

# GENDER AT THE CENTRE INITIATIVE (GCI) MULTI-COUNTRY MEETING ON GENDER-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING (GRESP)

5-8 December 2023, Dakar – Senegal



PRIORITÉ À L'ÉGALITÉ  
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# CONTEXT

As part of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) support to the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI), UNGEI, GIZ, UNICEF, and Gender at Work co-organized a multi-country learning meeting on gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP) from 5 to 8 December 2023 in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting drew on the experiences of GCI countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria) and non-GCI countries (Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Liberia, Malawi) for mutual learning on the integration of gender equality in education sector planning, with a specific focus on the GPE partnership process.

The objectives of the meeting were the following:

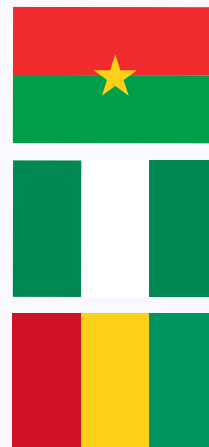
1. Enhance participants' understanding of gender equality issues in education and the principles of an equitable and inclusive education system
2. Familiarize participants with gender analysis, its tools, and their role in education sector planning
3. Build participants' capacities to apply a gender perspective to education policies and planning
4. Increase each participant's commitment to using their leadership to promote gender equality in education
5. Facilitate connections and sharing of experiences among participants and country delegations, with a specific focus on fostering collaboration between Ministries of Education (MoE), civil society and GPE grant agencies at country level.

Each country was represented by a delegation made up of two participants from the Ministry of Education (Senior ministry officials with responsibilities in sector planning and/or the formulation and implementation of education policies), one participant from the GPE Coordinating Agency, and one civil society representative. In total, 52 participants took part in the meeting including 28 women and 24 men.

The meeting has provided a unique platform for exchange among these eight African countries. It has combined two flagship approaches of GCI: (i) gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP) and (ii) gender-transformative leadership. Participants have gotten the opportunity to develop the skills and commitment necessary to effectively integrate gender equality into education sector planning, whether in sectoral analysis, policy, and planning development, or within the framework of GPE processes. At the end of the meeting each country delegation had developed a concrete action plan for further integrating gender equality in their country's education sector plan. In addition, the meeting has strengthened the collaboration among education stakeholders, providing a solid basis for further joint action within the GPE partnership framework.



## GCI Countries



## Non-GCI Countries



# DAY 01

## Opening

During the opening ceremony Dr. Nina Neubecker (Cooperation Officer, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Senegal), Silvia Danailov (Representative UNICEF Senegal) and Dr. Eline Versluys (GCI Lead, UNGEI) welcomed participants to the meeting. The three speakers emphasized the importance of their collaboration for advancing gender-transformative education, through the Gender at the Centre Initiative, of which Germany has been the second largest donor to date. They also highlighted the continued need for investing in gender equality in and through education in Sub-Saharan Africa, as a 20% gap between boys and girls in senior secondary school enrollment endures, with one in four young women being illiterate and persistent harmful gender norms hampering the dreams and opportunities of girls and women. Eline Versluys highlighted that everyone has a role to play in advancing gender-transformative education, and that the meeting was an opportunity to learn from each other and strengthen our collaboration as education partners.

**“It is impressive to see such a diverse group of stakeholders gathered here today, united by the mutual commitment to gender equality in and through education.”**

Dr Nina Neubecker, Cooperation Officer, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Senegal



Delegation of Burkina Faso

## Introduction

### Brainstorming on education and gender outcomes and challenges

Following the opening ceremony, each country was asked to share at least one key achievement for gender equality in education in their country in recent years and one education challenge they face when advancing gender equality in education:

**Mali:** There is a small gap in access to education for girls and boys but maintaining girls in the education system proves challenging due largely to harmful social norms.

**Burkina Faso:** There is parity in access at primary and secondary level, whilst maintaining and ensuring success for girls in secondary school remains challenging. Educational continuity in a context of crisis compounds this challenge.

**Republic of the Congo:** There is parity in access to preschool and primary education but a low rate of girls' secondary school completion (69% of girls do not complete secondary school).

**Nigeria:** There is now a new roadmap for education in Nigeria, with a chapter dedicated to girl's education in this document, as Nigeria has also adopted a national gender policy. However, there is insecurity in certain regions of the country and GBV.

**Liberia:** Gender parity is almost guaranteed, yet a challenge is producing adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data to demonstrate concrete outcomes at this level.

**Egypt:** There is parity in enrollment in school but 53% of girls drop out at secondary school level because of child marriage and harmful gender norms.

**Central African Republic:** The latest education reform addresses gender issues but there are challenges in maintaining girls school attendance due to social and cultural norms, and early pregnancies, etc.



## Regional Overview of Gender Equality in Education in West and Central Africa

Arpana Pandey, UNICEF WCARO Education Specialist, presented an overview of the gender equality situation in education in West and Central Africa (WCA). Currently, over 38.7 million children of primary and lower secondary school age are not enrolled in schools in the WCA region, with more boys completing primary and lower secondary education than girls. This underscores the existing barriers to girls' education, including economic factors such as family poverty and the direct or indirect costs of schooling, socio-cultural norms, harmful traditional practices, early marriage, early pregnancy, and school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). Additionally, emergencies such as conflicts, epidemics, and natural disasters disproportionately impact girls' ability to continue their education compared to boys.

To address these challenges, several key strategies were discussed:

- Engaging and empowering communities, parents, boys, and girls.
- Making education more affordable.
- Enhancing the accessibility and holistic nature of schools.
- Ensuring that schools are responsive to the specific needs of girls.
- Implementing gender-responsive sector plans.

