCI. Furthermore, a lot of work has gone into the operational structures of GCI, and it is now possible for the Alliance to move beyond the processes of 'start up' and use the planning and reporting mechanisms in place to take implementation of the Initiative forward.

There are areas of GCI's initial planning that no longer seem to serve the needs of the Initiative initially formulated in the ToC and should be revisited. They cannot be specifically identified, as they depend on several important strategic decisions. However, the 'considerations' section after the recommendations section identifies some questions that could be asked to identify these areas of work specifically. Localizing the work of GCI is an urgent priority, and the LEGs have not proven to be a consistently effective coordination channel. Other mechanisms must be found. Furthermore, civil society organizations feel marginalized within the Alliance, and there are structural reasons why they have been unable to play the leadership role that was initially envisaged; these should be addressed. The initial group of countries were not formed based on technical merit, and has come with logistical challenges, including coordinating in three languages and quite different structures in ministries of education, in a region with very expensive and challenging travel. Future selection should be based on established criteria, which will make systematic, clear goal setting, and coordinated work planning around common results more feasible.

The Freetown Manifesto was a clear and concrete success emerging from the work of GCI, and illustrated the consensus achieved around GCI's mission and vision through the important political momentum. This achieved momentum can provide a tool for structuring some of the revisions that need to take place in the strategic focus of GCI. This Manifesto both frames a community of leaders who are ready to act to concretely move towards increased gender equality in and through education, and also lays out key issues, as they are viewed by this community. This provides a good opportunity for GCI to build on expressed will and plan a deliberate process of implementation on the basis of the direction in the Manifesto.

## 8.2. Strategic recommendations

| RECOMMENDATION |
|---|
| **Rec #1:** The structure and architecture of GCI should be revised to better align to the current needs of the program.<br><br>1.1 The current structure and resources are far too centralized, and specific attention needs to be given to integration, and defining linkages with existing initiatives. GCI should significantly expand its in-country presence, while being cautious not to duplicate existing structures. Methods for this could include making explicit and standardizing the roles of country focal persons, broadening the responsibilities of a wider range of GCI Alliance members, or having roles and responsibilities that could be resourced and taken up by existing national actors. Specific decisions should be made with consideration for other initiatives that may have common operational requirements as GCI, as profiled in the report above.<br><br>1.2 A core element of capacity building should include, as far as possible, drawing on local expertise and experience, and this should be core to GCI's training, technical assistance and research.<br><br>1.3 The mandate, role, and function of GCI MoE focal points should be clarified, and adequately resourced. |
| **Rec #2:** GCI should revise its theory of change to both better match GCI's ambitions to the scale of the initiative, as well as to more clearly carve out the strategic contribution of the initiative. This will help clarify the boundaries of the initiative for partnership building and ownership. This should include a refinement of GCI's programmatic focus, with clarity on targeting specific interventions that will strategically contribute to GCI's mandate. |
| **Rec #3:** The programmatic and geographic focus of GCI should be refined, with clarity on targeting specific interventions that will strategically contribute to GCI's mandate.<br><br>3.1 These programmatic focus areas should be defined from a combined process of considering country demand, as well as emergent results from research conducted in the first phase.<br><br>3.2 GCI should carefully consider the appropriateness of activities focused on diagnostic, planning and tool development.  There is a general need to shift support away from planning, and to ensure there is sufficient capacity for implementation, but this has implications for both the resourcing and the structuring of the network and should be done with consideration for alignment to the policy cycle.<br><br>3.3 A national approach is not appropriate to many of the issues GCI is aiming to address. However, GCI is not well equipped to work in a structured way at a school, district, or otherwise localized level. These is a need to either adjust the ambitions of GCI, or the structure of the Alliance, so that there is an alignment on this issue. |
| **Rec #4:** GCI should develop a partnership strategy that is in line with both its strategic and sustainability requirements. Deliberate, planned, strategic linkages should be built with organizations that could have complementary mandates. |

