

UNGEI FEMINIST NETWORK

FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

2023

REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT US

Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education (FemNet4GTE) is a powerful and growing intergenerational movement of over 120 organizations, experts and government representatives for gender equality in and through education. With members from 50+ countries, the Network centers the expertise of lived experience from global majority countries to build evidence, commitment and strategy for gender-transformative learning, especially for children and especially in schools.

The [Network](#) launched in 2022 in **New York** as part of the United Nations Transforming Education Summit resulting in [recommendations](#) to Ministries of Education, UN education teams and donors on feminist ways to progress gender equality in and through education. Results also included funding for UNGEI to convene the Network for three additional years (2023-2025) from Echidna Giving and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ.)

In November 2023 (the focus of this report), the Network met in **Istanbul** in Istanbul to continue to build a shared vision and pathway to achieve gender-transformative education.

That vision is that all learners, regardless of gender or sex, are supported with gender-transformative education to realize their full potential and contribute to achieving equal, just societies including by removing barriers to girls' and women's rights.

The third gathering of FemNet4GTE will take place in **Johannesburg** in October 2024.

“We all need to do more. The UN Girls’ Education Initiative is leading the charge. This movement isn’t confined to one organization, it’s a collective effort with diverse leadership.”

Amina Mohammed,
Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations

WHAT IS GENDER

TRANSFORMATIVE

EDUCATION?

Gender-transformative education challenges and overturns harmful gender norms and inequalities. A gender-transformative approach activates all parts of an education system to ensure that learners have access to inclusive, gender equal, and safe schools, while transforming harmful gendered stereotypes, attitudes, norms and practices. It addresses the root causes of inequality and the systems of oppression that hold back learners in all their diversity, in particular girls, minorities and the most vulnerable.

Definition based on [Gender transformative education: Reimagining education for a more just and inclusive world](#). Plan International, UNGEI, UNICEF, Transform Education

WHY IS THE NETWORK IMPORTANT?

Achievements from two decades of concerted efforts for girls' education, while rightly celebrated, should not close our eyes to the work left to be done. Only 19% of low-income countries have achieved gender parity in education (UNICEF). 68% of young people who are not in education, employment or training are young women (ILO) and for every 18 boys who own a smartphone, only 10 girls do (Girl Effect). 75% of new HIV infections among adolescents are among adolescent girls (UNAIDS). If this is the situation of gender equality among children, then it is no wonder that the June 2023 UN Gender Social Norms Index notes, "Women are more...educated than ever before, yet even in the 59 countries where women are now more educated than men, the average gender income gap remains a staggering 39% in favor of men."

The systems and structures that dominate our world today were founded on principles of prejudice and injustice. As they were built, we believe they can be dismantled. This must start in our education systems.

For too long the international community has set up gender equality and girls' education as if they are two different goals, but they are not. We must go beyond demanding equal access to demanding equal results: building a world where everyone is literate, numerate, compassionate, just and equal. Evidence shows that meaningful interventions at the individual-, school-, community-, and system- levels can make a significant impact on outcomes and futures for all children.

Recent years have brought a dramatic loss of political space for feminist movements and civil society, coupled with the backlash against gender equality, feminism and women's rights. It is critical to claim back the space, and to create safe pathways to advance gender equality in and through education for all.

The Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education seeks to advance gender equality in and through education so that we all, especially children and young people, understand how to live together in just and equal societies. To succeed in this, we must build a feminist movement that is led by and supports gender expertise locally, nationally, regionally, globally and within the education sector.

"We are pursuing a feminist foreign policy because it is bitterly necessary. To date, we are still leaving behind half of the world's population. Women and men are still not equal worldwide, this needs to change!"

- Dr Heike Kuhn, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

"We are not born as patriachs. No child is born wanting to hurt another child. No child is born wanting to start a war. This is something that is learned, that is role-modelled. And just as patriarchy can be learnt, it can be unlearnt."

Antara Ganguli, Director of UNGEI Secretariat



**FEMINIST NETWORK FOR
GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE
EDUCATION ISTANBUL,
NOVEMBER 2-3 2023**

In 2023, the Network brought together 120+ representatives from 50+ countries to meet in Istanbul for a dynamic two-day event. Centering expertise from the global majority, the gathering was intentionally intergenerational developing country expertise, civil society organizations and young feminist experts constituted the majority of participants. The gathering was intergenerational with 29% of members under 30. Fifty sponsored places sought to ensure that those with the most limited means were able to participate. Every session on the agenda was led by a civil society organization or a young feminist expert working at the forefront of gender equality and education.

The agenda, format and participants for FemNet4GTE were developed with a fifteen-member Planning Group drawn from last year's membership and the UNGEI Partnership. Principles agreed by the Planning Group for the event included passing the microphone, elevating civil society and young feminist voices, avoiding speeches in favor of workshop and discussion-based sessions, and ensuring solidarity and wellness spaces to ensure that experiences could be shared in confidence and safety.

“By funding FemNet4GTE, we are looking to create an annual coming together of the most committed minds and hearts to truly progress gender equality in and through education”
- Erin Ganju, Managing Director, Echidna Giving

**THE 2023 AGENDA INCLUDED
THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS:**

- ◆ Defining gender-transformative education: what it is and what it is not
- ◆ Building a glossary for gender-transformative education
- ◆ Decolonizing data: through the lens of “child, early and forced marriage”
- ◆ Ensuring girls’ access to education in politically-stressed contexts
- ◆ Comprehensive sexuality education as an essential tool
- ◆ Power mapping the gender equality in education sector
- ◆ Queer identities and gender-transformative education
- ◆ Tackling masculinities within gender-transformative education

“The FemNet4GTE gathering in Istanbul was an exceptional experience, instilling a profound sense of ownership as we collectively reached agreements on the concept, outcomes, and the path forward.”

Network member, 2023

“An unforgettable experiences, that changed my way of activism”

Network member, 2023

“You cannot build a movement without building community.”