These strategies aim to tackle gender inequality in education and create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Following this presentation, participants engaged in a discussion on the suitability of the formal education system for certain categories of out-of-school children, especially in crisis settings, and the importance of partnering with communities and local organizations to provide alternative learning pathways. Participants also discussed poor quality of teaching due to an under-equipped teaching force, as well as language of instruction and learning measures.

## Workshop overview session

Prior to the workshop, a survey was sent to participants to better understand their needs and interests. The participants' responses enabled the workshop content to be customized to best meet their specific needs and expectations. These responses were shared by facilitators during the workshop overview session.

Participants stated that by the end of the workshop they wanted to have achieved the following outcomes:

- A deeper understanding of gender analysis, planning, and evaluation.
- The necessary skills to reduce inequalities between men and women, girls and boys, and to promote gender equality.
- Practical tools for applying a gender perspective to project design, planning and monitoring in education, to share with colleagues and partners.
- More confidence in influencing national policies to take gender into account.
- A wider network of practitioners and other decision-makers who can provide support and technical assistance.
- A renewed commitment to making positive changes to achieve gender equality in education.

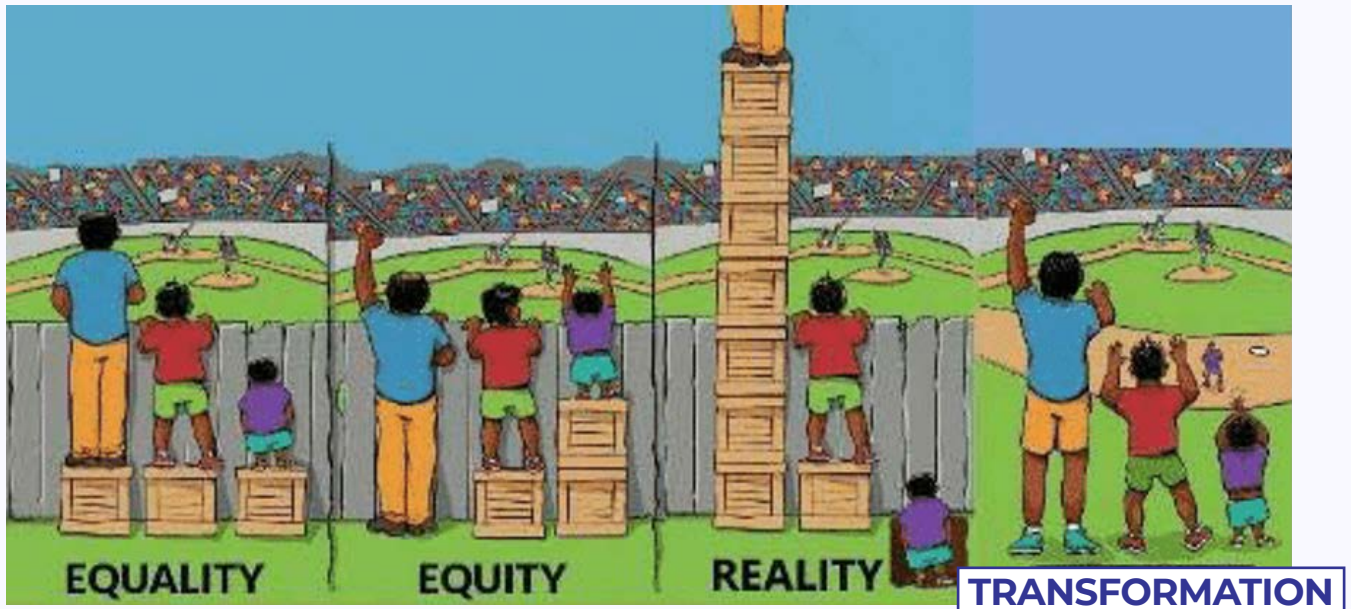
The discussion on the outcomes of the survey was followed by information sharing on the objectives, journey, agenda, methodology, working agreements, and an introductory presentation on the Education Sector Planning Cycle. Participants also conducted a rapid self-assessment on their understanding of gender equality in education sector planning, their capacity to apply a gender lens to education sector planning, their attitudes regarding education sector plans and gender analysis and their commitment to using their leadership to achieve gender equality in education.



## Understanding gender and equality

After the session on the workshop overview, a presentation on the Language of Gender Equality was delivered by one of the facilitators. This session allowed participants to gain a common understanding of key concepts and terms related to gender equality and to identify gender equality language relevant to their context.

The following picture provided a space for discussions on important gender terminologies:



As part of the session, participants were requested to do a free writing exercise recalling a time when they were in school, and they learned something important about gender roles. The exercise was an opportunity for participants to reflect and share on their personal experiences with gender (in)equality and how they became aware of existing inequalities.