| RECOMMENDATION |
|---|
| 4.1 This strategy should specifically include, but not be limited to GPE and UNICEF, which have relevant mandates around funding and coordinating in-country implementation. |
| 4.2 The strategy should consider the level of ownership GCI requires of different Alliance members, and what this looks like operationally. This should be collectively agreed and understood. |
| 4.3 An expanded network of partnerships, particularly including feminist movements, should be explored, since they have both a wider reach and a more explicit mandate around norm shifting on gender issues. |
| 4.4 The strategy should include financial sustainability as one purpose, with an aim to diversify the current base of donors, and particularly include additional key donors in the education sector, such as the World Bank. |
| **Rec #5:** GCI should strengthen collective ownership of the Initiative's finances, including more transparent, collective financial follow-up. This will lead to increased accountability for results across all members of the Alliance, as well as to beneficiary countries. |
| **Rec #6:** While this evaluation has often strongly recommended localizing the work of GCI, this should not exclude a regional perspective. GCI is an appropriate space for a follow-up mechanism to support and monitor the implementation of the Freetown Manifesto. The commitments made should be followed, and this process can provide significant strategic direction to GCI's future planning. |

*Table 9: Strategic recommendations*

## 8.3. Operational recommendations

| RECOMMENDATION |
|---|
| **Rec #1:** There should be an integration (including the workplan, budget, and theory of change), that includes the work of capacity building within ministries as well as the enabling environment work with CSOs, in an integrated way. This should also be reflected in the operational structure.<br><br>1.1 Despite good communication that is allowing the current model to function, the division of work between IIEP and UNGEI needs to be resolved, particularly, but not only at a local level. This should be addressed as part of the restructuring of country engagement. |
| **REC#2:** Research and knowledge production should be more closely focused on understanding interventions that are effective in addressing intersectional exclusion, with a 'leave no one behind' agenda in the specific contexts of the focal countries.<br><br>2.1 This research should have a specific focus on leaving a portfolio of evidence to both ministries and CSOs around what the most effective approaches are to keep gender at the center of education in their specific context.<br><br>2.2 This should include interventions at an individual level, at a school level, and at a provincial or national level of policy and coordination. |

| RECOMMENDATION |
|---|
| **REC#3:** Diagnostics carried out in GCI's first phase should be used to identify areas that would be appropriate for developing communities of practice or structured knowledge production that would directly inform ministerial practice. These communities of practice should be built to include programmatic activity, common results, and structured peer learning.<br><br>3.1 The significant resources currently dedicated to regional and international convening are widely valued, but with some deliberate restructuring, could also contribute more substantively to the results of the initiative. |
| **Rec #4:** Based on the revised strategic direction of the initiative, GCI should consider whether its portfolio of countries remains appropriate.<br><br>4.1 Criteria should be developed that reflect a combination of need, political will and country ownership, and alignment to the strategic direction of GCI.<br><br>4.2 The capacity of LEGs is not of consistently high enough quality and not inclusive enough to local CSO-NGO capacity to be the primary coordination mechanism. GCI should consider different models of country engagement, including involving countries in specific activities, or communities of practice, based on their context and needs. Decisions such as deeper engagement with fewer countries, or broader engagement with many countries should be made according to the revised strategic direction.<br><br>4.3 GCI should phase changes, to ensure maximum use of the capacity already in place. While new areas of exploration, such as including countries in Asia, or countries which have successfully achieved parity but want to work through changing norms through play, should be put in place only if they align strongly with GCI's revised strategic direction. |

*Table 10: Operational recommendations*

## 8.4. Additional considerations

Several considerations were raised during the evaluation that could become recommendations, but it would be premature to frame them as such before certain foundational questions about GCI's approach and strategy have been answered. These are listed below for consideration, with the possibility to make decisions at some point in the future.