Network member, 2023



THE NETWORK IDENTIFIED THE

FOLLOWING JOINT ACTIONS (2023-2025)

1. Create a shared definition and glossary for gender-transformative education we can take forward together, using accessible, feminist language (priority for 2024)
2. Write a feminist declaration for gender-transformative education with core principles that can be used for global advocacy (priority for 2024)
3. Develop a shared advocacy strategy to implement together throughout 2024 and beyond, leveraging national, regional and global moments (priority for 2024)
4. Craft a white paper on gender-transformative education, using regional convenings to deepen understanding and develop actionable opportunities
5. Explore quantitative and qualitative research to strengthen collective understanding of the power of gender-transformative education
6. Expand the network in two directions: bringing in grassroots organizations that lack the resources and language to join alongside international stakeholders that lack the nuanced understanding of gender-transformative education
7. Create learning spaces and opportunities to share best practice within the Network
8. Ensure funding and resource mobilization is discussed as part of the 2024 agenda
9. Find ways to work together to address anti-rights movements
10. Call for an international day for Gender Equality in and through Education



SUMMARY OF 2023

PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

Overall, the feedback on the event was positive, with 95% of participants saying that the event met or exceeded their expectations. We also saw an 18 percentage point increase in participants' understanding of the definition of gender-transformative education as a direct result of the 2023 event (based on before and after surveys.) Participants shared genuine enthusiasm for the community that was built through the course of the two-day event, in itself a strong outcome that will create a positive foundation for the movement and the Network a positive foundation for the movement and the Network.

Useful lessons learned for future Network convenings include: A less busy agenda, more time to plan budget, travel and visas and a greater focus on humanitarian contexts. More details on this are in Annex 2.



“The event achieved the most strategic outcome possible of building community because that is the first step of building a movement.”

Network member, 2023



WHAT DOES 2024 LOOK

LIKE FOR THE NETWORK?

Shared Priorities:

1. Development of a Feminist Declaration on Gender-Transformative Education to influence the United Nations Summit of the Future, September 2024, ensuring gender equality in and through education is at the heart of the next set of international goals following the Sustainable Development Goals
2. Launch of a joint advocacy strategy to meaningfully push governments, donors and educators to prioritize gender equality in and through education
3. Launch of the glossary for gender-transformative education

SELECTED HIGH-LEVEL MILESTONES FOR 2024:

(This preliminary list will be updated with regional and thematic milestones in consultation with FemNet4GTE Members)

February	Virtual meeting of Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education Accelerate 2024 Priorities (outlined above) Regional leadership identified for consultative process, to take place between February-April
March	International Women's Day: Registration opens for 2024 Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education
May	Virtual meeting of Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education Findings from regional consultations Discussion of FemNet4GTE Agenda 2024
June	Launch of Feminist Declaration for Gender Transformative Education: a call to action for The Summit of the Future
September	The Summit of the Future
October	Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education 2024, Johannesburg
December	AWID International Forum (biennial convening of 4,500 representatives of feminist movements from around the world)

**Annex 1:
Network members**

**Annex 2:
Feedback on 2023 FemNet4GTE
from participants**

**Annex 3:
Read-out of sessions at 2023
FemNet4GTE (Istanbul)**

Find out more about the Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education and get involved:

www.ungei.org | contact@ungei.org

“This is just the beginning!”

Network member, 2023



ANNEX 1: NETWORK MEMBERS

2023 Membership | 124 Members

Name	Organization
Sheena Hadi	Aahung*
Elizabeth Vasquez	Abrienda Oportunidades
Mildred Thabeng	Accelerate Hub
Janina Jochim	Accelerate Hub/Hey Baby
Jyotsana Prajapati	Access Planet
Laxmi Nepal	Access Planet
Laure Khayat	Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
Woppa Diallo	AMFE Senegal
Esther Noemi Giron Flete	Aquelarre
Susmita Choudhury	ASPBAE
Irene Ogeta	ATHENA Network
Hazal Sipahi	Beats by Girlz Türkiye
Dr Heike Kuhn	BMZ - Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
Miriam Kronester	BMZ - Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
Manjuma Akhtar	BRAC University
Kezia Luke	Breadfruit Collective
Sunita Menon	Breakthrough India
Doris Tulifau	Brown Girl Woke
Anas Alibrahim	CARE
Sapphire Alexander	Caribbean Feminist*
Zeina Ali	Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance.
Justin Chidozie	CHEVS
Angela Kithao	Children's Investment Fund Foundation
Babita Sinha	CREA
Sara Ruto	Echidna Giving
Dana Schmidt	Echidna Giving
Erin Ganju	Echidna Giving
Geetika Higgins	Educate Girls
Rachel Temoi	Educate!
Hawah Nabbuye	Educate!
Jihane Latrous	Education Cannot Wait
Vittoria Porciuncula Horch	Empodera Clima
Pauline Boutembourg	Enabel - Belgian development agency
Julisa Tambunan	Equal Measures 2030
Dr Wessel Van Den Berg	Equimundo
Catherine Asego	Forum for African Women Educationalists*
Katie Mullen	Foreign Commonwealth Development Office
Ghewa Nasr	FEMALE
Scott Marchack	Feminitt

Name	Organization
Elif Topkaya	Flying Broom
Rangina Hamidi	Former Minister of Education, Afghanistan
Susana Medina Salas	Fos Feminista
Monika Niroula	FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund
Akanksha Singh	FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund
Chea Engmey	Gender and Development for Cambodia
Dr Asyia Kazmi	Gates Foundation
Gabriela Lima	Geledés - Instituto da Mulher Negra
Khanysa Mabyeka	Gender at Work
madeleine kennedy-macfoy	Gender at Work
Joanne Sandler	Gender at Work
Narges	Girl Power Org
Sima	Girl Power Org
Shamah Bulangis	Girls Congress
Valeria Montufar	Girls First Fund
Emma Pearce	Girls Not Brides
Alicia Stenzel	GIZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
Sally Gear	Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
Sanya Sagar	Global School Leaders
Franklyn Fawundu	Sierra Leonian Embassy in Türkiye
Chernor Bah	Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Education and Civic Education
Zenobia Kay	Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Education and Civic Education
Makhosazane Mngadi	Department of Basic Education, Government of South Africa
Irene Kanyankole	Haki Elimu
Dr Ramneek Ahluwalia	Higher Health
Caryn Dasah	Hope Advocates Africa
Nalini Khurana	International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
Yasemin Öz	Kaos GL
Sabrina de Souza	Malala Fund
Milliam Wanjiru Gachihi	Maria Njeri Foundation
Maria Njeri	Maria Njeri Foundation
Betta Cheikh	Ministry of Education, Mauritania
Fatimetou Cheikh	Ministry of Education, Mauritania
Francisco Quiñones Cuartas	Mocha Celis
Maimouna Kere	Ministry of Education, Burkina Faso
Alice Mwangi	Msihana Empowerment Kuria