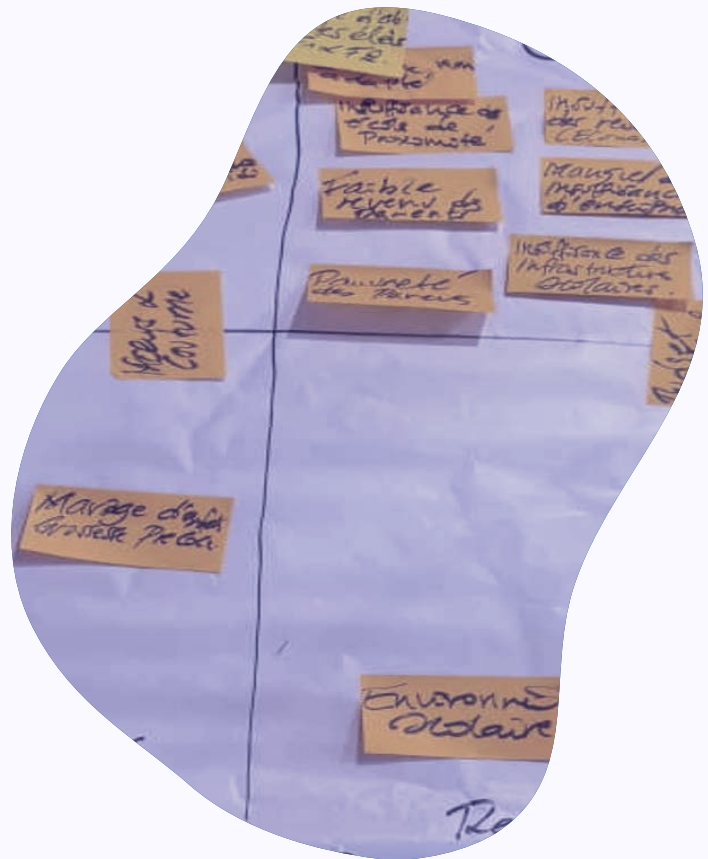
## Gender analysis

In order to strengthen competencies on gender analysis in education, facilitators presented the “Why-Why Analysis Tool” and the Gender at Work Analytical Framework (tools are included in annex). Group work which followed the presentations allowed participants to practice these gender analysis techniques and explore how gender intersects with other aspects of exclusion. Participants used the results of the Why-Why Analysis Tool to feed into the Gender at Work analytical framework.

After using the Gender at Work analytical framework, each country shared their findings of gender and equality issues within their context. Below are 2 examples of country-level analyses:

### The gender and equality issue identified by Liberia was “Poor Policy implementation”:

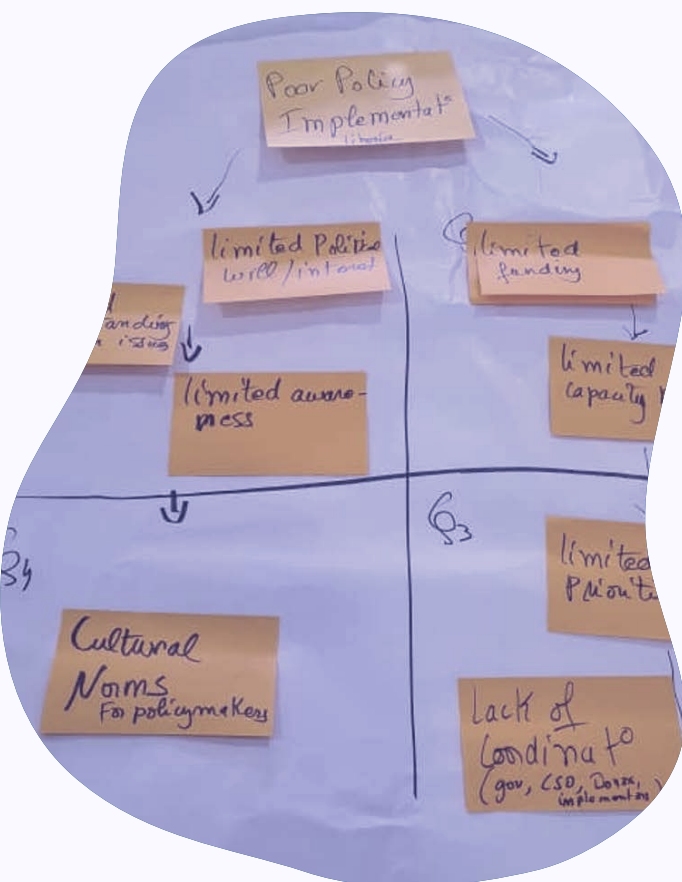
- » **‘Consciousness’-level issues: limited political will/interest; limited understanding of gender issues, limited awareness**
- » **‘Resources’-level issues: limited funding, limited capacity building**
- » **‘Rules and policies’-level issues: limited priorities; lack of coordination (government, donors, CSO, implementors)**
- » **‘Social norms’-level issues: cultural norms (for policy makers)**



Central African Republic gender in education analysis

### The gender and equality issue identified by Central African Republic was “High rate of girls’ dropout in F1 and F2”:

- » **‘Consciousness’-level issues: weak self-esteem, parents’ perception, lack of basic education, lack of knowledge of legal documents**
- » **‘Resources’-level issues: lack of financial resources; non-adapted latrines; lack of schools close to families, parents’ poverty, lack of school facilities, lack of teachers**
- » **‘Rules and policies’-level issues: lack of school mapping, school environment not secured**
- » **‘Social norms’-level issues: traditions and customs, child marriage, early pregnancies**



Liberia gender in education analysis

# DAY 2

## Developing a gender-responsive education sector plan

### The Education Sector Planning Cycle

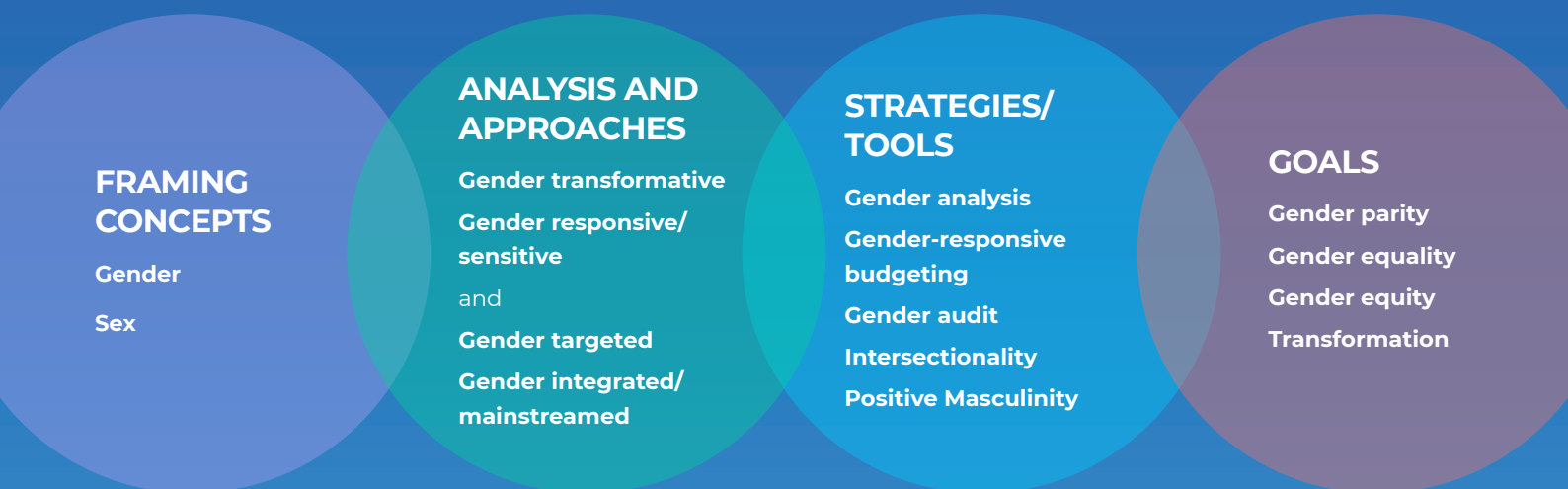
To introduce participants to the topic of gender-responsive education sector planning, a presentation on the education sector planning cycle was made by the facilitators.

