

# LEARNING BRIEF: ENDING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SCHOOLS: GOOD PRACTICES, EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

July 2023



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United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) developed the learning brief with valuable inputs from eleven members of the Partner Coalition for Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools in 2023. The brief is based on the Coalition's shared objective to build global momentum by developing a learning agenda, capturing evidence and insights from programming.

UNGEI deployed a consultative and participatory approach in developing the present learning brief. Following the agreement of Coalition members, the UNGEI team developed a template to collect case studies illustrating good and/or promising practices and lessons learned on ending gender stereotypes in school programmes. UNGEI invited members of the Coalition to submit write-ups of programme implementation, national, regional and global policy advocacy, research and evidence generation and monitoring and evaluation through an online portal. UNGEI reviewed submissions primarily based on the robustness of impact evidence and completeness of information. Finally, a total of ten cases are included in the learning brief.

Dr. Nepali Sah (monitoring, evaluation and learning consultant at UNGEI) developed the learning brief. Zeynep Aydemir Koyuncu (UNGEI) provided overall oversight and inputs, Jennifer Thomas (UNGEI) proofread the brief, with the leadership of Antara Ganguli (UNGEI).

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The authors and contributors acknowledge that the cases featured in this learning brief are non-exhaustive. There are many other programmes and lessons learned across the world that include efforts to shift beliefs, attitudes and behaviors on gender stereotypes and harmful gender norms. We would like to continue to amplify the voices of all actors who are committed to this cause. You may contact us at [contact@ungei.org](mailto:contact@ungei.org).

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# ACRONYMS

<b>ADAP</b>	Adolescent Development & Participation
<b>CoP</b>	Communities of Practice
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education (South Africa)
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>EGS</b>	Ending Gender Stereotypes
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>GLTT</b>	Girls' Learning Through Technology
<b>GR-CoTT</b>	Gender Responsive Continuum of Teacher Training
<b>GREAT</b>	Gender Responsive Education and Transformation
<b>GRPBL</b>	Gender Responsive Play-Based Learning
<b>GTES</b>	Gender Transformative Education System
<b>GTP</b>	Gender Transformative Pedagogy
<b>GTP4ECE</b>	Gender Transformative Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education
<b>ICT</b>	Information, Communication & Technology
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>KZN</b>	KwaZulu-Natal
<b>KZNDOE</b>	KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education
<b>LGBTQI+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
<b>MINEDH</b>	Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano (Mozambique)
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>RCA</b>	Reflect-Connect-Apply
<b>RCT</b>	Randomized Controlled Trial
<b>SACE</b>	South African Council of Educators
<b>SD</b>	Standard Deviation
<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN Women</b>	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first ever global learning brief on addressing gender stereotypes through schools in developing countries. Gender stereotypes constrict children's aspirations and narrow their world and self-view from an early age. Emerging evidence from programmes and research tackling gender stereotypes through schools is promising and provides a strong incentive to further consolidate, analyze and share results and learnings. We believe programming and research on this issue, if taken up at scale, can address a critical root cause of gender inequality.

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) developed the learning brief with valuable inputs from eleven members of the Partner Coalition for Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools<sup>1</sup>. Launched in September 2022, the Coalition's objective is to build global momentum by developing a learning agenda, capturing evidence and insights from programming.

The ten case studies were from eleven countries from Asia and Africa. They vary in size from a few schools to nationwide scale-up. Most of the organizations focus on primary to secondary school students, and some on early childhood education (ECE). All aim to shift knowledge and attitudes about gender stereotypes among students, teachers and parents through curricula, including, in some cases, through digital means.

## WE DRAW THE FOLLOWING KEY LESSONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES AND AVAILABLE LITERATURE:



**Programming to end gender stereotypes works. Programmes can achieve results in a surprisingly short period of time, but further measurement is needed to understand the potential for scalability and life-long impact.**



**Meaningful engagement of the whole school is key to programme success.**



**Design and process must be simple to succeed.**



**Tools to measure gender equality in the classroom are essential.**



**Teachers need adequate support throughout the programme and beyond.**



**Success requires work at three levels: curricula, capacity and in the classroom.**



**A blend of digital learning platforms and face-to-face forums should be used where possible.**



**Adaptation to socio-cultural contexts is important.**



**Centering children and young people and amplifying their voice is key.**

The case studies contain robust evidence on ending gender stereotypes through schools. However, evidence gaps do remain, which are outlined in the brief. UNGEI and the Partner Coalition has begun work to address notable gaps, however more work is needed across the sector to continue to drive progress on this crucial issue and establish meaningful and life-long change.

# INTRODUCTION

All children should be able to dream about their future without limits or restrictions. Yet there is a pervasive and powerful force that constricts children's aspirations and narrows their world and self-view: gender stereotypes. Stereotypes are widely held beliefs about the character and behavior of all members of a group<sup>2</sup>. Gender stereotypes have negative influences on children in their career decisions and can lead to harmful relationships which can become violent<sup>3</sup>.

Stereotyped roles often get entrenched and normalized, so that deviance from the norm is penalized and punished. While gender norms can affect all children, they disproportionately affect girls and LGBTQI+<sup>4</sup> children. According to Save the Children, more than 575 million girls live in countries where inequitable gender norms violate their rights<sup>5</sup>. Gender stereotypes persist both in the global South and global North. A 2021 OECD study of 4,000 five-year-old children in England and Estonia found that girls and boys imagined gender-stereotyped futures for themselves. As children grow older, these stereotypes impact not just children's aspirations but also their self-esteem, educational progress, and career choices, especially for girls<sup>6</sup>. For girls, boys and gender non-conforming children, stereotypes can also increase the likelihood of experiencing violence. The Global Early Adolescent Study found that gender stereotypes were universal across 10–14-year-old girls and boys in fifteen countries and became entrenched before the age of ten<sup>7</sup>.

Addressing gender stereotypes and harmful gender norms should be integral to gender-transformative education. Gender-transformative education moves beyond simply improving access to education for girls and women. It equips and empowers stakeholders to examine, challenge, and change harmful gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women<sup>8</sup>.

The UN Transforming Education Summit 2022 Call to Action on 'Advancing gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education' envisions that governments at national and sub-national levels shall "identify and remove gender bias and stereotypes from curricula, teaching and learning materials, and ensure all teachers and learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to examine, challenge and change harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices, unequal power relations, gender discrimination and wider intersecting inequalities"<sup>9</sup>. This in turn pursues the vision statement of the UN Secretary-General of 'Rethinking the purpose and content of education in the 21st century' supporting them to realize their aspirations and to contribute to their families, communities and societies'<sup>10</sup>.

To achieve this, transformative education must support learners in the four key areas: i) learn to learn, ii) learn to live together, iii) learn to do, and iv) learn to be. The second dimension 'learn to live together' envisions an education system that teaches to question harmful social norms through critical thinking and an appreciation of equality and human rights, including the right to sexual and reproductive health and the right to be free from violence and have access to age-appropriate and gender-sensitive curriculum<sup>8</sup>.

This is best articulated in the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education: "We demand decision-makers to invest in gender-transformative education to create a present and future that is feminist, equitable, and free from harmful gender stereotypes"<sup>11</sup>.