*Member of the 2023 Planning Group

Name	Organization
Selina Nkoile	Nashipai Maasai Project
Abia Akram	National Forum of Women With Disabilities
Kira Youdina	Oak Foundation
Nafissatou Ide Sadou	ONGFAD Niger
Silvia Guglielmi	Overseas Development Institute
Kira Boe	Oxfam
Jane Mariara	Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP)
Schuyler Bailar	Pink Mantaray LLC
Yona Nestel	Plan International*
Amal Ouachhou	Politics4Her
Nicole Haberland	Population Council
Sajeda Amin	Population Council
Nataly	Por Ser Niña
Niyati Sharma	Pratisandhi*
Sonal Kapoor	Protsahan
Ebru Yilmaz	Psychologist
Hope Wambi	Raising Voices
Carolina Maya Tambo	Red Tu Decides
Lucina Di Meco	Room to Read
Farirai Gumbondzvanda	Rozaria Memorial Trust
Dr Nyaradzayi Gumbondzvanda	Rozaria Memorial Trust
Dr Karishma Desai	Rutgers University
Hawa Abdi	She Leads Kakuma/TE
Bonita Sharma	SOCHAI Network
Aysel Madra	Suna's Daughters
Olanike Timipa-Uge	Teenage Network
Hawng Tsai (Ah Sai)	Thinking Classroom Foundation
Gloria Somah	Titi Foundation
Julia Lalla-Maharajh	Tostan
Jona Turalde	Transform Education, hosted by UNGEI*
Ashlee Burnett	Transform Education, hosted by UNGEI*
Lopa Gandhi	Ugam
Elsa Burzynski	UNESCO
Justine Sass	UNESCO*
Representatives	UNGEI
Ruth Graham Goulder	UNICEF
Dr Catherine Vanner	University of Windsor
Gulbanu Dertli	UN Women
Lopa Banerjee	UN Women
Vivek Rai	UN Women
Emmanuel Manyasa	Usawa Agenda
Joyce Laker	VSO International
Ilayda Eskitaşçioğlu	We Need To Talk
Julia Fan	Women Deliver
Selma Acuner	Women's Coalition Turkey
Beverly Martin-Berry	Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation
Duygu Dokuz	WWHR Women for women's human rights
Renu Singh	Young Lives India
Tsevenravdan Tsogbat	Youth LEAD Mongolia

2022 Membership | 55 Members

Name	Organization
Sheena Hadi	Aahung
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ANNEX 2: 2023 FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

INTRODUCTION

To effectively evaluate the 2023 Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education, UNGEI shared a survey before and after the event with all participants. We received 70 responses to the pre-event survey, and 65 responses to the post-event survey, reflecting over 50% of all participants.

In the pre-event survey, we captured participants' expectations, measured knowledge on gender-transformative education, and collected demographic information. In the post-event survey, we analyzed shifts in knowledge and captured feedback on the event itself. This document outlines key learnings and feedback.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Overall, the feedback was positive, with 95% of participants saying that the event met or exceeded their expectations. Participants shared enthusiasm for the community that was built through the course of the two-day event, noting that the building of community is a critical first step to building a movement.

There are some useful learnings also identified by the Network, that we will take forward into the planning for 2024. Specifically, participants shared that the agenda was very busy, which didn't allow as much time as hoped for reflection, discussion and networking. This will be reviewed and taken into consideration in the development of the event in 2024.

“The FemNet4GTE gathering in Istanbul was an exceptional experience, instilling a profound sense of ownership as we collectively reached agreements on the concept, outcomes, and the path forward.”

Network member, 2023

RESULTS

95% of participants said that the event met or exceeded their expectations

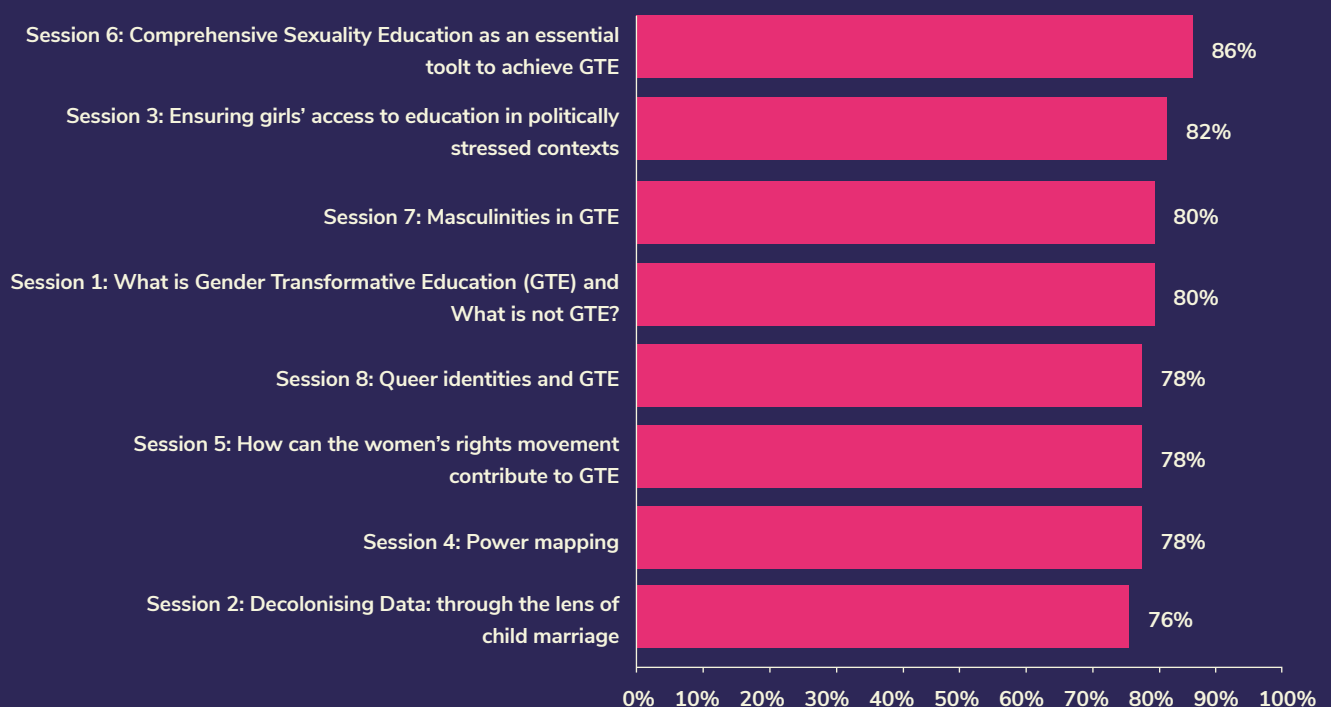
18 percentage point increase in participants' confidence in "being able to define gender-transformative education to others" after the event

Participants rated the following as the four most important objectives of the Network following the event:

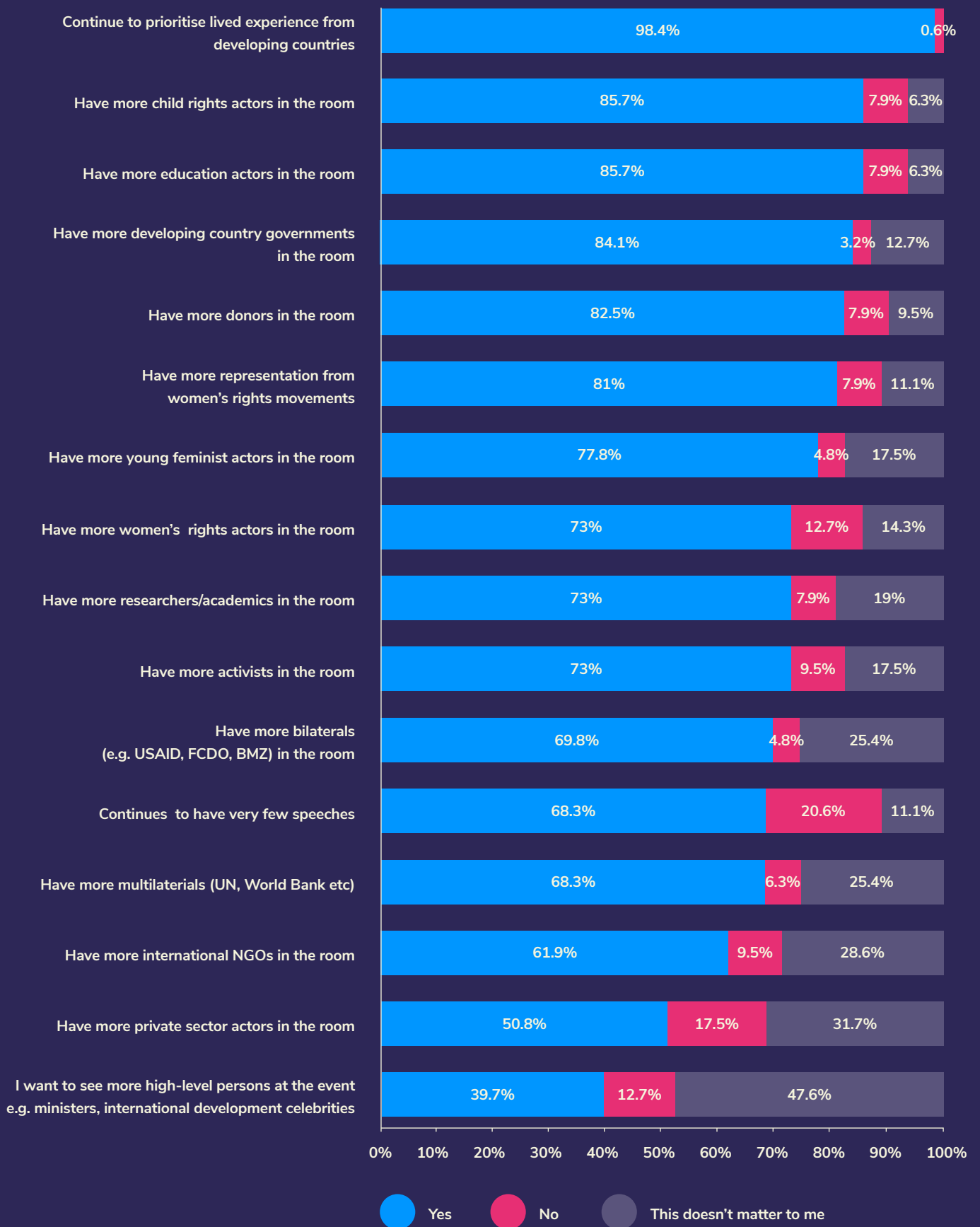
1. Networking and making connections (67%)
2. Learning about examples and work in other themes or in other areas of the world (64%)
3. Coming out with clear outcomes to take forward (57%)
4. Progress towards building community (57%)

Interestingly, prioritization of Objectives 2 and 3 shifted. Prior to the event, "coming out with clear outcomes to take forward" was the highest objective, falling to third place after the event. "Learning new ideas and concepts" was the fourth highest objective and dropped to last place after the event.

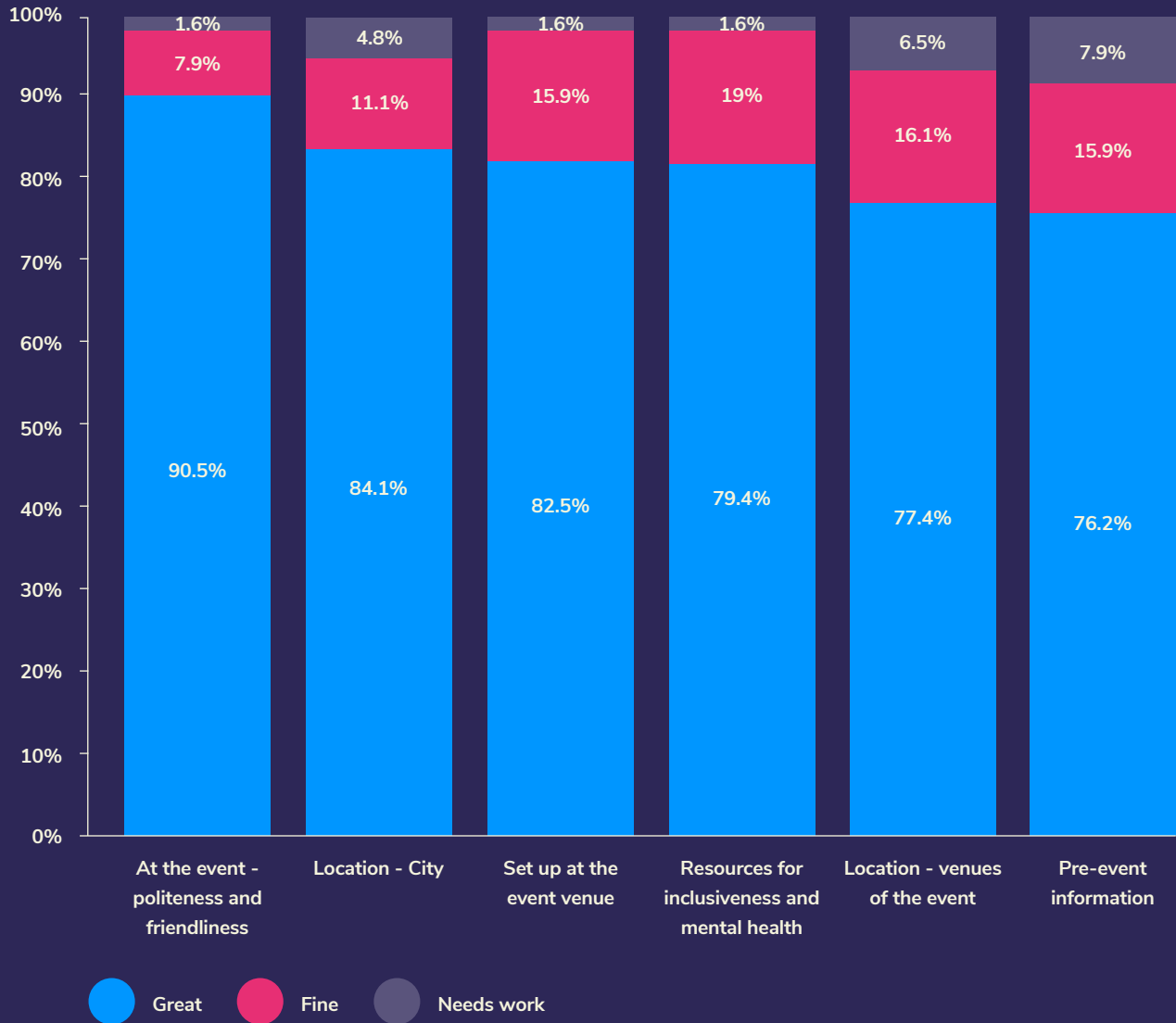
All sessions were highly rated by all participants, with the session on comprehensive sexuality education receiving the most positive rating overall:



86% of participants felt that there was just the right number of attendees. When asked who else could be represented in the room, participants wanted significantly more developing country governments, education actors, women’s rights actors and young feminists in the room. 98% of respondents wanted a continued emphasis on prioritizing lived experience from developing countries.



Overall, participants were very happy with the logistics and overall management of the event:



When given options of hearing from us quarterly, every two months or every month, **54%** of participants said they want to hear from us once a month, indicating a strong interest in continuing to engage. **27%** chose once every two months, showing strong engagement and enthusiasm for the Network and the community.

Participants were also asked to share their reflections and feedback for the event and the Network going forward. We noted the following trends:

Overall participants expressed strong appreciation for the theme, the gathering and the convening of the event. The relevance and criticality of the theme were noted by several participants. The prioritization of civil society voices, meaningful inclusion of young experts, and the focus on global majority expertise were all noted with appreciation. There were no critiques related to exclusion: either of themes or of groups and communities.

In this first gathering of this scale, we prioritized an inclusive agenda. The feedback was that this ended up being too busy not allowing enough time for reflection, discussion and networking.

Some participants shared that they were tired given how far they had travelled and that they needed more time ahead of the event to rest before sessions began. The global nature of this event as well as budget constraints means that this may continue to be a challenge in future years for some participants, however we hope by moving the event to different locations, some participants will be affected less in different years.

The timeline was cited as a challenge for some participants to get their visas in time, this was also noted by the UNGEI team. The recommendation to confirm the date and the logistics much earlier for 2024 will be taken forward by the UNGEI team.

Participants noted that more emphasis could have been placed on education in crisis response settings, especially given the current conflicts and the need for responsive, gender-transformative education.

Participants noted that there could be more emphasis on education itself, for example education systems and curricula, alongside the (necessary) focus on gender and community interventions.

Participants noted that good arrangements were made for translation, while also suggesting that other languages be taken into account, and more facilitation offered in non-English / non-colonizers' language.

Participants noted that the evening social events allowed for deeper connection and network building.

One participant with disabilities noted that there were good accommodations made to ensure accessibility and that their needs were met.

In their own words:

“The FemNet4GTE gathering in Istanbul was an exceptional experience, instilling a profound sense of ownership as we collectively reached agreements on the concept, outcomes, and the path forward.”

“The experience was informative, engaging and awesome to meet new people and make new connections while learning great impactful ways to bring gender transformative education.”

“Whenever I am among the FemNet members, I feel home. Thank you for the incredible learning experiences. Although I have more of a listener than a speaker, it felt wonderful to hear the diverse stories and experiences of feminists around the world.”

“Great work, am looking forward to building the community”

“FemNet4GTE expanded and challenged my understandings of feminist work and I’m very grateful for this.”

“Had a wonderful experience! Looking forward to next year.”

“I have met with amazing activists, I felt solidarity being among passionate individuals that are willing to address the faults in policies, bureaucracies, and the international silence and double standards.”

“It was powerful to spend two days in the same room with a diverse intergenerational coalition of feminist activists all committed to the same goal!”

“Reinvigorating experience, making us feel part of a transdisciplinary, cross-border activist community.”

ANNEX 3:

OVERVIEW OF 2023 SESSIONS

DEFINING GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION:

WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT IS IT NOT?

Session Leads: Sunita Menon, [Breakthrough](#) (India) and Shungu Gwarinda, [CAMFED](#) (Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe)

Overview: What is Gender-Transformative Education and What is Not Gender-Transformative Education? In a world where “transformation” has been a universal buzzword, is girls’ education just about getting girls into school? And where does gender equality fit? Sunita Menon asked participants to come to a common understanding of the path to gender-transformative education, moving towards an education that transforms power relationships between all genders.

Why this session matters: This session pushed participants to think about the following terms, how we define them and what these types of interventions look like:

- ◆ Gender Discriminatory/Unintentional/Neutral: These interventions deepen or perpetuate gender inequality, or they treat all genders the same when they are not, or they acknowledge but do not address gender inequality
- ◆ Gender Responsive/Intentional: Accurately describe the different needs of girls, boys, women, men, and gender-expansive persons and address different needs of all genders
- ◆ Gender Transformative: Explicitly focused on achieving equal power and removing structural barriers and empowering disadvantaged persons/ groups

Outcomes & Reflections: Participants listed what a gender neutral, a gender responsive and a gender-transformative intervention would look like for children. Some examples of each of these approaches were:

- ◆ Gender-responsive/intentional approaches:
 - ◆ Creating safer spaces in schools
 - ◆ Having wellbeing and mental health support for parents
 - ◆ Teacher training and capacity building on gender equality
- ◆ Gender-transformative approaches:
 - ◆ Implementing zero tolerance for gender-based violence
 - ◆ Ending child, early and forced marriage and unions
 - ◆ Reducing unequal care work at home through school pedagogy and curricula



This session emphasized the importance of understanding key terminologies around gender-transformative education and it became clear that we have yet to reach a common understanding of how to define this.