### Production of Evidence and Data

In order to provide participants with information on how they can find or produce evidence and data to support their gender analysis and planning, UNGEI presented the [Gender Equality in Education Snapshot \(GES\) Toolkit](#) which supports education stakeholders to conduct a rapid assessment of gender equality in and through education. It provides a quick snapshot of where the country stands regarding gender equality within and beyond its education system. The tool allows planners and practitioners to produce an overview of relevant gender data and to catalyze a dialogue among education stakeholders at country level. J-PAL Africa presented their Gender Equality in Education Portfolio support which aims at improving living conditions by ensuring that policies and programs are based on rigorous scientific evidence.

### Terminology: Approaches, Concepts and Goals

For participants to feel comfortable using words related to understanding gender in programs and strategies, facilitators introduced discussions on gender and education terminologies. The different terminologies being discussed appeared in the following figure:



Through table discussions, participants exchanged ideas on strategies for incorporating gender in Education Sector Plans.

### Overview of the Guidance for developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans (GRESP)

A session to introduce the guidance for developing a gender-responsive education sector plan was conducted by the facilitators. The objective of the guidance is to enrich the existing process by putting the spotlight on gender issues and to identify additional tools, resources and information to support planners and practitioners in systematically undertaking gender analysis and developing gender-responsive strategies during the ESP process.

Facilitators also drew participants' attention to three aspects of the guide:

- The guide moves away from old approaches to gender issues. 'gender' includes 'women and girls' and is much broader than that, including power dynamics between men and women, between women, between men and between adults and children.
- Educational success is not a zero-sum game. Girls and boys, women and men all benefit from more equitable outcomes in education.
- Gender should not be examined in isolation. Other dimensions such as poverty, location, ethnicity and ability must be considered in education sector planning.

Participants were then requested to provide their feedback on the guidance for developing a GRESP.

For instance, according to Jiddere Musa Kaibo, FAWE Coordinator for Nigeria:

**“the guide is sequentially arranged. It starts with understanding relevant concepts on how to do an analysis using a gender lens to look at specific ESP up to the evaluation of the plan and gives a guide to understanding what is missing and what needs to be added to make an ESP gender responsive”.**

Jiddere Musa Kaibo, FAWE Coordinator for Nigeria

Jiddere Musa Kaibo, FAWE  
Coordinator for Nigeria





The facilitators then presented the five main aspects to consider when working on a gender-responsive ESP, i.e. information needed, approaches to use, resources needed, quality monitoring, and expertise and knowledge required.

Country delegations undertook a rapid assessment of their existing ESPs using a gender-responsive ranking grid. The participants then divided into two linguistic groups for a group work on how their ESP has addressed gender issues.

Some examples of comments made by country delegates on their ESP process after presenting their teamwork include:

**Central African Republic:**

- Consideration of aspects such as separate toilets for boys and girls.
- The existence of a budget for the plan, but not specifically to address gender issues.
- The existence of a gender policy, but the need to implement it.

**Mali:**

- The analyses considered documents such as the RESEN, the GES toolkit, the gender audit and certain reports.
- Several ministries, NGOs and other partners took part in the process.
- Mali has a gender policy and strategies.
- There are budget headings to meet the specific needs of girls, such as awards, income-generating activities, scholarships for girls, etc.
- The presence of a technical gender advisor and gender focal points in most ministries.
- The existence of statistical yearbooks providing statistical data to stakeholders facilitates analysis and monitoring-evaluation activities.

**Burkina Faso:**

- Several different documents were used in the analysis.
- The process was participatory, involving other key ministries, the PFT leader, CSOs, trade unions, etc.
- The educational standards which consider disability, gender and inclusion were integrated.
- Special attention is paid to gender funding.
- There is a gender appendix to the progress reports that are developed.
- There is a gender and inclusion department.
- Biannual and annual reports are produced on a regular basis, with all indicators disaggregated by sex.

