

## Editorial

Dear friends,

Welcome to the last newsletter from the first phase of GCI. As we embark on an exciting new phase of the Gender at the Centre Initiative, we are happy to share the results we achieved collectively over the last six months of 2023 and provide a preview of what is coming up!

While we witnessed unprecedented human suffering in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan, some of our GCI countries have also gone through severe crises. With a military coup in Niger, an attempted coup in Sierra Leone and ongoing political instability in other countries, GCI has once again had to operate under particularly challenging circumstances. Despite these challenges, GCI partners have been continuing to deliver programs to maintain and strengthen the progress made on gender equality in and through education.

GCI's civil society partners advocated for increased investments in gender-transformative education and worked with communities to transform harmful gender norms. The newly organized Feminist Youth Coalitions in Mali and Niger developed work plans for gender-transformative action and are now officially represented within their country's Local Education Groups. This is an important step forward in including young feminist expertise in education spaces!

GCI continued to expand its support and learning across the African continent. Targeted technical support, GRESIP trainings and Communities of Practice allowed countries to share experiences and improve their education systems for gender equality. Gatherings of GCI gender champions across Africa are contributing to the development of a strong, coordinated and active movement for gender-transformative education.

Based on the results from the GCI mid-term review and recommendations from the GCI Alliance Board meeting, GCI Alliance members collectively designed a strategy for the second phase of the Initiative, which will start in 2024. GCI has also strengthened its partnership with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to provide targeted support to countries on gender-transformative education planning and dialogue. We are very grateful to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and GPE for committing to support this second phase of GCI, and we are hopeful that other partners will join our collective effort to continue to advance gender-transformative education!

Thank you for your solidarity, energy and commitment. Onwards together.



**Eline Versluys**

GCI Lead, UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)



**Fabricia Devignes**

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

# KEY RESULTS & UPDATES

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

In Mauritania, IIEP actively participated in the education sector review in July. Throughout the year, the team led various workshops and provided technical support to education sector planning and Financial Simulation Modelling, gaining validation and endorsement from the Local Education Group (LEG) in December 2023. The plan encompasses a comprehensive set of measures focused on addressing gender inequalities.

In Sierra Leone IIEP delivered an in-person four-day course to the staff of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). The training program allowed MBSSE participants to develop a strong understanding of educational planning and budgeting processes, recognizing their pivotal roles within these frameworks. The training also equipped participants with practical tools and skills to prepare gender-responsive budget proposals and statements, identify appropriate indicators, set gender-responsive targets, and conduct gender-responsive expenditure reviews.

With financial support from the government of Japan and in collaboration with UNESCO, GCI is developing capacities of ministries of education and school management committees at central and decentralized levels and developed its teacher guide for gender mainstreaming in Mauritania and Chad to prevent and address school closures with a gender-responsive approach in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.



The second English edition of the Short Course on Gender-responsive Education Planning was delivered by IIEP between September and December. 42 education professionals from 16 anglophone African countries have embarked on a 3-month journey to explore topics such as intersectional inequalities in education, gender-responsive budgeting and gender-mainstreaming in education sector analyses and planning.



30 Members of the Community of Practice in Education and Gender (CoP) from across Francophone Africa were invited to a one-week face-to-face workshop which took place in Dakar in October, hosted by IIEP-Dakar as part of the six-month intensive coaching programme of the CoP. The workshops primarily focused on the issue of data, covering aspects from collection and analysis to dissemination and utilization in steering gender-transformative education. During the workshop, members shared best practice from their respective countries and strengthened the movement initiated by GCI towards gender-transformative education.

The GCI team has started data collection for a new research project addressing girls' school dropout in Sierra Leone and Mozambique. The objective is to contribute to the generation of evidence on girls' school dropout process in both countries and support governments to develop data systems, education policies and tools for early identification and prevention. In particular, we are keen to explore opportunities for the design and implementation of Early Warning Systems, which would be innovative in the region.

In collaboration with BMZ and UNICEF, UNGEI organized a multi-country learning event on Gender-Transformative Leadership and Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning (GRESPE) in Dakar in December. Ministry of Education planners, civil society representatives and GPE grant agencies from eight countries (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria) shared experiences and developed action plans to center gender equality in education sector plans and GPE compacts.