DEVELOPING A GLOSSARY FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Session Leads:

Ashlee Burnett, [UNGEI](#) / Transform Education

Overview:

As a queer person, Ashlee Burnett has faced discrimination. She believes that gender-transformative education is vital to changing that for generations to come. Ashlee is leading the development of a new glossary on gender-transformative education (name and terms to be discussed and finalized with the Network in 2024) with the UN Girls' Education Initiative. The vision is to have an accessible, fun and interactive glossary that reflects the expertise and needs of those working on these issues developed through extensive consultations, especially with young, feminist experts.

Within this session, participants were asked to review the draft list of terminology which was generated through consultation to date and provide their feedback.

Why this session matters:

To effectively deliver gender-transformative education, we need to develop shared terminology that is inclusive and reflective of current best practice and understanding on critical issues including SRHR, gender equality, identity.

Outcomes & Reflections:

Feedback on the initial terminology was positive, but broader consultation is needed to define more terms. As the consultation continues, it will be crucial to consider local and regional languages and contexts in the glossary development, which would in turn enable wider participation and equity. The participants asked for an “open door approach” for more definitions in the glossary making it a live document and exercise.



ACTION FOR 2024:

Complete the Glossary for Gender Transformative Education

DECOLONIZING DATA & RESEARCH

Session Leads:

Elizabeth Vasquez, [Abriendo Oportunidades](#), (Guatemala) and Dr Sajeda Amin, [Population Council](#)

Overview:

Dr. Sajeda Amin opened by questioning the term 'empowerment.' There is no solid evidence that conventional empowerment programs are effective in advancing gender equality and that there is need to deconstruct the notion of empowerment. "If we think of the term 'empowerment' as 'giving power' then we need to rethink this term, because if we are thinking of 'giving power' we often end up **giving** programs to a community instead of designing programs **with** the community."

Elizabeth Vasquez shared a case study of Abriendo Oportunidades' work around child marriage in Guatemala, and how their organization made sure to not to enforce power but to use Participatory Action Research within communities to identify needs and ensure that the community designs its own programs. This community engagement was used to curb cases of child, early and forced marriage in Guatemala and identify community partnerships (parents, teachers, community leaders). Participants were challenged to think about how they could develop programs that genuinely not just engaged but empowered communities in their design and development, and how to center this in their work going forward.

Why this session matters:

This session was designed to

- ◆ Emphasize the importance of engaging communities in the design of their own programs by assuring they define their own support needs
- ◆ Urge organizations to interrogate their definitions of key terminologies, as these inform the programs we design
- ◆ Push organizations to question our own position/power/privilege

Outcomes & Reflections:

- ◆ It is both challenging and risky to put the burden of "empowerment" only on girls. We must explicitly expect the system to change as well
- ◆ Language imposes patriarchal and colonial ways of thinking, so it is important that we are careful and intentional with the language we use. This emphasizes the need for the glossary that UNGEI is crafting
- ◆ Suggestions to replace 'empowerment' with: 'the equitable redistribution of power towards liberation' or 'nurturing agency'
- ◆ Many development programs unintentionally disempower communities
- ◆ There was an emphasis on co-creation and collaboration



ENSURING GIRLS' ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN POLITICALLY STRESSED CONTEXTS

Session Leads:

[Rangina Hamidi](#), former Minister of Education, Afghanistan, Nafissatou Ide Sadou, ONG [FAD Niger](#), Maimouna Kere, [Ministry of Education, Burkina Faso](#)

Overview:

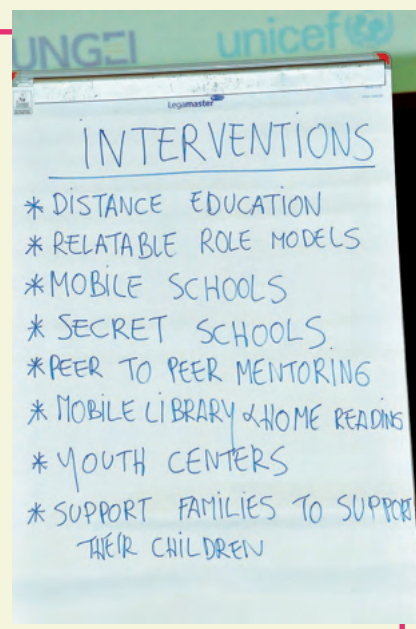
To begin the session the three session leads all spoke about their respective contexts. Nafissatou Ide Sadou, Director of ONG FAD, reflected on the case of Niger where a military coup has increased school closures because of violent attacks. ONG FAD's work has been focused on mentoring girls and getting them back into school.

Maimouna Kere, the Director of Inclusive Education at the Ministry of Education in Burkina Faso, spoke of how schools in Burkina Faso had to close in 2015 due to terrorist attacks. As a result, a lot of girls were subjected to early marriage or child labor as a means to support their families. Organizations had to create strategies to respond to the needs of these girls, this is seen in the work of Gender at the Center Initiative (implemented by IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI.)

Rangina Hamidi, former Minister of Education in Afghanistan, spoke of the situation in Afghanistan being a direct result of Afghanistan's history of conflict and competing interests of the international world order, post-World War II. She reflected that solutions have to be developed and led by those on the ground.

Why this session matters:

- ◆ This session highlighted the need to transform policy as a whole when it comes to crises, and that education cannot be addressed in a silo.
- ◆ Participants discussed:
 - ◆ Why men in many societies are afraid of educating girls
 - ◆ 'Democracy' as a tool that works both ways, because even democracy is not inherently anti-patriarchal
 - ◆ Donors and aid in general, because donor dependent countries are not free to develop their own curriculums but have to work according to their donor's agenda and if all a donor is looking for is 'parity' then this can compromise the quality of girls' education
- ◆ Participants were asked to think of alternative and unconventional interventions, as these are needed in times of crisis and politically stressed contexts



Outcomes & Reflections:

There were powerful youth-led interventions shared that are continuing to ensure education opportunities for girls in the context of humanitarian emergencies, extremist threats and military coups.

There are practical local solutions to girls' education where stakeholders have found a common ground, including using local community and government champions; facilitating opportunities for girls to educate/support other girls; developing non-formal and hands-on programs as done by BRAC, Edtech Hub, AKF and others.

Participants also shared some strategies to promote gender-transformative education during crises:

- ♦ A gender focused approach to developing alternate methods of delivering (gender sensitive) education during times of crises: Radio programmes, delivering learning materials. An example is Sierra Leone during Ebola & Covid-19 crises
- ♦ Partnering with powerful institutions and finding allies in unconventional places. An example is the case of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, organizations partnered had cultural and religious interventions, pastors would speak about HIV and encourage safe sex and this helped to reduce the cases of HIV nationwide.

