United Nations Girls' Education Initiative

Making UNGEI Work: Lessons from Four African Countries

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Abbreviations

ABEK	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
AGEI	African Girls' Education Initiative
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AIEMS	Action to Improve English, Mathematics and Science
BEP	Basic Education Programme
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre (Zambia)
CBO	Community-based organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COBET	Complementary Basic Education for Tanzania
COPE	Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education
DCFPO	District COPE Focal Point Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
DVD	Digital video disk
ECD	Early childhood development
EDDI	Education for Democracy and Development Initiative
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education management information system
ESAMI	Eastern and Southern African Management Institute
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (of UNICEF)
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWEU	FAWE-Uganda
FAWEZA	FAWE-Zambia
GBEM	Girls' and Boys' Education Movement
GEM	Girls' Education Movement
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus
IDP	Internally displaced person
ISTC	In-Service Training Trust
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports

MOET	Ministry of Education and Training		SPARK	Skills, Participation, Access and Relevant Knowledge
MTN	Mobile Telecommunication Network		SPRINT	School Programme of Inservice for the Term
NGO	Non-government organization		UNDP	United Nations Development Programme,
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development Cooperation		UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
NUL	National University of Lesotho		UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
PAGE	Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education		UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
			UPE	Universal primary education
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper		USAID	United States Agency for International Development
PSI	Population Services International		WFP	World Food Programme
			WHO	World Health Organization
PTA	Parent–teacher association		ZIMFEP	Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production
RAPCAN	Resources Aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect		ZINTEC	Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course

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Introduction

girls' education has long been a particular concern to UNICEF and to the United Nations Secretary General. This volume contains a critical survey of four girls' education programmes in East and Southern African countries under the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). UNGEI was instituted by the Secretary General in 2000 to build on the work done by UNICEF under the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI), which began in 1994 and was operational in 34 countries. The intention was to strengthen and extend the successes of AGEI, making UNGEI a worldwide movement involving the whole of the United Nations in support of girls' education.

Lessons of AGEI

An evaluation of AGEI done in 2004 indicated its strengths and weaknesses (UNICEF Evaluation Office, 2004). On the plus side were its relevance to the needs of girls in Africa. AGEI helped to

AGEI gave gender equity a high profile in education policy and programming in many African countries. Its relevance stemmed from priorities and plans that were solicited from the ministry of education and other local authorities, rather than imposed from above.

shape UNICEF's education agenda in the late 1990s and it gave gender equity a high profile in policy and programming in many African countries. One reason for its high degree of relevance was that its priorities and plans were solicited from the ministry of education and other local authorities, rather than imposed from above. UNICEF New York only provided a reference framework.

Nevertheless, AGEI demonstrated some common features across countries in its emphasis on improving girls' enrolment, retention and learning achievement in formal basic education. Among the common threads were such activities as feeder or satellite schools,

girls' hostels, school feeding programmes, and provision of construction materials and supplies for infrastructure. Curriculum development and the development and distribution of instructional materials were also underlying themes, as were girl-to-

girl tutoring and teacher training. In most initiatives some degree of community participation was sought for the construction of the schools, for the promotion of girls' education and enrolment, and for the management of schools.

But non-formal education was incorporated as well, extending to "second chance" literacy development and vocational training for children who had never been to school or who had dropped out of school, as in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria,

Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. These programmes proved to be highly popular and highly successful. Only a few governments integrated such programmes into their budgets, however, with the result that during the AGEI period these non-formal programmes were largely marginalized.

UNICEF field staff found some strategies to be more successful than others. These included the provision of water and sanitation, food rations for girls, early childhood programmes, girls' education clubs, girl-to-girl tutoring, and the "Breakthough to Literacy" campaign. Other success stories involved second-chance school options and, in some locations, community school construction.

Other AGEI activities were considered by UNICEF field staff to be less successful than had been anticipated. Among these were construction of hostels and playgrounds and one-shot materials development.

A noticeable reaction in a number of countries was a backlash – there were accusations that UNICEF was emphasizing the education of girls instead of taking the more balanced approach of concentrating on the education of both boys and girls. UNICEF's response was that by making the school "girl-friendly" it also became "child-friendly", as girls were the most underprivileged of children in most societies. The focus on girls' education was clearly essential, as a less defined focus would have led to the neglect of many important aspects that could contribute to improving both access to and quality of girls' education.

There were a number of negatives. The evaluation pointed out that there was more emphasis on access and not enough on equality and quality. There was insufficient concern about efficiency,

There was a noticeable backlash in some countries – there were accusations that UNICEF was emphasizing the education of girls instead of taking the more balanced approach of concentrating on the education of both boys and girls.

i.e., cost-effectiveness. Issues of sustainability were not adequately addressed. Many excellent programmes were somehow not linked to government policies and plans; this was particularly true of non-formal education programmes. Monitoring and evaluation were inadequate, with the problem of "over-reporting and under-informing" (UNICEF Evaluation Office, 2004: 13).

Building on AGEI

Learning from the lessons of AGEI, it was envisaged that UNGEI would be broader, and would comprise many partnerships with a shared interest in gender and education issues. Thus partners would concentrate on their specialized areas of work, but would highlight a gender perspective. Girls' education would be utilized as a strategic way to bring in added value. Organizations that focused on educational policy development, for example, would include the gender perspective within educational policies. The gender focus would be utilized in health education and in water and sanitation: the gender dimension would bring a more precise perspective to the development programme as a whole. As different UN agencies would focus on various aspects of development, having all of them include the gender perspective in their analysis and implementation would build synergy for impact (UNICEF, 2003: 9).