| CONSIDERATION |
|---|
| Youth and children are an important constituency group in GCI, and it is not clear how their inclusion is provided for in the program's governance. This should be considered. |
| GCI's current programmatic design does not include out of school children, who are potentially important for the program's success and clearly referred to as one of the 4 key commitments of the Freetown Manifesto. Consideration should be given to whether there should be a focused inclusion of them in the program, or if it should be considered out of the GCI's scope. |
| Some areas of GCI's work require a stronger evidence base for ministries to be able to make decisions, but GCI is not currently well designed for rigorous experimental studies on remedial measures and policy levers. Such measures are however widely tested within a large number of development[31] and emergency projects in the beneficiary countries, including individual measures encouraging individual participation (cash transfers, internships and "safe spaces" for vulnerable girls, hygiene or pedagogical kits for example), changing education delivery systems and methods (eliminating stereotypes in school curricula and manuals, training teachers, combating SGBV, improving school infrastructure including WASH…) and targeting social norms and changing legal frameworks, and now included in education sector plans. However, little information is available about their differentiated impact and affordability. Should a partnership be considered that could answer some of the key research questions that are critical to the mission of GCI? Could the GES diagnostic be adapted to include modelling work? |
| Certain thematic areas emerged that had significant interest in coordinated, programed activities from a number of country. Issues like child marriage, young pregnancy, gender based violence, scholar transport and displacement all had a significant number of participating countries interested in specific, coordinated efforts and common exploitation of existing evidence on impact. Scope to structure coordinated work in this way should be considered. |
| Poverty and intersectional exclusion combine to form the biggest barriers to girls accessing schools. For this, a national approach is not relevant, and a close focus at the specific places where access is very unequal becomes critical. How can GCI adapt to accommodate such granular work? CSO's could have an important role to play. |
| There are some areas of work that are either explicit or implicit in GCI's theory of change, that the Alliance is not well structured to achieve. This includes public sector capacity building at scale, and norm shifts. Meaningful progress in these areas suggest including other central implementation |

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[31] See finding 45 on DAC gender equality policy marker. Development and emergency projects tend to experiment differentiated gender equality packages, and centralised MoE information on lessons learned may lack to some extent.

| CONSIDERATION |
|---|
| partners, such as national schools of government, or feminist movements. Are the central actors of GCI the most appropriate ones, or might there need to be changes? |
| GCI is not currently well structured to engage with the entirety of the educational supply chain, particularly down to the school level. Further evidence on school demand for girls remains to be collected. However, this is a necessary level of change, according to the theory of change. How can this gap be addressed? Should the anticipated results change, or the structure of GCI's implementation change, or some combination of both? |
| Some people are in favor of significant shifts to GCI's operating model; including Asian countries, including countries that have achieved parity of access and want to introduce play to challenge harmful stereotypes, etc. When some of the larger questions of strategy and design have been solved, it will be easier to develop a systematic approach to evaluate these suggestions. However, all changes should be phased, given the resourcing required by change management process. Given the significant time invested simply in establishing the Initiatives and its systems, it is a good idea to meaningfully implement the model planned in country and learn from what works (or doesn't) before moving to a revised model. However, possibilities of identifying countries and programs for piloting, sharing, and scaling could be explored. |
| Given GCI's scale and focus, investing in supporting targeted local pilot projects could be a strategic investment of resources. However, this only makes sense if there are linkages to upscaling or wider implementation based on the findings both from the implementation phase and from existing initiatives both from global partners (Spotlight, SWEDD) and national alliance members (ALIGN, Muskoka Fund, upcoming French support though EDIFIS). Should GCI take on a model like this in some or much of its programmatic work? |
| GCI seems a bit undecided about whether it is taking a movement approach, where different organizations contribute to the work of GCI and claim the results, versus a traditional program which has consolidated branding. This should be resolved, because it has significant issues for the Initiative. |
| Some respondents recommended a strategic reflection on what it means to be an Initiative. Does this imply a timeline for close out? Does it imply work hosted and other institutions, versus stand-alone branding? Does it imply independent political leadership from member states? Or other things? This should be considered and then the relevant components should be spelled out explicitly, so that expectations are shared. |

*Table 11: Additional considerations*

**ANNEXES**

## Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

| CRITERIA | EVALUATION SUB QUESTIONS | INDICATORS/MEASURES | DATA COLLECTION METHOD | DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RELEVANCE**<br><br>To what extent do the GCI's objectives and design respond to the needs of girls and boys in and out of school and may continue to do so? | 1.1 How is the support offered by GCI relevant to the needs of the countries? | / Base line data<br>/ Country policies | / Country engagement focus groups<br>/ Survey | / Interview data, program documentation, baseline reports, international databases on gender equity |
| | 1.2 How is the combined achievement of intermediate outcomes 1 and 2 likely to generate more ambitious change in countries than the sum of their respective impacts? | / Theory of change | / Key informant interviews | / Technical experts, Benchmark |
| | 1.3 Does the governance and coordination structure in place (UNGEI/IIPE coordination, GCI alliance and governance) meet the issues and ambitions targeted by GCI? What have been its strengths and where are the gaps? | / Theory of change | / Key informant interviews | / Interview data, program documentation |
| | 1.4 – Is the selection of the 8 pilot countries relevant to the objectives of the Initiative? What alternative or additional criteria could have been considered, or could be considered for a second phase? | / Gender parity in school attendance, compared against country selection, gender equality indicators (SIGI[32], Gender inequality Index[33], Global Gender | / Key informant interviews,<br>/ secondary data<br>/ Context analysis | / Interview data, program documentation, TBD sectoral data |

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[32] The OECD Development Center's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI): Measure of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, (formal and informal laws, social norms and practices), discrimination in the family, restricted physical integrity, restricted access to productive and financial resources, restricted civil liberties.