“I have never understood the term school dropout. When war came to my village, when the houses burnt the following day the school was closed. I didn't drop out of school. When war comes children are dropped out of school.”

Dr Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda,
Rozaria Memorial Trust



POWER MAPPING

Session Leads:

Shamah Bulangis and Jona Turalde, [Transform Education](#), hosted by UNGEI

Overview:

Who holds power in the education and gender equality space? And how can we influence them? In this session, Transform Education guided participants to develop regional Power Maps. A Power Map is a common community-organizing technique used to visually represent relevant stakeholders relative to an issue, the types of power they have, and how they relate to one another. Power maps help us orient ourselves to the world around us and help us to plan for specific actions or campaigns.

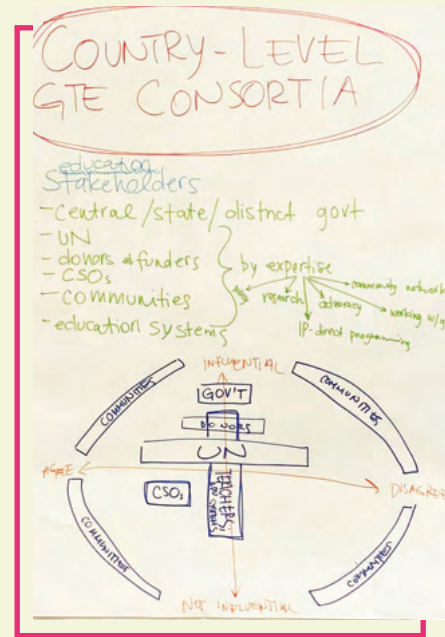
Participants developed six regional Power Maps (East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean). These maps show who holds the most power, who sets the agenda, who receives which resources and what is the distribution of labor.

Why this session matters:

Power maps are critical for developing targeted, customized strategies to influence each actor differently. Each regional power map identified the most powerful actors to progress gender transformative education in the region.

Outcomes & Reflections:

Participants discussed varying levels of allyship and the extent to which the Network should focus on less effective but lower-hanging fruit versus higher effort work to influence more powerful actors.



ACTION FOR 2024:

The six regional Power Maps will be taken forward by Transform Education (a network of young, feminist experts hosted by UNGEI) to develop a Global Power Map that will sit on the Global Platform for Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment in and through Education, hosted by UNESCO and UNICEF.

HOW CAN THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT CONTRIBUTE TO GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION?

Session Leads:

[Selma Acuner](#), Women's Rights Expert and Activist, Women's Coalition (Türkiye)

Abia Akram, CEO of [National Forum for Women with Disabilities](#) (Pakistan)

Chea Engmey, [Gender and Development for Cambodia](#) (Cambodia)



Overview:

Selma Acuner, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda and Olanike Uge opened the discussion by telling their own stories about their activism in the women's rights movement. Positioning gender and education within the broader women's rights agenda at the national and global platforms (CSW, Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW Country Periodic Reports) has been critical to achieving not just girls' rights but women's rights as well. They emphasized the importance of closing the distance between the women's, girls' and queer rights movements.

Why this session matters:

“Feminist movements are under attack globally. Why? Because we are the most effective at achieving change, because we get stuff done. There is not a single advancement in human rights that has been achieved without the woman's rights movement.” - Lopa Banerjee

However, women's rights movements can and must do more to acknowledge, measure and respond to girls' needs and children's needs more broadly in achieving gender equality.

Outcomes & Reflections:

- ◆ There is a need to make better linkages with the disability inclusion movement.
- ◆ Community leaders need to develop by-laws on the right to education.
- ◆ We need to create spaces for girls to enter direct conversation with policy makers.
- ◆ Adolescent pregnancies: we focus too much on pregnancy but not on how the girls got pregnant. Adolescent out-of-school mothers fall in a gap between the education sector and the women's rights movements.
- ◆ Some participants felt that the term 'child marriage' must be rejected; it is rape and there is a need to revise our language and terminology.
- ◆ Regarding the re-entry of girls who are victims of child, early and forced marriage and adolescent mothers into education, girls do not return to school, even if there are re-entry policies. This is because they do not get the support they need. There are no childcare facilities, parents and spouses do not accept an educated girl/ woman, parents do not pay school fees. Re-entry policies are often gender-responsive but not gender-transformative as they don't address the underlying issues.
- ◆ There is a need to strategically involve men in women's rights movement.

Moreover, there was a discussion on how the women's rights movement can work more proactively on gender-transformative education, and how gender-transformative education actors can engage with women's rights actors. Suggestions included development of global guidance on gender-transformative re-entry policies for adolescent mothers and survivors of child, early and forced marriage; development of global guidance on mental health in education and inclusion of women in teachers' unions and women teachers in the women's rights movements as they are often the lead in schools and communities in advancing gender equality for children.

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Session Leads:

Sheena Hadi, [Aahung](#) (Pakistan), Niyati Sharma, [Pratisandhi](#) (India)

Overview:

This session highlighted the crucial role of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in a gender-transformative curriculum. Sheena Hadi and Niyati Sharma explored key concepts of CSE and shared examples of how CSE was negotiated in practice through programs in India and Pakistan. CSE has four major pathways: i) SRHR pathway – focuses on health aspects, ii) Values pathway – focuses on respect and dignity, iii) Protection pathways, and iv) Gender norms pathways. Participants worked in regional groups to explore CSE through the lens of one of the following themes: gender-based violence including in schools; child, early, and forced marriage/unions; education in non-formal and humanitarian/emergency settings; LGBTIQ+ and sexual diversity; teenage pregnancy and adolescent parents.

Why this session matters:

In many contexts, comprehensive sexuality education is seen as controversial. It can be used as a reason that policy makers or donors don't want to engage in gender-transformative education approaches. Yet there can be no progress in gender equality without support for bodily integrity. Understanding the different dimensions of CSE and its core principles can ensure that it can be genuinely contextualized and applied.

Outcomes & Reflections:

- ◆ What is considered appropriate can vary by culture, context & stakeholders' perception. Sessions on consent for example have received backlash around age-appropriateness. These should be challenged by qualitative needs-assessments, contextually relevant data, collaboration with stakeholders and experts in the same room, and engaging with parents to demand CSE in school (PTA).
- ◆ It's not straightforward to implement CSE. A CSE programme must consider the cultural compatibility of themes and topics, mitigate potential parental and community backlash, ensure teacher preparedness, and facilitate an approach that is integrated into existing structures and systems that will support if there is a rise of coordinated opposition.
- ◆ CSE can be a powerful tool to tackle other issues including child early and forced marriage, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health rights.