**“Participating in this group exercise taught me about good practices implemented in other countries for gender mainstreaming in the ESP and their education systems. Upon my return, we will be in contact with the Ministry of Finance to begin a dialogue regarding our need for funding to implement transformative gender equality strategies for my country.”**

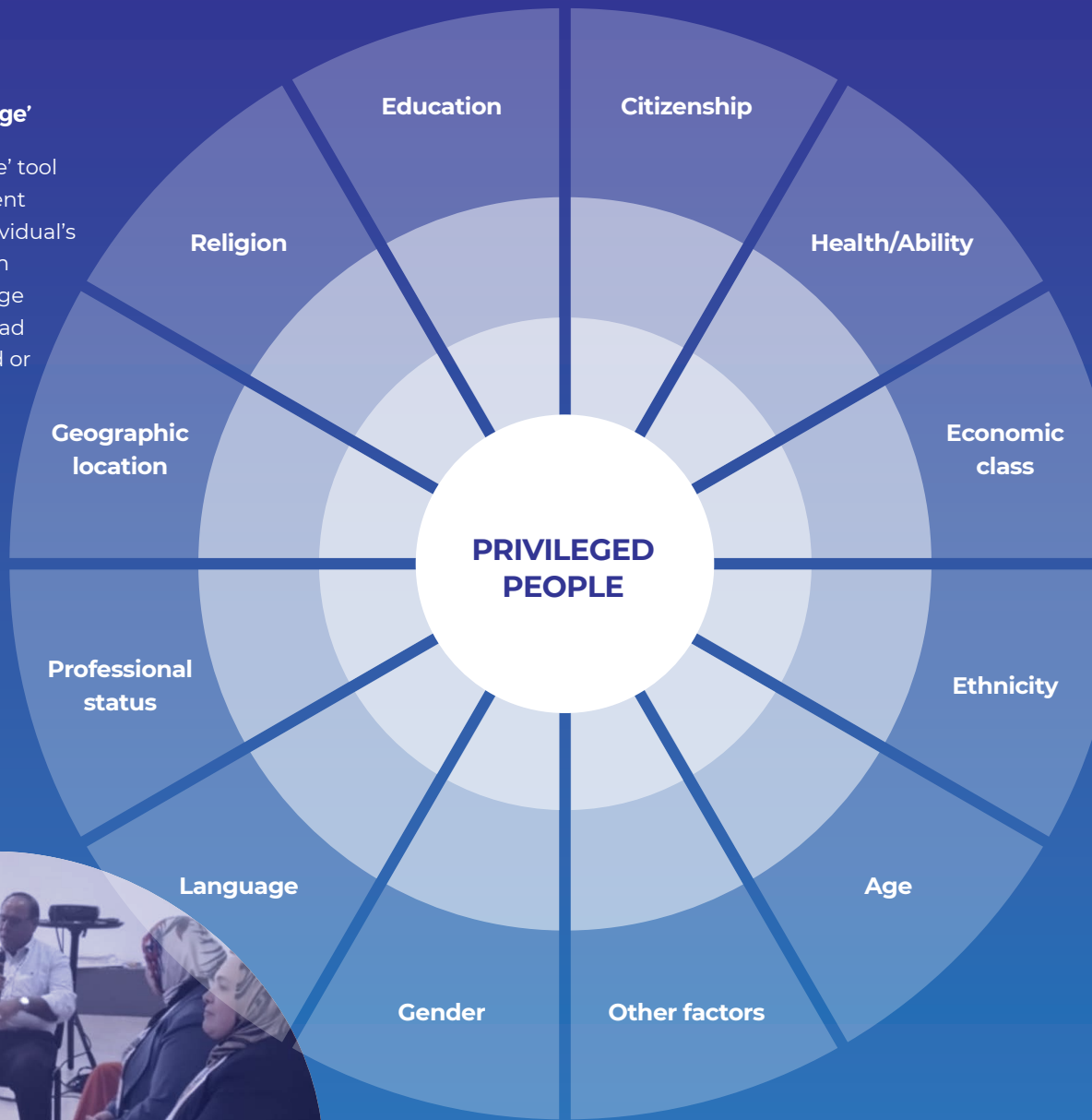
Samuel Ouanfio, Director General of the National Institute of Pedagogical Research and Animation (INRAP) Ministry of Education Central African Republic



Samuel Ouanfio, Director General of INRAP

### The 'wheel of privilege'

The 'wheel of privilege' tool shows how the different dimensions of an individual's identity can give them relatively more privilege in society as well as lead to being marginalized or excluded.



Roleplay on MoE-CSO negotiation to discuss problems affecting girls' education in the country



### Skills building - responding to resistance and intersectional analysis

During this session, participants were assigned to work in groups. Each group was asked to describe a specific situation in which resistance to gender equality had arisen but had been overcome through the power of negotiation and dialogue. Groups performed roleplays to train negotiation skills in gender equality. Situations included for example the gendered division of domestic tasks, CSO-MoE negotiations on gendered barriers to education, and gender discrimination within institutions.

# DAY 3

## Power Mapping Session

In developing a gender-responsive ESP, it is important to identify the levers and relationships we can use to gain access to specific decision-making spaces and influence them. Power mapping is a visual tool that the facilitators presented to show participants how they can identify the best individuals and organizations to target when advocating for gender-transformative education. UNGEI reminded participants of the existence of the [Freetown Manifesto](#) as a powerful advocacy tool to remind signatory countries of their commitments towards gender-transformative education.

## Presentation of GPE paper “Going Further Together: a Partnership Approach to Gender Equality”

Promoting gender equality in and through education is fully aligned with GPE's goal to support partner countries to develop their own pathway to transform their education system by identifying key challenges, implementing priority reforms and aligning all stakeholders to achieve results, as well as through specific funding mechanisms such as the Girls' Education Accelerator (GEA). GPE presented their strategy to hardwire gender equality in their partnerships with countries.

After the presentation and discussions, country delegations were invited to reflect on 2 or 3 things that can be done by each education stakeholder to strengthen the inclusion of gender equality in GPE processes.