## EVIDENCE FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

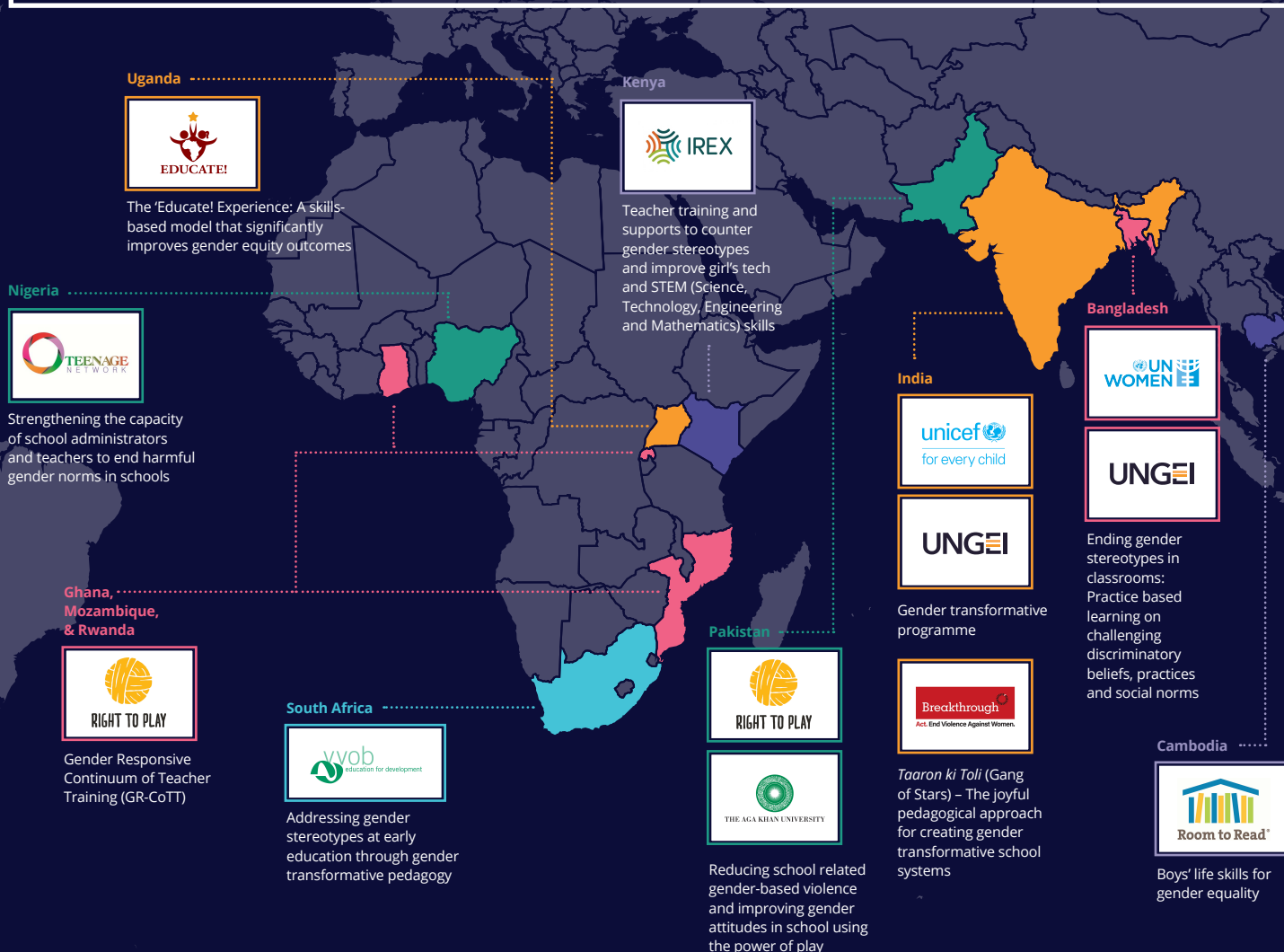
Programming in this field is recent, knowledge and experience is accumulating, and so it is paramount to share and transfer knowledge and evidence.

This brief aims to provide governments, education practitioners, civil society organizations and donors with good and/or promising practices, evidence and lessons learned from programming on ending gender stereotypes in schools in developing countries.

The learning brief includes ten case studies from eleven countries implemented from 2009 to 2023. The cases either take ending gender stereotypes in schools as a core objective or deploy it as a component or strategy within a larger programme.

### Ending gender stereotypes in schools programming can help:

-  **Transform education policies, curricula and pedagogy;**
-  **Sensitize and mobilize students, teachers, school administrations, school management committees and community members on harmful gender norms and stereotypes;**
-  **Lead to children's questioning of harmful gender norms and stereotypes;**
-  **Change attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about gender equality, resulting in positive learning outcomes for children in all their diversity.**



# MAIN RESULTS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

## THE EDUCATE! EXPERIENCE: A SKILLS-BASED MODEL THAT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES GENDER EQUITY OUTCOMES



- Educate!'s skills-focused interventions covered secondary school students from 500 schools through 300 youth mentors, with over 35,000 youths reached annually throughout Uganda.
- Educate! also adapted this model to support competency-based education system reforms in partnership with governments in Rwanda and Kenya and developed livelihood bootcamps for out-of-school youths in Uganda and Kenya; with over 250,000 youths impacted across three countries.
- Improvement in life outcomes of young women – 8 per cent more likely to graduate from secondary school, 25 per cent more likely to enroll in university, and 22 per cent more likely to choose a business or STEM degree; with 28 per cent increase in women's agency, 21 per cent increase in delayed childbirth and 18 per cent decrease in intimate partner violence.

## GENDER RESPONSIVE CONTINUUM OF TEACHER TRAINING



- Right To Play International trained 4,077 teachers (62 per cent female) from 368 schools in Rwanda, Mozambique and Ghana on the gender-responsive continuum of teacher training (GR-CoTT) modules. 81 per cent of teachers (70 per cent in Mozambique, 78 per cent in Rwanda and 95 per cent in Ghana) demonstrated improvements in delivering gender-responsive play-based teaching and learning outcomes.
- 235,324 boys and girls from grades 1 to 6 reached through the project.
- GR-CoTT manuals are now used by MINEDH (Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano) for teacher training in Mozambique. GRPBL is integrated into the national coaching and mentoring framework of the National Teaching Council, Ministry of Education, Ghana.
- In Rwanda, girls' and boys' self-esteem increased from 77 per cent to 98 per cent. In all three countries girls and boys reported a more supportive and equal learning environment.

Photo credit: Right To Play International



## BOYS' LIFE SKILLS FOR GENDER EQUALITY



- Reached 386 boys from four schools from the two districts of Banteay Meanchey province of Cambodia.
- Significant increase in gender knowledge and positive attitudes among boys in gender-based roles, GBV, perception of masculinity, puberty, sexuality & health and gender norms.
- Boys self-report taking on additional chores to alleviate unequal care duties of the women and girls in their households. Boys also report a significant increase in the intended age of marriage to 25.