**“This training is coming at the right time for us to support our government in ensuring that our education sector plan is gender-responsive.”**

Jiddere Musa Kaibo, FAWE Nigeria

# WHAT'S COMING UP?

- In **Mozambique**, IIEP-UNESCO will design and deliver an in-person training to the Ministry of Education and Human Development staff on gender-responsive budgeting.
- In **Mauritania**, IIEP-UNESCO Dakar will organize a workshop to raise awareness on gender equality in education among members of school management committees.
- In **Niger**, IIEP-UNESCO Dakar will finalize the gender institutional diagnosis initiated in Niger before the coup d'état and will engage the new ministry personnel in discussions around the main findings of the diagnosis.
- In **Nigeria**, IIEP-UNESCO, UNGEI and partners will work with the Federal Ministry of Education to run pilot workshops for teams of representatives of states to build capacity in gender-responsive education planning and management and supporting gender assessments through the GES Toolkit.
- In **Sierra Leone** IIEP-UNESCO will deliver an in-person course to the staff of the MBSSE and Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) at both central and decentral level on gender-responsive TVET.
- In **Chad**, GCI will organize training courses on gender-responsive planning and management for the benefit of six regional educational directorates.
- The GCI team will continue the research activities on “Addressing Girls’ School Dropout through Data Systems, Policies and Early Prevention Tools in **Sierra Leone** and **Mozambique**”.
- UNGEI will organize 2 virtual learning events on GRESP, as a follow-up of the multi-country meeting in Dakar.

## KEY RESULTS & UPDATES

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

In November, UNGEI convened over 120 organizations at the [Feminist Network for Gender-Transformative Education](#) in Istanbul. GCI supported a session on girls’ education in politically stressed contexts, with representation from Burkina Faso and Niger, and shared lessons learnt from GCI countries.



Maimouna Kere, Director of Girls' Education, MoE Burkina Faso, sharing lessons learnt at the Feminist Network for Gender-Transformative Education meeting.

In Mali, UNGEI supported 30 young feminists to launch the first Feminist Youth Coalition for Gender-Transformative Education, part of the global [Transform Education](#) network. The coalition met on 7 August and developed an action plan for joint advocacy, community engagement and peer support. Officially represented within the Local Education Group, the coalition will be able to engage in education sector decision making to promote gender-transformative education.



**“The establishment of this national youth coalition presents new avenues to promote inclusive education. As dedicated young leaders, we could shape education policies and reforms in Mali. Our voices matter for an equitable educational future.”**

Zeina Mohamed Ali, Mali Feminist Youth Coalition

GCI’s civil society partners [FAWE](#), [ANCEFA](#) and [Plan International](#) undertook a series of activities to advocate for and build capacity on gender-transformative education. In Burkina Faso, FAWE partnered with young feminists to organize a national youth advocacy forum for the promotion of girls’ education in October.



Youth representatives delivered advocacy messages to the authorities and invited partners, including the Ministry of Education and the traditional chieftaincy, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

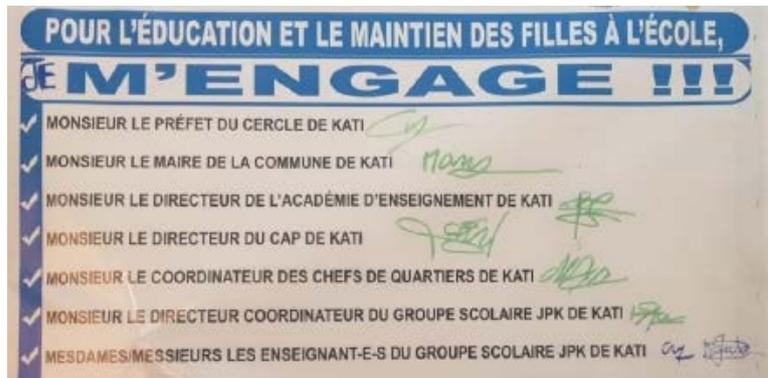


In Nigeria, FAWE organized two GRESP workshops in Katsina State and Cross River State in October, targeting MoE staff and civil society representatives. In both workshops participants developed a state-level work plan aimed at increasing gender equality in and through the education system.