The following suggestions were made for each type of stakeholder:

### Governments:

- Resource allocation
- Integrating gender issues into curricula
- Implementation and M&E involving all stakeholders

### GPE Secretariat:

- Providing guidance and direction
- Financial support
- Ensure the quality of the plan development process and its alignment with the country's realities, ensure that plan is developed in a participatory way, ensure that the right people are involved in the various processes

### Development Partners:

- Collaborate in terms of policy implementation.
- Technical support

### GPE Board:

- ESP has to be gender sensitive
- Facilitating the provision of technical resources
- Open to discuss on certain specific compliances existing in the country
- Provide financial support to CSOs so that they can work on accountability

### Grant Agents:

- Must have gender expertise
- Needs to have a gender-responsive budget
- Monitor gender-related indicators in implementation processes and share process experience

### Local Education Group:

- Call for contributions from young activists
- Presence of MoE gender focal points
- The GPE process must be an agenda item during meetings

### CSOs:

- Advocate for gender reforms
- Bringing evidence on gender inequalities
- Monitoring gender responsive budgeting



# PRESENTING COUNTRY ACTION PLANS

In this session, each country delegation presented their action plan to strengthen gender-responsive education sector planning within their country context. The action plans were elaborated throughout the workshop, based on the capacities and knowledge gathered during the sessions. Country delegations presented their plans, as well as immediate next steps for implementation upon their return to the country. Feedback on the presentations was provided by peer delegates. A WhatsApp group has been created to allow participants to share on the next steps of implementation of their action plans and continue to support each other as gender champions.

## Learning Day on GPE's Girls' Education Accelerator

An extra learning day was organized for 4 countries who are eligible to the GPE Girls' Education Accelerator (GEA) grant (Central African Republic, Mali, Malawi and Nigeria). The day's purpose was to apply the learning from the GRESP workshop to the drafting of the GEA application and share experiences in mainstreaming gender equality in GPE processes.

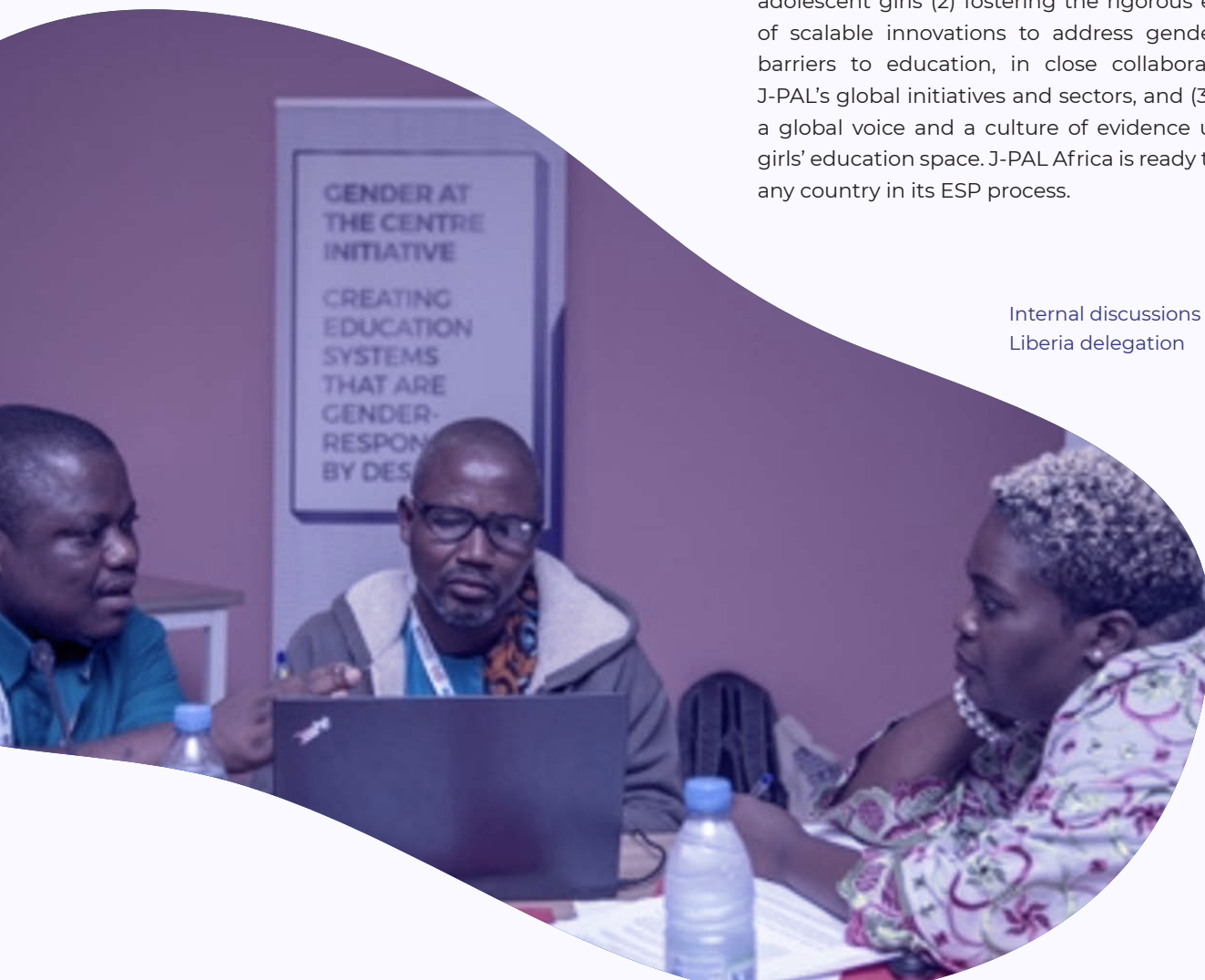
## GPE Presentation

Rachel Booth from GPE provided a detailed presentation on the GPE partnership approach to gender equality and created an opportunity for the delegates of the four countries to discuss on various issues related to GPE processes and the Girls' Education Accelerator window. Participants emphasized that the distribution of roles between the government and the grant agent could be made clearer and that it is important to have a transparent and collaborative selection process for the grant agent.