## ADDRESSING GENDER STEREOTYPES AT EARLY EDUCATION THROUGH GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY



- WVob's Gender Transformative Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education (GTP4ECE) model impacted children from 103 Early Childhood Development centers, reaching 165 early childhood teachers and 98 center leaders.
- 7,000 educators in South Africa benefitted from the contextualized GTP4ECE toolkit through professional development initiatives.
- South African Council of Educators endorsed online course materials, now hosted on an open-access learning management system.
- The Department of Basic Education scaled up early childhood teacher professional development on gender transformative pedagogy benefiting approximately 4,000 educators.

## TAARON KI TOLI (GANG OF STARS) - THE JOYFUL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH FOR CREATING GENDER- TRANSFORMATIVE SCHOOL SYSTEMS



- Direct impact on 900,000 adolescents across 5 States of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Delhi.
- Programme scaled up in 771 schools in 565 Gram Panchayats across 11 districts in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The programme was further scaled-up in partnership with two State governments in Punjab and Odisha. By 2028 the curriculum will reach 66,000 teachers and 4 million adolescents in these two States.
- Evaluation findings from Haryana show 12.9 per cent and 8.4 per cent increase in students' attitudes on norms related to women's paid employment and girls' higher education respectively. Boys' behaviors shifted more significantly than girls', indicating greater social constraints for girls.
- In Uttar Pradesh, there is a 6 per cent reduction in dropouts despite the impact of COVID-19. Girls' age at marriage increased by almost 2 years. There is a 17 per cent increase in adolescent girls accessing health services, and 17.8 per cent increase in dialogue between adolescent girls and their families.

## ENDING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN CLASSROOMS PROGRAMME

UNGEI

unicef  
for every child

UN WOMEN

- Reached 7,364 students (45 per cent girls) of grade 3 to 10 from 56 schools in India and Bangladesh with 351 (36 per cent female) trained teachers through play/reflection-based curricula.
- School management committee members (555) and parents/ community members (over 11,000) reached to boost their understanding on gender norms and stereotypes.
- Baseline and endline findings from India reveal 73 percentage point increase among girls and a 71-percentage point increase among boys of 3 to 5 grade associating the word 'cooking' with both girls and boys - rather than girls only. Further, there is 81 percentage point increase among girls and 78 percentage point increase among boys associating the word 'gentle' with both genders. Among teachers, 47 per cent female and 48 per cent male indicated strong disagreement with '*women's most important role is to take care of her home & cook*' in the endline, compared to only 18-19 per cent in the baseline.
- Baseline and endline findings from Bangladesh reveal 62 and 61 percentage point increase among girls and boys respectively who knew how to recognize and identify gender stereotypes. Findings also show 49.6 and 62 percentage point increase in who believed that gender stereotypes are harmful, and 37 and 71.5 percentage point increase in who said gender norms can be altered.

## TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO COUNTER GENDER STEREOTYPES AND IMPROVE GIRLS' TECH AND STEM SKILLS

IREX

- Over 1,300 students and 61 teachers from 15 schools benefitted directly.
- Baseline findings showed all teachers (100 per cent, n=61) believed they instruct boys and girls equally and most (97 per cent, n=61) give boys and girls equal assignments. Teachers' behavior and instructional activities revealed a lack of inclusive practice, e.g. only 56 per cent of teachers cited giving leadership roles to both boys and girls. (Comparative data is forthcoming)



## STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS TO END HARMFUL GENDER NORMS IN SCHOOLS



- Teenage Network trained 157 teachers from seven schools in Abuja who teach 1,994 students.
- As a result, more toilet blocks were allocated to girls and leadership roles were renamed among boys and girls within the schools.
- 62.4 per cent of the trained teachers made a commitment to adopt gender sensitive approaches in their classrooms.

## REDUCING SCHOOL RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND IMPROVING GENDER ATTITUDES IN SCHOOL USING THE POWER OF PLAY



- The project (Randomized Controlled Trial) took place in 40 public schools with 1,752 children in Hyderabad, Pakistan from December 2015 to January 2018. Based on the positive results, the government of Pakistan incorporated play-based approaches into the provincial curriculum to prevent GBV and challenge and change gender stereotypes.
- Key findings demonstrate significant decreases in self-reported peer violence victimization, perpetration, corporal punishment and depression. Gender attitudes/stereotyping scores reduced by 14 per cent in boys and 18 per cent in girls. Peer violence victimization reduced by 33.3 per cent for boys and 58.5 per cent for girls. Peer violence perpetration reduced by 25.3 per cent and 11.1 per cent for boys and 55.6 per cent and 27.6 per cent for girls in the intervention and control groups, respectively.

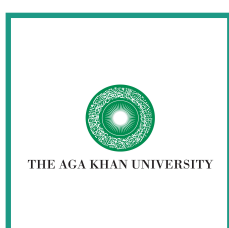


Photo credit: Right To Play International

# KEY LESSONS



**Lesson #1: Programming to end gender stereotypes works. Programmes can achieve results in a surprisingly short period of time, but further measurement is needed to understand the potential for sustainability and scalability of impact.**

Breakthrough's *Taaron Ki Toli* which addresses gender norms and gender stereotypes through interactive sessions had a profound impact on increasing girls' access to health services, dialogue between adolescent girls and their families and the age at which girls marry. The Gender-Transformative Programme of UNGEI/UNICEF India demonstrates that deployment of such approaches in the curricula leads to changes in knowledge and awareness of primary grade children in a short period of time. VOB's gender transformative pedagogy in ECE led to significant changes among teachers and students. IREX's baseline shows there can be a disparity between teachers' perception and action, e.g. they may believe that girls and boys should have equal access to STEM education but favor boys to be leaders in class. Through reflecting on their own biases and learning practical gender-responsive strategies, teachers can help disrupt stereotypes. Right To Play International's experience in Pakistan shows that play-based activities with the use of the Reflect-Connect-Apply approach helps change the mindsets of school children and address the issue of peer violence. However, available evidence shows an urgent need for concerted efforts in measurement of results generated through the programmes.

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**Lesson #2: Meaningful engagement of the whole school is key to programme success.**

Evidence from UNGEI/UNICEF India's programme shows that engagement of the school management, administrators and teachers is key to effective and timely implementation. Educate!'s programme in Uganda points to the need to establish accountability measures both at the policy and school level to facilitate change. VOB's learning from South Africa emphasizes whole school engagement as a crucial element. Teenage Network's experience in Nigeria suggests that meaningful engagement of teachers and school administrators is important: firstly, they are the custodians of school's norms, training them will improve their perception and consequently influence the silent gender norms in schools, and secondly, a teacher tends to influence 3,000 students in a lifetime<sup>12</sup>.

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**Lesson #3: Design and process must be simple to succeed.**

Concepts of gender norms and stereotypes are complex, and it is often difficult to convey messages to audiences. UNGEI/UNICEF's experience from India shows that simplicity in the design of tools and materials helped stakeholders understand and take up the programme. This is backed by learnings from Room to Read's programme in Cambodia which revealed difficulty in understanding and interpreting the concepts of gender, especially among boys. UNGEI/UN Women's programme in Bangladesh shows the effectiveness of role-play in increasing girls' and boys' confidence in understanding gender-discriminatory practices.