MASCULINITIES IN GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Session Leads:

Dr Wessel van den Berg, [Equimundo](#), Nalini V. Khurana, [International Centre for Research on Women](#)

Overview:

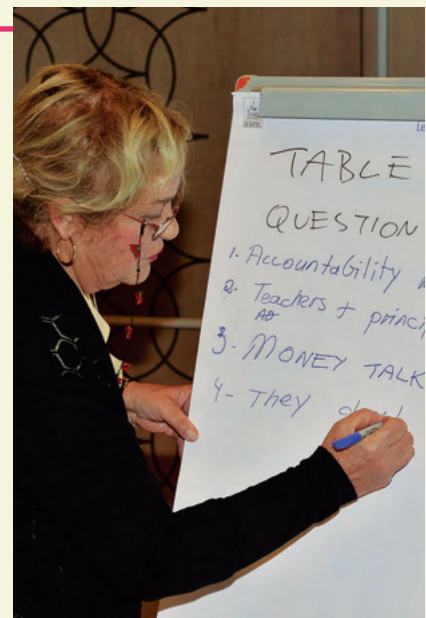
This session focused on how to address harmful masculine gender norms in education for the benefit of girls, boys and children in all their diversity, and how the education sector can promote positive masculinities at school, as part of the gender-transformative education agenda. The session also helped unpack 'masculinities' to ensure better alignment on its definition.

Why this session matters:

We cannot advance girls' education agenda nor gender equality without meaningfully engaging men and boys. Boys are also impacted by harmful norms and stereotypes, and without a gender-transformative education, can grow up to perpetuate harmful behaviours, attitudes and norms. Moreover, men in positions of power must be made accountable for delivering this change. Enabling change for all learners, including and especially girls, means addressing unequal power dynamics and transforming notions of masculinity at all levels.

Outcomes & Reflections:

- ◆ Participants discussed that masculinities are socially constructed, masculinities are plural and contextual, boys' disengagement in education is growing.
- ◆ There are emerging questions on how gender norms influence boys' educational pathways, how masculinities affect girls, boys' and gender equality.
- ◆ It is important to engage with men, e.g. men in power and we have to invest in partnering with men allies.
- ◆ There is a lack of movement speaking up for boys with disabilities.
- ◆ Movements are important to bring values and ideas into practice and reward positively the deviance that we are seeking in communities.



QUEER IDENTITIES AND GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Session Leads:

Yasemin Öz, [Kaos GL](#) (Türkiye), [Schuyler Bailar](#) (USA), Dr Ramneek Ahluwalia, [Higher Health](#), Department of Higher Education and Training (South Africa)

Overview:

This session began with an introduction on queer and gender-expansive identities to provide participants with a base understanding of the LGBTIQ+ community. The session leads then invited participants to consider how gender and sexual identities specifically affect and are integral to our lived experiences in education.

Dr. Ramneek Ahluwalia spoke of the studies on gender diversity in South Africa that showed that 5% of the population is gender diverse and that these students often face stigma, abandonment and discrimination. Schuyler Bailar reflected on his research on queer identity and the binaries that put people in boxes.

Why this session matters:

This session spurred an important discussion about how education systems can and should teach students about diverse gender identities. At the same time, participants reflected that queer issues are women's & girls' rights issues, especially in the context of education. This is particularly relevant in contexts where we are seeing anti-rights & anti-gender opposition.

Outcomes & Reflections:

The session leads posed the following questions to the group:

- ◆ Francisco Quiñones Cuartas from Mocha Celis in Argentina recounted his experience in schools where he studied and the discrimination, he faced which made him realize that trans people in Argentina suffer a lot of stigma; so, he decided to open the first school for transgender people in Argentina. At the time, the police were not sympathetic to transgender people; trans people could be sentenced to 5 years in prison for wearing clothes supposedly for the other gender.
- ◆ Justin Chidozie from CHEVS in Nigeria, spoke on how, in Nigeria, if a girl, even a minor, shows lesbian characteristics, parents will rush to marry her off. There are queer students who are excluded from schools and queer teachers who are fired because of their gender. As a solution, CHEVS launched an initiative, which is now in its second year of implementation; where they teach students how to use technology to work online, enabling them to suffer less from stigma.



WHAT IS NEXT FOR THE FEMINIST NETWORK FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION, AND HOW CAN WE BUILD THAT TOGETHER?

Session Leads:

Dr. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, [Rozaria Memorial Trust](#) (Zimbabwe); Joanne Sandler & Khanyisa Mabyeka, [Gender at Work](#); Yona Nestel [Plan International](#)

Overview:

Throughout the two-day convening, participants were asked to reflect on, develop and dream, to develop a shared vision and collective next steps to take forward as a Network. The following questions were posed to shape this:

- ◆ What are the barriers that prevent you from advancing gender-transformative education?
- ◆ What are the opportunities that support you for advancing gender-transformative education?
- ◆ What are the 2-3 outcomes/successes that we can achieve together as FemNet4GTE over the next 3 years that can advance your work?

Why this session matters:

The power of this Network is our collective strength and expertise. It was important to draw all organizations and activists together to ask crucial questions, identify barriers and opportunities together and use this to inform our forward-facing strategy.



Outcomes & Reflections:

In terms of internally focused action points, we need:

- ◆ A common understanding of Gender Transformative Education and its related terms
- ◆ To simplify some of the complex language around GTE and assure that all terms are translatable and apply to diverse contexts (in terms of policy, technical & community)
- ◆ To design and disseminate a co-created strategy for the next three years that will become an anchor for the network
- ◆ To begin movement building of the FemNet4GTE with linkages from community to global level, bound by core values and objectives, with actions at each level

And in terms of external facing outcomes, we need:

- ◆ Political strategy/engagement with duty bearers who control power, resources and social norms locally and globally
- ◆ Data, knowledge management, research, best practice sharing
- ◆ Solidarity and support to region/context specific strategic interventions, examples: MENA region on peace and security; South Asia & Africa on child marriage; review of AU Education policy/education as theme for 2024.
- ◆ To build synergies and cross linkages with other movements, in leading an external facing campaign on gender-transformative education – this could take place on a special day.
- ◆ To be strategic and to measure results and progress both at local and global levels. Convening is key.

A world where gender-transformative education is accessible for all learners is a world of equality, justice, growth and peace.





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