## Presentation of J-PAL Africa on evidence and data issues

Aminatou Seydou presented on the GE&E Portfolio at J-PAL Africa. The portfolio is an evidence-to-policy effort to improve the lives of adolescent girls in Africa by closing the gender gap, reducing early marriage and childbearing and supporting girls' transition into the labour force, as well as reducing GBV. The portfolio's mission is supported by three key pillars: (1) supporting the design and scale-up of evidence-informed policies and programs targeted at adolescent girls (2) fostering the rigorous evaluation of scalable innovations to address gender-specific barriers to education, in close collaboration with J-PAL's global initiatives and sectors, and (3) building a global voice and a culture of evidence use in the girls' education space. J-PAL Africa is ready to support any country in its ESP process.

Internal discussions within Liberia delegation



### Central African Republic's experience with mainstreaming gender equality in the GPE process

One of the objectives of the learning day was to allow delegations from countries that already applied successfully for the GEA to share specific learnings. Central African Republic shared their experience on their GEA application which led them to submit their document entitled "Fair and inclusive basic education 1 supported by qualified teachers and a transformed education system".

This presentation was followed by rich discussions. One of the issues being raised was related to the theory of change. From the exchanges, the theory of change of the ESP can be used within the framework of the GEA application development if it is gender responsive.

### Experience sharing from the groups.

Finally, delegations were requested to share any ideas/concerns with participants.

**Nigeria:** FAWE has developed 3 resources to support gender transformative education:

- Gender responsive pedagogy manual for teacher training,
- COE (Center of Excellence) relationships in school environment leading to gender responsive schools,
- Speak out (Girls' Club).

**Mali:** Zonal distribution of teachers (more in urban areas, but fewer in rural areas). It's more difficult to assign women teachers and school directors to rural areas. There are issues such as family reunification that need to be considered. In terms of taking gender into account in communities, using simpler terms that take account of local realities can be considered, so as not to offend community sensitivities.

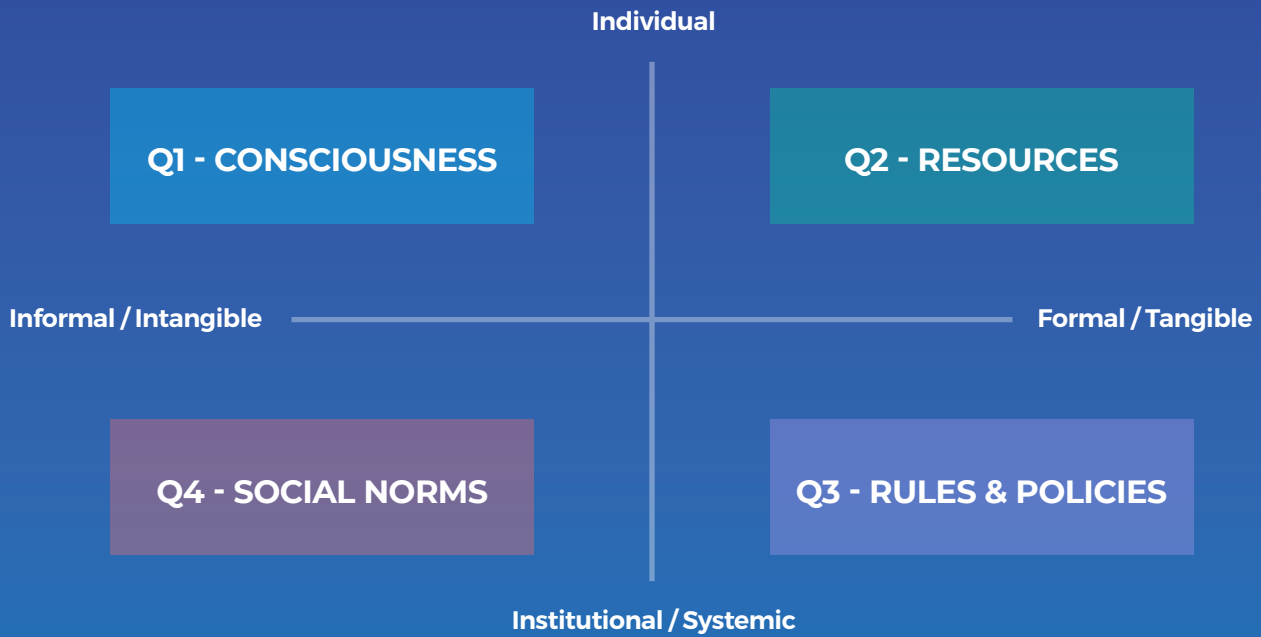
**Malawi:** The performance of schools in rural areas is affected also by the underrepresentation of women in the teaching workforce.