#### **Lesson #4: Tools to measure gender equality in the classroom are essential.**

Availability of simple tools to measure the extent to which gender equality is internalized and applied in the classrooms could be a good starting point to set milestones at the school level. Such tools can be deployed by teachers and school authorities with the involvement of students. Educate! has started to develop such a tool in Uganda. UNGEI/UNICEF India has initiated co-development of a context-specific tool for teachers in collaboration with 'champion teachers' that enables reflection on classroom processes through a gender lens. Right To Play International is developing a classroom observation tool to better assess teaching practices, including the application of GRPBL. Right To Play International's team in Pakistan also noted that the absence of a valid tool to measure secondary outcomes, such as academic performance and reasons for school absences, as well as the response biases in the self-reported measures as limitations.

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#### **Lesson #5: Teachers need adequate support throughout the programme and beyond.**

Teacher training has been a pivotal intervention. However, one-off trainings are not sufficient to dismantle gender norms and stereotypes. IREX's experience from Kenya shows that giving adequate follow-up and support to teachers after the trainings reinforces the application of learning and helps teachers overcome challenges they face. Right To Play International's experience from Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda reveals that communities of practice, which address teachers' gender biases and support girls' leadership within the classroom, have been well recognized for knowledge exchange among teachers. UNGEI/UNICEF India's experience also demonstrates that regular engagement with teachers through classroom and school-based activities, as well as over social media, results in changes in their own biases/stereotypes in their home/family relationships. IREX's experience also indicates that strengthening teachers' leadership skills is important to reinforce practices and address the issues faced during teaching.

While the transfer of gender-trained teachers from one school to another has a spill-over effect in the school they are transferred to, it creates a vacuum in the school they are transferred from. As witnessed by Right To Play International in Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda, the transfer of trained teachers creates a need for re-orienting and training the new incoming teachers to maintain the momentum towards sustainability. Further, Educate!'s team in Uganda realized that provision of incentives helps motivate the teachers to prioritize and use gender-responsive approaches among their competing priorities.

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#### **Lesson #6: Success requires work at three levels: curricula, capacity and in the classroom.**

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Framework<sup>13</sup> includes three areas of interventions focusing on governance (curricula), capacity building and school-level interventions. Right To Play International's experience in Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda proves the need for deploying a multi-stakeholder approach. UNGEI/UNICEF India's experience in India reveals that engaging across levels – running interactive sessions with students alongside those with teachers, community, SMC members and school administrators – has a positive impact. Breakthrough's learnings from India also indicate that while working with children in schools, there is a strong need for simultaneous and equal engagement with the community and parents in order to shift the needle on gender-based violence. Thus, evidence and learning reflect that all three areas need to be addressed to ensure comprehensive and sustainable change. While interventions focusing on only one dimension would also bring change, it would be hard to have sustainable impact at scale.



### **Lesson #7: A blend of digital learning platforms and face-to-face forums should be used where possible.**

While face-to-face engagement is effective, it has its own limitations in terms of reach and scale. Digital learning platforms have wider reach but there is less control on their effectiveness and use. However, it is critical to harness digitized solutions to minimize the negative impacts and learning gaps that arise from disasters that result in the closing of schools, including COVID-19. Breakthrough's experience from India revealed that during the pandemic, there was a disconnect between the teachers/facilitators and adolescents. Deployment of a digitized curriculum and online platforms including games, videos and quizzes proved useful in bridging this gap. VVOB and Right To Play International's experiences are also similar; in response to the challenges of COVID-19, they developed innovative resources for teacher professional development, such as online/distance learning courses and multimedia resources, which continue to support the professional development of educators at scale. This supports the UN Secretary-General's vision of harnessing the digital revolution for the benefit of public education, ensuring quality education for all and transforming the way teachers teach and learners learn<sup>14</sup>. However, there is contrast in the experience of UNGEI/UNICEF India's team, that found that online training of teachers results in low participation due to practical reasons. Thus, a blend of these two is most effective and efficient. This also enables programme continuity during crisis situations.

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### **Lesson #8: Adaptation to socio-cultural contexts is important.**

Gender norms and stereotypes are strongly embedded in the socio-cultural fabrics of society. Room to Read's experience from Cambodia revealed that gender-disaggregated sessions specially on topics related to sexual and reproductive health and GBV are effective, but that mixed-gender classes and discussions on other topics are also required. Educate!'s experience in Uganda demonstrates that a strategy of all children learning together is more effective than female-only learning spaces. UNGEI/UNICEF's experience in India shows that women and girls often need prompting to speak up in the play-based sessions and express their views/ feelings which is not the case for boys and men.

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### **Lesson #9: Centering children and young people and amplifying their voice is key.**

Children and youth are more receptive to change and tackle various issues and challenges in an innovative way. As ending gender stereotypes in schools programming is focused on children and adolescents, amplifying their voices and actions towards addressing gender norms and stereotypes helps parents, teachers and wider community accept and internalize it too. For instance, Educate!'s programme helped adolescents and young people to relate to jobs based on their interest and skills without adhering to perceived gender roles. Room to Read's student-centered and participatory experience in Cambodia was appreciated by the participating boys. In Bangladesh and India, UNGEI/UN Women and UNICEF's play-based learning approach amidst challenging discriminatory beliefs, practices and gender norms ensured that secondary school students were comfortable in bringing these issues to the surface. Right To Play International's experience in Pakistan also shows that play-based activities which are child-centric and participatory help address the issue of peer violence and corporal punishment in school.

# GAPS IN EVIDENCE

Findings from ending gender stereotypes programmes in schools and available literature point to the evidence gaps outlined below. Further in-depth evidence would strengthen advocacy for policy change, and lead to more robust programmes. It would also increase demand from governments and other stakeholders, and eventually contribute to advancing the gender-transformative education agenda.

- ▶ **Randomized controlled trial to measure change among students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors is an excellent methodological approach. There is room to further deploy this methodology to capture attitudinal change among teachers, parents and other stakeholders.**
- ▶ **Some of the case studies focused on the capacity development of teachers with the goal of ending gender stereotypes in schools. Measurement was limited to showing change among teachers' knowledge and attitudes. There is a need to measure the ultimate impact on ending gender stereotypes in schools.**
- ▶ **Evidence so far demonstrates what works and does not work to address gender stereotypes in classrooms, in particular from interventions targeting teachers. More in-depth exploratory and feminist participatory action research that puts individuals and populations at the center is needed. This would help us understand better the reasons behind these results, so that the tools and materials deployed can be further strengthened.**
- ▶ **There is lack of comparable evidence through standardized baseline and endline survey approaches for understanding the change through programming in this field. Further global guidance, including sample survey questions is needed.**
- ▶ **Literature suggests gender norms and gender stereotypes have disproportionate impact on LGBTQI+ persons. However, there is an almost complete lack of evidence regarding programme reach and impact for LGBTQI+ communities.**
- ▶ **Much of the evidence is based on self-reported changes in attitudes and beliefs, a form of evidence that comes with its own biases and challenges. Observation data, although expensive, can be an important way to triangulate and validate self-reported changes.**
- ▶ **Further clarity is needed on the "dosage" of the curricula, for example how long should the teaching of each concept take, how often should it take place and over how many years? Ideally, analysis of evidence would provide clear guidance on the correlation of the intensity of the intervention with the level and longevity of the result.**
- ▶ **Although some of the interventions have longitudinal elements like *Taaron ki Toli* in Haryana (Breakthrough), overall, there is still not enough information on what is required for long-term or even life-long changes in attitudes and behaviors.**