[33] Gender Inequality Index reflects gender-based disadvantage in three dimensions— reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market—for as many countries as data of reasonable quality allow. It shows the loss in potential human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, where women and men fare equally, to 1, where one gender fares as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions.

| CRITERIA | EVALUATION SUB QUESTIONS | INDICATORS/MEASURES | DATA COLLECTION METHOD | DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Gap[34]), and key causal factors<br><br>/ Diversity of the countries selected for the initiative | | |
| | 1.5 – Given the changing political, socio-economic, security, and health contexts in the pilot countries, to what extent has GCI adapted to maintain its relevance? | / Theory of change | / Key informant interviews,<br>/ Context analysis<br>/ stakeholder mapping | / Reference group members, TBD sectoral data |
| | 1.6 – Looking ahead to a second phase of GCI, what gaps would need to be filled or adaptations made (in terms of the overall coordination mechanism, technical assistance to countries, and creating an enabling environment for the education sector to support gender mainstreaming) to enhance the relevance of the initiative at the country, cross-country and global levels? | / Identified outcomes, compared against context analysis. | / Key informant interviews,<br>/ Participatory planning process<br>/ *Potential gender focal point led country processes* | / Gender focal points, reference group members, key sector experts |

[34] The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment

| CRITERIA | EVALUATION SUB QUESTIONS | INDICATORS/MEASURES | DATA COLLECTION METHOD | DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COHERENCE**<br><br>How well did GCI fit in country sector policies, cross-sector intervention and at global level? | 2.1 - To what extent does the support offered by GCI align with the priorities and sector coordination mechanisms of the countries? | / Outcomes identified | / Key informant interviews<br>/ *Potential gender focal point led country processes* | / Interview data<br>/ Gender focal points |
| | 2.2 To what extent does the support offered by GCI aligned with the existing policy cycles in the country? | / Outcomes identified | / Key informant interviews<br>/ *Potential gender focal point led country processes* | / Interview data<br>/ Gender focal points |
| | 2.3 - Have the activities been defined in a participatory manner and in complementarity with the programs of field actors? | / Stakeholder analysis and country focus groups | / Key informant interviews<br>/ Document analysis<br>/ Stakeholder mapping | / Program documentation<br>/ Interview data<br>/ Survey data |
| | 2.4 - To what extent has GCI succeeded in complementing rather than duplicating other interventions and programs with similar objectives? What are the recommendations for improving this complementarity, and how can coordination and the search for synergies with local actors be improved? | / Outcomes identified | / Outcome harvesting<br>/ Survey data | / Program documents<br>/ Interview data |
| | 2.5 - How has GCI partnered with key global and regional initiatives, including but not limited to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW)? | / Analysis of stakeholder map | / Stakeholder mapping<br>/ Document review<br>/ Key informant interviews | / Stakeholder map<br>/ Program documents |
| | 2.6 - To what extent has GCI connected with actors beyond the education sector to work cross-sectorally, and/or to what extent could and would these partnerships have benefited the Initiative? | / Stakeholder analysis | / Stakeholder mapping | / Stakeholder map |
| | 2.7 - In the perspective of a second GCI phase, how could GCI build more efficient and change-generating partnerships with these actors and more broadly with technical and financial partners working in the fields of education and gender equality? | / Stakeholder analysis | / Participatory planning process<br>/ Online survey<br>/ Stakeholder mapping | / Survey data |