In Mali, FAWE, the Coalition Education pour Tous (ANCEFA) and Plan International organized three advocacy sessions in October in the communities of Kati, Baguinéda and Bamako, with the aim of boosting girls’ enrolment and retention in all levels of education, especially in Basic I and II.



In Bamako, the Children’s Parliament developed and submitted an advocacy note to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education. The note was centered on increasing girls’ enrolment and retention at all levels of education, especially basic 1 and 2.



Advocacy note addressed by the Children’s Parliament to the Minister of Education in Mali.

CSO partners in Sierra Leone, led by Plan International, hosted a number of transformative initiatives in October, including a training on SRGBV and life skills for peer educators from 30 schools in Freetown and Moyamba, as well as a consultation with 120 school girls for the International Day of the Girl Child. The consultation resulted in the decision to utilize government buses in GCI-supported districts.



In Niger, Plan International organized a dialogue workshop, events for the International Day of the Girl and several workshops on gender-transformative education, fostering collaboration among CSOs, young leaders, Education Ministry staff, and local NGOs.



In Mozambique, the CSO consortium led by the Movement for Education for All Partnership (MEPT, ANCEFA), engaged with Ministry working groups and parliamentarians and led media campaigns promoting girls' education. Notable achievements included influencing the revision of the teacher's code of conduct to address gender inequality and combat violence in schools, as well as the creation of a national action plan for the reintegration and retention of girls in schools.

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

- UNICEF will support the launch of a Feminist Youth Coalition for Gender-Transformative Education in Nigeria, and continue to support the Feminist Youth Coalitions in Mali and Niger.
- UNICEF will support Local Education Groups in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal to use the GES Toolkit and hold an inclusive dialogue on gender equality in and through education.
- UNICEF will launch a pilot media campaign to end gender stereotypes in schools in Niger.

## NEWS

- GCI phase 2 will be launched in the first part of 2024 in collaboration with the GCI Alliance.
- GCI and GPE will launch the pilot phase of the Gender Technical Assistance Initiative in 2 countries in early 2024.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

- “Improving Educational Attainment and Learning for Girls”, panel discussion with GCI representation, Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 31 January 2024, Brussels, Belgium.
- Comparative & International Education Society (CIES) Summit, March 2024, Miami, USA. GCI will present the main findings of its research on female leadership and school drop out.
- 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), March 2024, New York, USA. GCI will be hosting a session on financing gender-transformative education.
- The Annual GCI Alliance Board Meeting is tentatively slated for June, 2024 in Dakar, Senegal. GCI board members will assess and strategize planning and programming for the remainder of 2024 and beyond.

## RESOURCES & PUBLICATIONS

### Reports and studies

- [Learning Brief: Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools: Good practices, experiences, and lessons learned, UNGEI](#)
- [The role of women school principals in improving learning in French-speaking Africa - IIEP-UNESCO & UNICEF Innocenti research report](#)
- [Women in Learning leadership \(WiLL\) What does women’s school leadership look like in Chad? - UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight](#)

### Blogs and news

- [Sixty years of educational planning at UNESCO: Addressing gender inequality France 24 - The 51%](#)
- [Empowering Girls: Addressing School Dropout Through Data Systems, Policies, and Early Prevention Tools in Sub-Saharan Africa - NORRAG](#)
- [Transforming Education in Nigeria through GCI Alumni Perspectives: Julie Uzor, Deputy director of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education tells us about GCI’s impact in her country -IIEP UNESCO](#)
- [Four Things You Should Know About the Feminist Network for Gender-transformative Education 2023!](#)
- [BBC interview with Fabricia Devignes on GCI participation to UKFIET and main findings of GCI research on Female Leadership in Schools \(in French\)](#)
- [Extract from an interview with Fabricia Devignes, on RTS \(Senegalese National TV\): 1’s “Kinkeliba” on October 11, 2023 on girls ‘education in Africa with a focus on GCI results \(in French\)](#)
- [Investing in Social Norms:Addressing Public Scepticism of Girl Students’ Sexual Violence Experiences](#)
- [Sima & Narges: Fighting for Girls’ Rights](#)

PRIORITÉ À L'ÉGALITÉ  
GENDER AT THE CENTRE

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