# WHAT UNGEI AND THE COALITION ARE DOING TO SUPPORT ENDING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SCHOOLS

UNGEI and the Partner Coalition for Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools are already working to help address the gaps by:

## **1. Developing a common results framework for ending gender stereotypes in schools programming.**

Evidence and learning reveal wide variations in terms of programmatic components, tools, and measurement frameworks. UNGEI in collaboration with the Coalition initiated the common results framework (RF) for ending gender stereotypes in schools programmes. The RF will capture and measure results and allow for the comparison of results across interventions. It will also help assess the effectiveness of interventions, pedagogies and approaches. The common RF will be launched in 3rd quarter of 2023.

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## **2. Promoting continued and structured sharing of resources and knowledge products.**

There is often a lack of access to or sharing of resources on ending gender stereotypes in schools. UNGEI in collaboration with the Coalition initiated the present learning brief, launched at Women Deliver 2023, to help create a shared understanding of the best practice, results and opportunities around ending gender stereotypes through schools programming.

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## **3. Contributing to a global movement to advocate for ending gender stereotypes in schools.**

UNGEI and the Coalition are working to build momentum globally on this issue by identifying opportunities to influence wider education communities and increase the potential for resource mobilization towards this goal. UNGEI is also working to support feminist organizations and activists working to advance gender-transformative education approaches around the world.





CASE

STUDIES



## CASE # 1:

# THE EDUCATE! EXPERIENCE: A SKILLS-BASED MODEL THAT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES GENDER EQUITY OUTCOMES



Photo credit: Educate!

According to the 2021 National Labor Force Survey of Uganda, the employment-to-population ratio is 18.1 percentage points higher for men than for women (33.8 per cent for women vs 51.9 per cent for men). Access to quality education is critical to closing this gap. Even when girls do gain access, they often face discrimination and inequality in the classroom, including gender stereotypes within the curriculum, an underrepresentation of female leaders at the secondary level, SRGBV, and discrimination and biases towards welcoming pregnant girls and young mothers. This leads to lifelong impacts that perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

Educate! launched a skills-based model, the 'Educate! Experience' that translated into improvements in life outcomes. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) measuring impact on youth four years after participating in the model revealed that compared to their peers, female participants were 7.9 per cent more likely to graduate from secondary school, 25 per cent more likely to enroll in university, and 22 per cent more likely to choose a business or STEM degree. There is also 28 per cent increase in women's agency, a 21 per cent increase in delayed childbirth, and an 18 per cent decrease in intimate partner violence<sup>15</sup>.

Educate!'s program in secondary schools in Uganda build skills through three core components: a skills course, practical experience, and mentorship. The program typically lasts about two school terms and is delivered by Educate!-trained mentors beginning with a focus on leadership skills, and then on developing business models and launching businesses. 300 youth mentors deliver the program in 500 secondary schools out of about 3,500 schools in Uganda. Educate! mentors embed gender-transformative practices, e.g. instead of telling which jobs are seen for girls and which are for boys, and why that is not just, they facilitate discussions that lead to barrier-breaking experiences.

Educate!'s gender-transformative approach seeks to utilize all parts of the education system, from policies to pedagogies to community engagement. Educate! materials defy traditional gender norms and lessons dismantle gender stereotypes through discussions, activities, and exposure to female role models. Educate! ensures that all young people learn together —proven to be more effective than female-only learning spaces. Girls open new doors for themselves and inspire each other when they lead and learn alongside boys, and when boys see the power and potential of their female classmates, they become advocates for greater gender equity. Educate! calls on leaders, trainers, and staff to examine their own gender beliefs and biases and engages caregivers and community members around shared goals.

The organization has learned that there must be accountability measures both at the policy and school level. Due to competing priorities, teachers need incentives to use gender-responsive approaches. Educate! also realized the need for a tool to measure gender equity in the classroom, the development of which is currently underway.

Initiated with 324 young people in 2009, the Educate! Experience reached over 35,000 youth annually throughout Uganda. Educate! also adapted this model to support competency-based education system reforms in partnership with governments in Rwanda, and Kenya and developed livelihood bootcamps for out-of-school youth in Uganda and Kenya. To date, Educate! has measurably impacted over 250,000 youth in the three countries.

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## CASE # 2:

# GENDER RESPONSIVE CONTINUUM OF TEACHER TRAINING



**RIGHT TO PLAY**  
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

In 2018, Right To Play International initiated the Gender Responsive Education and Transformation (GREAT) project that aims to improve quality education outcomes for girls and boys in Ghana, Mozambique, and Rwanda, with support from the Government of Canada. The project promotes the adoption of gender-responsive play-based learning (GRPBL) methodologies, supported by Right To Play International's Gender Responsive Continuum of Teacher Training (GR-CoTT), a training and development framework for educators. It aims to build the capacity of teachers to apply child-centered GRPBL

methodologies and create positive learning environments for children in all their diversity. In each country, the GR-CoTT was adapted to the local context and national curriculum, in collaboration with government partners.

As a result of transformed teaching practices, with 81 per cent of teachers (70 per cent in Mozambique, 78 per cent in Rwanda and 95 per cent in Ghana) demonstrating GRPBL, GREAT improved equal learning outcomes for girls and boys. GR-CoTT supported equitable gains in literacy and life skills for girls and boys in the three countries. Results from quasi-experimental evaluation demonstrate that children are able to read 17 words per minute more in Ghana than children in control schools; in Rwanda, girls' and boys' self-esteem increased (from 77 per cent to 98 per cent); in all 3 countries, girls and boys reported a more supportive and equal learning environment. Furthermore, it supported teachers to foster positive gender norms among their students and reduced teachers' own gender biases in the classroom, increasing all learners' life skills. Teachers' practice shifted to be more supportive of the diverse needs of all children. The Ministry of Education integrated GRPBL into its objectives. For example, in Mozambique MINEDH (Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano), uses the GR-CoTT manuals in teacher training. In Ghana, GRPBL is integrated into the national coaching and mentoring framework in partnership with the National Teaching Council.

GREAT has reached 368 schools across Rwanda (89), Mozambique (140) and Ghana (139). Across these schools, GREAT has trained and coached 4,077 teachers (2,525 female) on the GR-CoTT modules. Through training of Communities of Practice (CoP) and engagement of School Management Committees, GREAT facilitated the integration of GR-CoTT throughout the school system. Engagement with district administration and the CoPs were core to supporting quality assurance and improvement. 235,324 boys and girls from grades 1 to 6 were reached through the project.