| CRITERIA | EVALUATION SUB QUESTIONS | INDICATORS/MEASURES | DATA COLLECTION METHOD | DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **EFFECTIVENESS**<br><br>Is GCI support likely to effectively promote gender equality in and through education? | 3.1 Has the governance and coordination structure in place been effective in implementing the initiative? If so, what are the main strengths? And if not, what are the levers for effective governance for a second phase? In particular, does the GCI Executive Committee effectively support GCI members? Could it do more or less, or do things differently? | / Key informant interviews | / Key informant interviews<br>/ Document analysis<br>/ Survey data | / Reference group interviews, Executive committee members<br>/ Gender focal points<br>/ Meeting minutes<br>/ Program documentation |
| | 3.2 – With the first results observed, has GCI been able to strengthen the capacities of ministries of education, civil society actors and more generally sector dialogue actors in terms of gender equality in and through education in the 8 selected countries? If so, what are the main successes identified, particularly considering the sector planning cycle? | / Identified program outcomes | / Outcome harvesting<br>/ *Potential gender focal point led country processes* | / Interview data, gender focal points, potentially gender focal point led country processes |
| | 3.3 – What were the enabling conditions for effective implementation of GCI activities at the country level? What has hindered the effective implementation of GCI activities at the country level? | / Identified program outcomes<br>/ Mechanisms of change | / Outcome harvesting,<br>/ Context mapping<br>/ Stakeholder mapping<br>/ Key informant interviews | / Theory of change<br>/ Interview data |
| | 3.4 – To what extent is GCI improving coordination on gender in education through LEGs under the leadership of the MoE? | / Identified program outcomes | / Document review<br>/ Outcome harvesting | / Program documents |
| | 3.5 - To what extent are GCI's efforts influencing or tending to influence policy and practice dialogue on gender in education at the national, continental and global levels? How can lessons from different countries and at global level be distilled and translated into recommendations for progress? Has the budget for the gender unit within the MoE increased? | / Identified program outcomes | / Outcome harvesting<br>/ Document review | / Program documents<br>/ Media on gender in education<br>/ Stakeholder feedback |
| | 3.6 – What are some considerations for scaling up GCI to the national/regional/continental levels in a second phase? | / Identified mechanisms of change | / Participatory planning process | / Gender focal points<br>/ Secondary data TBD |

| CRITERIA | EVALUATION SUB QUESTIONS | INDICATORS/MEASURES | DATA COLLECTION METHOD | DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **EFFICIENCY**<br><br>Was the GCI cost-effective and did GCI deliver results in an economic and timely way? | 4.1- To what extent have GCI resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been used and committed efficiently, i.e., converted into meaningful results within a reasonable time frame, given the changing national needs and contexts in GCI countries? To what extent have GCI resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been used and committed to activities with the highest effectiveness? | / Disbursement rate<br>/ Identified outcomes | / Outcome harvesting<br>/ Key informant interviews | / Budget data |
| | 4.2 - Have the financial resources made available for the implementation of the initiative been commensurate with the challenges and ambitions of GCI? What recommendations would you make to best calibrate the ambitions for change with the means available for a second phase? | / Document review | / Key informant interviews,<br>/ document review<br>/ review of secondary data | / Budget data, interview data,<br>/ TBD secondary source |
| | 4.3 - What efforts were taken by GCI to adjust to challenges in the context of COVID-19 pandemic? | / Theory of change | / Key informant interviews<br>/ Document analysis | / Program documents<br>/ Interview data |
| | 4.4 - How have GCI Alliance partners engaged and effectively supported GCI, allowing economies of scale? | / Stakeholder analysis | / Participatory planning process<br>/ Online survey<br>/ Stakeholder mapping | / Survey data |

| CRITERIA | EVALUATION SUB QUESTIONS | INDICATORS/MEASURES | DATA COLLECTION METHOD | DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SUSTAINABILITY**<br><br>Are the benefits and outcomes of the GCI long-lasting and likely to continue benefiting girls' education? | 5.1. To what extent are the results obtained so far likely to be sustainable? Has the support provided, and the tools developed been designed with sustainability in mind? | / Outcomes identified | / Document review<br>/ Outcome harvesting<br>/ Context analysis | / Program documents |
| | 5.2. To what extent can the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of country education systems allow for continuity of results delivered through GCI over time in GCI country contexts? What would be the recommendations for selection of partner countries for a second phase? | / Mechanisms of change | / Participatory planning process<br>/ Context analysis<br>/ *Potential gender focal point led country processes* | / Program documents |
| | 5.3 - Has GCI mobilized further resources for promoting gender equality in and through education from other MoE financial partners to support its efforts? | / Document review | / Document review | / Program documentation |
| | 5.4 – Are there indications that GCI has generated lasting changes in UNGEI and IIEP's planning or program design? | / Theory of change | / Key informant interviews<br>/ Stakeholder mapping | / Interview data |