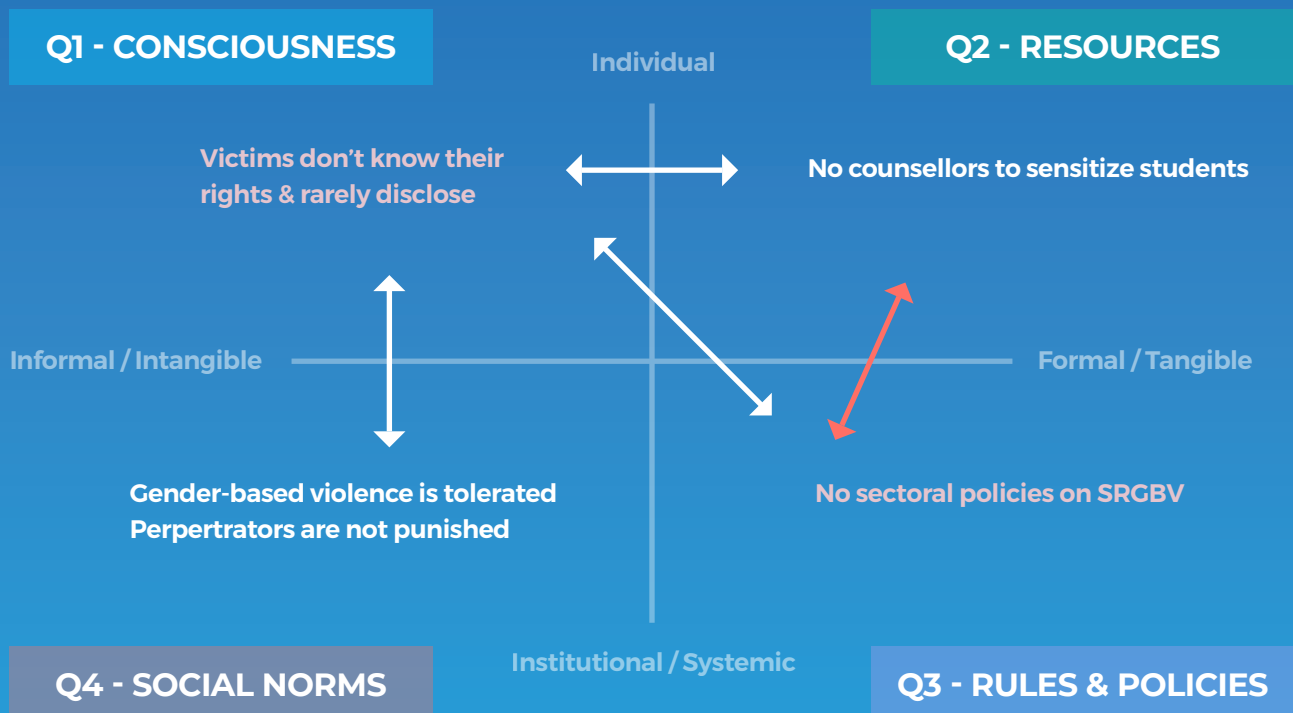
# ANNEX

Find here all the [presentations & tools](#) from the meeting with all the [photos](#).

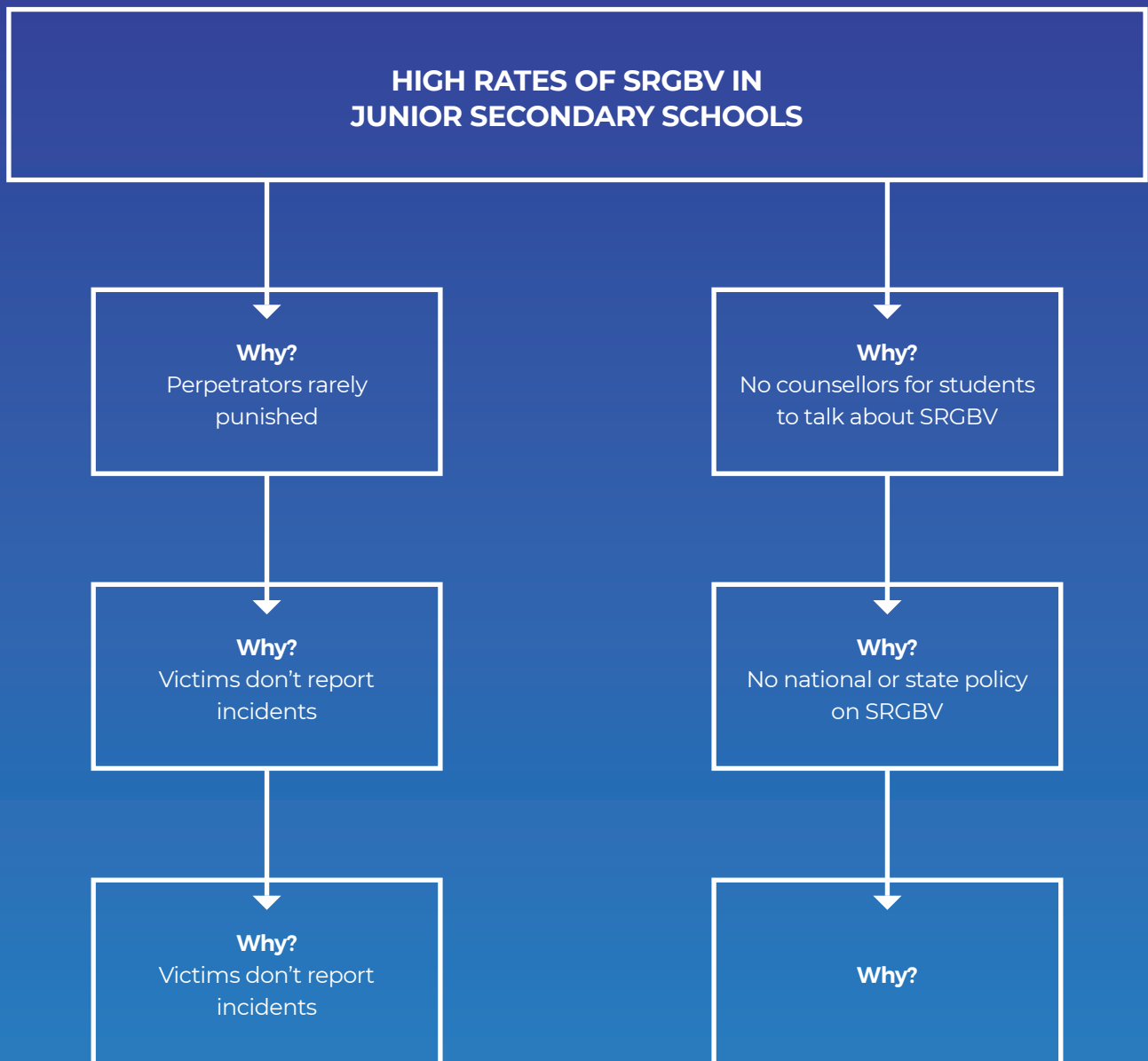
## A Tool for Analysis: Gender at Work Analytical Framework



## Example of a SRGBV analysis



Example of a “Why-Why” Analysis



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