Teachers also reported capacity improvement through GR-CoTT, which supported them to better understand the multiple dimensions of inclusion and gender, and to apply this within their teaching practice. Teachers recognized CoPs as an important forum for knowledge exchange e.g. for addressing teachers' gender biases and supporting girls' leadership within the classroom. GREAT witnessed transfers of teachers which meant that not all teachers were exposed to the full GR-CoTT training. To overcome COVID-19 related school closures, the project pivoted to online

delivery methodologies for teacher training and CoPs. Further, there is a need to deploy multi stakeholder approaches across the school system inclusive of teacher capacity building and parental and caregiver engagement if outcomes are to be sustained in the long-term.

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Photo credit: Right To Play International



### CASE # 3:

## BOYS' LIFE SKILLS FOR GENDER EQUALITY



Findings from formative research on the needs and experiences of 7th and 8th grade boys in schools in Banteay Meanchey province of Cambodia in 2021 revealed that boys faced instability at home, experiences of domestic violence, and overburdening housework, as well as pressure to find work, forcing them to drop out of school. Boys wished their parents understood how difficult it was to balance these pressures and responsibilities, and felt it was hard to express their feelings and emotions with them.

The research also revealed that in the school setting all participants saw boys' teasing, bullying, and harassment of girls as a problem but externalized it as perpetuated by a few "bad" boys. Grounded on this research, Room to Read and Equipundo developed and implemented a life skills for equality curriculum to help secondary school boys examine and challenge these harmful gender norms and stereotypes. This was complementary to Room to Read's school-based girls' life skills education program covering 7th to 9th grades in the same schools.



Photo credit: Room to Read

The two-year pilot programme demonstrated positive impact: comparison of baseline (January 2022) and midline (October 2022) reveals significant increase in the gender knowledge and positive attitudes among boys on gender-based roles, GBV (mean score 0.56 in baseline to 0.64 in midline), perception of masculinity (mean score 0.49 in baseline to 0.57 in endline), puberty, sexuality & health (mean score 0.66 in baseline to 0.72 in endline). There was a statistically significant increase in their intended age of marriage to 25 years. The midline found promising shifts in gender norms and behaviors of boys at home. Boys reported taking on additional chores to alleviate the unequal care duties of the women and girls in their households.

Boys' life-skills for gender equality curriculum for 7th and 8th graders includes 34 sessions under six thematic areas: 1) Gender roles and division of household roles, 2) Gender norms, masculinity, and relationships, 3) Puberty, sexuality, and health, 4) Addressing conflict and harassment in my school and community, 5) Succeeding in school and life, 6) Mental health and emotional disclosure. The pilot programme reached four schools with 386 boys from the districts of Mongkol Borey and Preah Net Preah in Banteay Meanchey province of Cambodia.

Room to Read complemented this with a mixed gender study group, a monthly facilitated discussion on topics chosen with the boys, home visits and meetings with parents, school management, teacher and facilitator trainings, and a training for parents on gender-equitable parenting practices in selected schools. Room to Read partnered with Equipundo for the formative research instruments and curricula with technical support from Gender and Development for Cambodia.

Boys appreciated the student-centered and participatory curriculum. Boys felt comfortable with male facilitators, especially for sessions on topics related to sexual and reproductive health and GBV, but they also appreciated the mixed-gender classes and discussions on other topics. Boys rated most highly the sessions on "Confidentiality", "Succeeding in School", "Power", "My Changing Body", "Masculinity", and "Time Management". Many boys found gender concepts difficult to understand and interpret as the gender sessions were more theoretical.

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## CASE # 4:

# ADDRESSING GENDER STEREOTYPES AT EARLY EDUCATION THROUGH GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY



Photo credit: VVOB - education for development

Evidence suggests that the concept of gender takes shape between the ages of 3 and 7<sup>16, 17, 18</sup>. By the age of 7, gender identities form and stereotypes become set<sup>19, 20</sup>. Gender transformative pedagogy (GTP) in early childhood education is key for young children to develop to their full potential according to their unique and valuable talents and interests irrespective of their gender.

In 2020-2021, VVOB piloted the Gender Transformative Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education (GTP4ECE) intervention in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, South Africa, built around the concept of learning through play. The model uses existing stereotypes in learning materials and traditional songs as an opportunity to challenge and discuss gender concepts and stereotypes with young learners.

The pilot aimed to develop and test the effectiveness of a South African approach to gender transformative early childhood education, in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the South African Council of Educators (SACE) and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education (KZNDOE). The project consisted of i) Development of a contextualized toolkit and open educational resources, ii) Professional development on GTP for teachers, ECE center leaders and district officials, and iii) Research on the effectiveness of the intervention. Pilot testing took place in 103 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers, reaching 165 early childhood teachers and 98 center leaders.

A built-in pre-and post-intervention study showed significant effects of the GTP4ECE approach on early childhood teachers' beliefs, teachers' classroom practices and school leaders' institutional practices.

Key themes	Effect size
Early childhood teachers' beliefs regarding gender stereotypes	Significant – moderate (-0.419 SD)
Increase of gender-responsive pedagogy: classroom practices (see chart for details)	Significant – small to moderate (0.283 SD)
Teachers' perceptions on child-level gender nonconformity	Significant – moderate to large (0.407 SD)

Note: SD denotes standard deviation.

A contextualized GTP4ECE toolkit has since been in use in South Africa with 7,000 educators benefiting directly through professional development initiatives. SACE endorsed the online course materials and are available on an open-access learning management system. This means educators receive professional development credits on completion of the courses. The Department of Basic Education scaled early childhood teacher professional development on GTP benefiting 4,000 educators in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State and North-West provinces of South Africa.

The programme allowed for strong engagement of the DBE, SACE and CSOs on GTP. Support to early childhood teachers is centered around: the learning environment, learning materials, learning activities in the daily programme, interactions between teacher and children and interactions with parents and other caregivers.

VVOB implemented the pilot during the COVID-19 pandemic which required the development of innovative resources for teacher professional development, such as online courses and multimedia resources. These online resources continue to support at scale the implementation of professional development for educators in South Africa.

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## CASE # 5:

# TAARON KI TOLI (GANG OF STARS) - THE JOYFUL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH FOR CREATING GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE SCHOOL SYSTEMS



Photo credit: Breakthrough

In India, only one-third (33 per cent) of girls make it to grade 12, down from 95 per cent in grade 8<sup>21</sup>. One in four girls are married before the legal age of 18<sup>22</sup>. Only 21 per cent of women are part of the workforce<sup>23</sup>. The *Taaron ki Toli* intervention in Haryana (April 2014-October 2016 first intervention) came from the belief that by addressing gender stereotypes early enough in a structured and phased manner, young adults can become social change actors in their own settings. The programme started in 150 schools in Haryana State in 2014 and was scaled up to 771<sup>24</sup> schools in a total of 565<sup>25</sup> Gram Panchayats<sup>26</sup> across 11 districts across Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand.