## Annex 2: International commitments on gender in and through education and measurement frameworks

| Sustainable Development Goals | | AU's continental education strategy for Africa |
|---|---|---|
| SGG 4 – Quality Education | SDG5 – Gender Equality | SO5 – Gender Parity and Equity and Gender equality strategy for the CESA |

| | SGG 4 – Quality Education | SDG5 – Gender Equality | AU's continental education strategy for Africa |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TARGETS** | 4.1 Free primary and secondary education<br>4.2 Equal access to pre-primary<br>4.3 Equal access to TVET and higher education<br>4.4 Skills for financial success<br>4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education<br>4.6 Literacy and Numeracy<br>4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship<br>4a Safe and non-violent education facilities | 5.1 End discrimination<br>5.2 End all violence<br>5.3 End forced marriage & FGM<br>5.4 Value unpaid care and share domestic responsibilities<br>5.5 Ensure participation<br>5.6 Guarantee women aged 15-19 access to sexual and reproductive health information and education<br>5.7 Equal rights to economic resources<br>5.8 Empowerment through technology<br>5.9 Policies for gender equalities | Results and Indicators framework to incorporate gender equality into M&E frameworks<br>SO1: Revitalize teaching profession<br>SO2: Education infrastructure<br>SO3: ICT<br>SO4: learning outcomes<br>SO5: Social mobilization<br>SO6: Literacy campaigns<br>S07: STEM<br>SO8: TVET<br>SO9: tertiary education & research<br>SO10: peace & conflict prevention<br>SO11: data collection and management<br>SO13: Partnership |
| **SELECTION OF INDICATORS** | 4.1.1[35] % children in grade 2/3, end of primary and end of lower education achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics by sex<br>4.1.2 Completion rates<br>4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all indicators<br>4a 1 Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service | 5.1.1 legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination<br>5.2.2 proportion of women and girls subject to sexual violence<br>5.3.1 Proportion of early marriage<br>5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial position | |

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[35] Source: Unstat.

## Annex 3: Primary Data collection operations and tools

1.      List of reference documents provided by GCI

This bibliography contains all documents consulted for the baseline review conducted by the Cayambe team for the Gender at the Center Initiative (GCI). This includes additional documents from GCI stakeholders which have been forwarded to us by UNGEI up until 15 January 2022. The list of documents is separated into sections for global and continental level documents, as well as for each of the eight GCI pilot countries.

All hyperlinks to web pages listed in this document were last retrieved on 15 January 2022.

2. List of Key Informant Interviews

/ UNGEI
  o Antara Ganguli
  o Eline Versluys
  o Simon Ziba
  o Jaloud Touré
  o Nora Fyles
  o Joanne Sandler

/ IIEP UNESCO
  o Fabricia Devignes
  o Luc Gacougnolle
  o Carolina Alban Conto
  o Marc-Antoine Percier
  o Cécile Giraud
  o Sally Fabric
  o Suzanne Grant Lewis
  o Jihane Lamouri
  o Margherita Boccalatte
  o Marcelo Souto

/ France
  o Sarah Narbone
  o Hélène Ferrer
  o Joanna Godrecka Barreau

/ FCDO
  o Vic Mall

/ GIZ
  o Roxana Sina

/ European Union
  o Elena Vilar-Pascual

/ AFD
  o Audrey Nirrengarten
  o HOFFMAN Jennifer
  o Sarah Nardone
  o Beridabaye Ndilkodje

/ Canada
  o Kathleen Flynndapaah

/ Lego Foundation
  o Alice Jowett

/ UNICEF
  o Justine Sass
  o Joanna Herat
  o "Hospital Xavier
  o Husson Guillaume

/ GPE
- o Jorge U Colin Pescina
- o Sally Joanne Elizabeth Gear

/ Plan International
- o Yona Nestel
- o Nsah Juli-Collette Bongsiisy

/ FAWE
- o Houraye Mamadou Anne

/ ANCEFA
- o Solange Akpo

/ AU-CIEFA
- o Rita Bissoonauth

3. Informed consent template and ethical protocol

4. Country engagement focus group guidelines

5. Proposed survey questionnaire

**CAYAMBE**
E D U C A T I O N

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