As of 2022, the programme directly impacted 900,000 adolescents across States of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Delhi through community-based interventions. An evaluation deploying the RCT<sup>27</sup> in Haryana shows a 12.9 per cent and 8.4 per cent increase in students' attitudes on norms related to women's paid employment and girls' higher education respectively. Boys' self-reported behaviors, such as participation in household chores, shifted more significantly than girls, (mean self-reported behavior index score of 0.260 for boys vs. 0.142 for girls) indicating greater social constraints for girls. Similar observations were found in Uttar Pradesh<sup>28</sup>: 6 per cent reduction in dropouts despite the impact of COVID-19, girls' age at marriage increased by 1 year 11 months, 17 per cent increase in adolescent girls accessing health services, and dialogue between adolescent girls and their families increased by 17.8 per cent.

Breakthrough scaled this initiative in partnership with State governments in Punjab and Odisha with a target of 66,000 teachers and 4 million adolescents through gender-transformative education systems (GTES). Breakthrough is advocating for a GTES with full integration of the *Taaron ki Toli* (TKT) through creation of gender equitable modules in the State level curricula as opposed to the current supplementary curricula.

The curriculum provides a simple, effective, and scalable model of tools and programmes for young adolescents (11 -14 years) and older adolescents (15-18 years). TKT addresses health, education, gender, and violence. The intervention consists of 32 classroom sessions with interactive games and activities, 12 assembly sessions using media, art, popular culture, and technology, and one teacher trained as a 'guiding star'. An in-house team supervised the curriculum and made improvisations as per contextual needs of the States. In the GTES initiative, the curriculum has been created as supplementary chapters for specific subjects with gender woven in.

The TKT programme team provided a strong support system, leveraged by adolescents negotiating life choices. As a result, adolescents demonstrated high levels of recognition of cases of domestic violence and other instances of discrimination. The programme used education as the means to delay marriage and improve inter-gender communication. The TKT team faced constraints particularly in addressing GBV in the family and community level

because of reluctance in discussing it openly due to the belief that it was a private matter to be handled with the family. During the pandemic, due to the school closure, there was a disconnect between the trainers/facilitators and adolescents. In response, TKT was adapted to create a digitized and interactive curriculum which includes online games, videos, and quizzes.

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## UNGEI'S ENDING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN CLASSROOMS PROGRAMME

UNGEI

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WOMEN

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative launched a pilot one-year multi-country programme in 2022 on ending gender stereotypes in classrooms through play-based curricula for primary and secondary school students funded by GIZ. Through the programme, implemented in Bangladesh, India and Niger in primary and secondary schools, UNGEI seeks to build evidence and momentum to institutionalize play and reflection, as well as activity-based curricula and pedagogy to end gender stereotypes in schools. This is coupled with a long-term vision of establishing a clear pathway for utilizing education to help children grow into equal, just and non-violent citizens.

Based on the evidence that when children are taught to recognize the social and non-biological origin of gender norms, they learn to question and reject them, UNGEI's programming uses play-based curricula to teach children to question gender stereotypes. Each of the three countries are using locally contextualized learning materials and tools.

### Gender transformative programme in India

Gender transformative programme seeks to address gender norms, gender biases and stereotypes in education through interventions implemented at schools. It consists of specific interventions designed for students aged 6 to 8 (grade 3 to 5), aged 11 to 13 (grade 6 to 8) and aged 14 to 15 (grade 9 to 10), teachers, the school management committee and community members. These include age-appropriate story books, interactive play-based modules on empowerment, life skills, sexual and reproductive health, film festival workshops for teachers, interactive sensitization sessions for school management committees and gender fairs for community members

UNICEF India implemented the program in 50 schools of Osmanabad district of Maharashtra State. During the 2022-2023 academic year, the interventions reached 4,958 students (46.2 per cent girls), 193 teachers (25.4 per cent female), 500 school management committee members and 8,700 community members.

Comparative results from baseline and endline studies show that while only 18 per cent of girls and 26 per cent of boys associated the word 'gentle' with both girls & boys in the baseline, this increased to 91 per cent among girls and 97 per cent among boys in the endline. Similarly, only 12 per cent of girls and 15 per cent of boys associated the word "cooking" with both sexes in the baseline which increased to 93 per cent for girls and boys in the end-line.



Evidence from the pre- and post-survey among teachers/facilitators revealed a shift in their mindsets as a result of the intervention; only 17.6 per cent female and 19.1 per cent male teachers/facilitators indicated a strong disagreement with the statement '*Women's most important role is to take care of her home and cook*' in the pre-test which increased to 47 per cent among women and 48 per cent among men in the post-survey.



The positive response from schools made it possible to carry out the activity even in the short period of time available. The simplicity of the interventions with stories, activities, discussion questions etc. and the simple design of baseline and end-line ensured that they were easily taken up by the stakeholders. The duration of the sessions had to be shortened during hotter weeks due to half-day schools and also during exams. Due to various practical constraints, it is also notable that the online training did not work for the teachers resulting in low participation in this element.

## Ending gender stereotypes in classrooms: Practice based learning on challenging discriminatory beliefs, practices, and social norms in Bangladesh

UN Women, in partnership with JAAGO Foundation Trust has been implementing the pilot programme to eliminate gender stereotypes in classrooms through interactive classroom discussion, role-reversal games and other play-based activities. These activities help students recognize and challenge discriminatory gender norms that particularly limit the potential of girls. The hands-on approach supports students to embrace positive gender norms, build meaningful connections with their peers and motivate them to grow up as an ally for girls and active bystanders in the future. The student-led activities in the schools are designed to enable intergenerational conversation with their parents, teachers, and school management committee members with the aim of ending gender stereotypes not only in classrooms but also in their families and society.



Photo credit: UN Women Bangladesh

The pilot programme runs through October 2022 to August 2023. It has reached 2,406 (43.5 per cent girls) secondary school students, 2,381 (73.9 per cent female) parents, 158 (49.4 per cent female) teachers and 55 (34.5 per cent female) SMC members from five secondary schools in Dhaka city. Thanks to the intervention, girls and boys are able to identify gender discrimination, recognize different types of GBV and understand that perpetrators of GBV can be teachers, family members, relatives, outsiders and more. The programme also created a space for mutual respect between girls and boys.

Comparative results from baseline and endline studies show that while 64.2 per cent of girls and 62.3 per cent of boys did not know how to recognize and identify gender stereotypes, this declined to 2.3 per cent among girls and 1.2 per cent among boys in the endline. More than half of them (55.6 per cent girls and 67.8 per cent boys) believed that gender stereotypes are harmless in the baseline which declined to about 6 per cent in the endline. 63.6 per cent of girls and 73.3 per cent of boys said gender norms cannot be altered and always remain the same in society in the baseline which declined to 26.9 per cent among girls and 1.8 per cent among boys

In the intervention schools, the role-play activities helped girls and boys become more confident and knowledgeable in addressing gender-based discriminatory practices. Capacity development and open discussions helped teachers

overcome the fear of discussing taboo issues, challenge themselves and their students to practice archaic gender norms, and be motivated to address gender stereotypes in the classroom.

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## CASE # 7:

# TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO COUNTER GENDER STEREOTYPES AND IMPROVE GIRLS' TECH AND STEM SKILLS



In Kenya, women and girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses and careers is between 30 per cent to 35 per cent lower than men and boys' participation<sup>29</sup>. Key factors perpetuating gender gaps in STEM not just in Kenya but globally include gender stereotypes that are adopted as early as grade 3, male-dominated cultures, fewer female role models, and anxiety around performance in STEM (the confidence gap<sup>30</sup>).

Based on the IREX-led ICT capacity assessment in Kilifi County in 2021, school leaders and teachers reported low levels of confidence and capacity to use ICT

equipment. The findings also revealed that there was a need to build the confidence and capacity of girls, particularly in the rural communities, to use technology and develop their digital skills.

With support from the Stone Family Foundation IREX initiated the Girls' Learning Through Technology (GLTT) project in 2022 in 15 schools in Kilifi County of Kenya<sup>31</sup> to enhance and accelerate upper primary (grade 4 and 5) educational gains in science and mathematics through a semester-long intervention including teacher training, observations, and coaching in gender responsive pedagogy and technology-based learning. Major activities include the teacher professional learning series which includes gender-responsive pedagogy, digital literacy, and coding. The gender-responsive pedagogy module is foundational for teachers to gain awareness of gender stereotypes within themselves, their school and their community, how students internalize stereotypes and how those stereotypes affect their teaching. Through the series, teachers reflect on and disrupt gender stereotypes, for example identifying hidden stereotypes in textbooks and supplementing examples or realizing that you are not including girls in class discussions. Key collaborators in the project are district government officials, STEM and girls' education researchers, Pwani Teknogal - a local STEM community-based organization, Curriculum Support Officers who serve as master trainers, teachers, education technology specialist, and girls' education specialists.

To date over 1,300 students and 61 teachers from 15 schools have engaged with GLTT. Baseline findings demonstrated that all teachers (100 per cent, n=61) believed that they instruct boys and girls equally and most (97 per cent, n=61) give boys and girls equal assignments. However, teachers' behavior and instructional activities revealed a lack of inclusive practice, for example only 56 per cent of teachers cited giving leadership role to both boys and girls frequently or always. Qualitative anecdotal evidence based on observations, focus groups, and interviews by the enumerators revealed that there has been increased uptake of technology in the classrooms, improved

teachers' digital skills, increased use of online resources, increased awareness of gender responsive pedagogy, and increased girls' participation following the programme. IREX expects conclusions from the first round of comparative study in summer 2023.



Photo credit: IREX

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## CASE # 8:

# STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS TO END HARMFUL GENDER NORMS IN SCHOOLS



Schools are meant to be safe spaces where every child has an equal opportunity to learn and to develop to its full potential. For many adolescent girls in Nigeria, this is not the case. Every day, girls face harmful gender norms within schools, which limits their access to learning opportunities such as STEM, predisposes them to violence, and many times contributes to the dropout of girls from school. According to Together for Girls, 44 per cent of girls has experienced at least one form of SRGBV before the age of 18 in Nigeria<sup>32</sup>. Studies revealed that 18 per cent of girls who experience SRGBV miss classes<sup>33</sup>.



Photo credit: Teenage Network

Teenage Network is working to change harmful gender norms in rural community schools by working with school administrators and teachers to change their perception about harmful gender norms and by helping them build gender-responsive classrooms. Teenage Network trained 157 teachers from seven schools in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria between June 2019 to March 2020. A vast majority (89 per cent) of the teachers Teenage Network engaged had never attended any gender training.

62.4 per cent of the trained teachers made a commitment to adopt gender-sensitive approaches in their classrooms. Assessment before the intervention revealed that the schools had only the boys holding the 'Head Prefect' roles while the girls served as assistants. Girls were the ones who cleaned the classroom daily while the boys only darkened the chalk board biweekly, and the unique needs of girls such as access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities were not prioritized. The intervention led to the renaming of leadership roles within the schools; rather than having girls as 'assistant head prefects' they are now 'Head Prefect Girl' and 'Head Prefect Boy.' Teenage Network's advocacy also contributed to the allocation of more toilet blocks to girls.

The attitude of teachers towards gender issues, for example the kind of examples they give in the classrooms and how they assign roles, could either reinforce harmful gender norms or dismantle them. Empowering teachers is a more sustainable approach to impact many students by motivating positive change in behaviors; for example, the 157 trained teachers teach a total number of 1,994 students from seven schools. Teachers and school administrators are the custodians of schools' norms, hence educating them will improve their perception and consequently influence the silent gender rules that exist in schools. Furthermore, a teacher has a tendency to influence the character of 3,000 students in a lifetime<sup>34</sup>.

Teenage Network replicated this model in eight more senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory between September 2021 to April 2022 by training school counsellors and administrators. Teenage Network realized a need to actively invest in social behavioral change related interventions aimed at transforming harmful gender norms in schools.

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## CASE # 9:

# REDUCING SCHOOL RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND IMPROVING GENDER ATTITUDES IN SCHOOL USING THE POWER OF PLAY

Right To Play International's project involved play-based learning and life-skills development which, funded by the Department for International Development (now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) of the UK Government. The interventions aimed to address school-related peer violence among students. It consisted of opening discussions, activities/games, and closing discussions known as Reflect-Connect-Apply (RCA) implemented in 40 public schools in Hyderabad, Pakistan, spanning over two years (December 2015 to January 2018) with each class having 120 sessions. The

research component comprising of RCT was embedded in the project. The Aga Khan University was the research partner and worked in collaboration with South African Medical Research Center & Texas Woman's University.

Forty single-sex public schools were randomized into intervention and control arms (20 per arm, 10 of each). A total of 1,752 grade 6 students, 929 from intervention schools (boys=446, girls=483) and 823 from control schools (boys=376, girls= 447) were enrolled in the RCT trial. The project reached many stakeholders: 16,000 students, 100 teachers (60 females and 40 males), and 20 coaches (10 males and 10 females). Right To Play International collaborated with 12 Community Service Organizations and 20 Youth Ambassadors, who then engaged with family members and community in various events. As a result, the project reached 128,000 community members.

The Aga Khan University carried out an impact assessment using Peer Victimization Scale, Peer Penetration Scale, Children's Depression Inventory Scale to measure primary outcomes, and secondary outcomes using self-reported assessment tools for corporal punishment, parents' fights, gender attitudes/stereotyping, physical punishment at home, early marriage, child performance and absence from school, parental literacy, and going to school without food. The key findings demonstrate that gender attitudes/stereotyping scores reduced by 14 per cent in boys and 18 per cent in girls. Findings also demonstrate significant decreases in self-reported peer violence victimization, perpetration, and depression. Peer violence victimization reduced by 33.3 per cent and 27.8 per cent for boys and 58.5 per cent and 21.3 per cent for girls in the intervention and control arms respectively. Peer violence perpetration reduced by 25.3 per cent and 11.1 per cent for boys, and 55.6 per cent and 27.6 per cent for girls in the intervention and control arms, respectively. Corporal punishment at school was reduced by 45 per cent in boys and 66 per cent

in girls. The government took steps to incorporate play-based approaches into the provincial curriculum to prevent school related gender based violence.

Right To Play International notes the need for further research to determine whether the impact can be sustained beyond the two years of study.



Photo credit: Right To Play International



Photo credit: Right To Play International

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