UNGEI was thus intended to bring the gender perspective into all existing development programmes such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Fast Track Initiative, poverty alleviation programmes, Common Country Assessments and UN development assistance frameworks. Sector investment programmes and sector-wide approaches, as well as the NGO coalition, were others where the perspective would be mutually beneficial. UNGEI would provide leadership and networks, as well as joint advocacy, reviews, monitoring and evaluation (UNICEF, 2003: 9). Some of the features that had proved successful under AGEI, such as the minimum learning packages, school feeding, life skills and HIV/AIDS education, and water and sanitation, could be included under UNGEI (UNICEF, 2003: 12).

The four UNGEI programmes reported in this volume were in Burundi, Lesotho, Uganda and Zambia. The programmes shared some common characteristics, whereas other aspects were more specific to the national and local situation. Burundi, for example, has been in a state of internal conflict and emergency for a period of 12 years (1993–2005); despite this, it was able to implement a girls' education programme with some remarkable features. Zambia has not had any conflict or emergencies, and has had a girls' education programme known as the *Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education* (PAGE) running continuously since 1994,

a longevity that has enabled PAGE to become incorporated into the education system as a whole.

Shared Features of Successful Girls' Education Programmes

Some common features across the four countries included a pro "girls' education" *policy* framework and the involvement of *girls themselves*, along with their *parents and communities*, in the education programmes. There was an across the board emphasis on *quality* education, and *material and physical facilities* were provided. Governments and partners alike provided *financial support*. *Advocacy* played a large role. This contributed to the development of *partnerships* for girls' education and ultimately the *institutionalization* of reforms. These approaches are detailed in the following sections.

Pro "Girls' Education" Policies Were Introduced…

In all four countries the introduction of free primary education has enabled universal primary education to begin to be established. The policy of free primary education was introduced at different times over the last decade: in 1996 in Uganda, in 2001 in Lesotho, in 2002 in Zambia and in 2005 in Burundi. The free primary education policy has had a major impact on enrolment, particularly that of girls, and is the most important policy and strategy needed. Whilst free primary education may be seen as a gender

neutral policy, in actual planning and implementation it is essential to identify the specific groups of children that are deprived of education, in order to be able to redress these specific challenges successfully. Inevitably, the issue of barriers to girls' education will surface.

Policy frameworks include the disaggregation of data by gender, and the utilization of such data for decision making, such as for ensuring the 50/50 enrolment of boys and girls at Grade 1. The appointment where possible of both male and female teachers in schools and the balanced promotion of school managers and supervisors to include both men and women are policy measures that provide opportunities and role models. In addition, re-entry policies that allow pregnant girls and other dropouts to return to school, and the reorientation of textbooks, educational materials and teaching methodologies to remove gender bias are other aspects of a policy framework that has made it possible to focus on specific problems within the system of education.

Some successful policies and strategies can be readily adopted and adapted to many other countries. The Zambian system by which a male school principal always has a female deputy, and vice versa, is simple and highly effective. The single sex classes instituted in Zambia could well be replicated in many other countries where large schools are common, and even in

> In all four countries, parents were heavily implicated in the changes taking place in favour of girls' education – but more work is needed in all the countries to increase participation by parents and communities.

small schools single sex group work can be utilized. Single sex classes have been found to be an important means of breaking away from the sexual stereotyping found in many African cultures, where girls are expected to be passive and reticent in front of boys, and there-fore are obliged to take a less active role in learning.

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Girls Themselves Were Involved in Controlling Their Own Destinies…

One of the most important characteristics of the Lesotho, Uganda and Zambia programmes is the very high degree of involvement of the girls themselves in what they did and what happened to them. Peer education and peer counselling were important to the success of the Girls' and Boys' Education Movement (GBEM) in Lesotho, the Go Girls Programme in Zambia, and Girls' Education Movement (GEM) in Uganda. GEM was also introduced in Burundi, although it was operational only in the 56 UNICEF supported schools.
The empowerment of girls through GEM is a major achievement of UNGEI. Surprisingly, perhaps, GEM found support amongst parents and boys as well as the girls themselves. For parents, the integration of HIV/AIDS education into GEM was regarded as an important

preventative measure for protecting the girls: in effect it was seen as a form of "vaccination". Boys also were keen to participate in GEM in Lesotho, with the result that GEM became GBEM, the Girls' and Boys' Education Movement. The popularity of GBEM with boys as well as girls stemmed from the importance placed on peer education and peer counselling for HIV/AIDS testing in the programme: young people found these peer programmes very empowering as well as more relevant to the needs of teenagers.

Parents and Local Communities Were Deeply Involved in the Education Programmes…

The involvement of parents and the local community is known to be essential for an education system to succeed and for reform programmes to become sustainable. In all four countries, parents were heavily implicated in the changes taking place in favour of girls' education. Beginning with the traditional responsibility of parents for supporting the construction of schools through either monetary or labour contributions, some of the programmes were able to develop parental participation further.

In Zambia, parents were involved in their children's learning through the *Familypac* approach by which parents participated in overseeing their children's homework. Girls were involved in teaching their mothers literacy, whilst mothers were involved in teaching their daughters traditional Zambian cuisine through the FAWE-Zambia programmes. Parent–teacher associations in Zambia participated in decisions about on how bursaries would be awarded and how school grants would be utilized.

More work is needed in all the countries to increase parental and community participation in schooling and in education, building on the achievements already made.

There Was Emphasis on Quality Education…

UNICEF's definition of quality education has been incorporated into the "child-friendly school" framework utilized in a number of countries to monitor the quality of schools.

The definition entails the following aspects:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported by their families and communities.

- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and that provide adequate resources and facilities.

- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acqui-sition of basic skills especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.

The security of girls, especially the ending of sexual harassment, has been a key to success.

- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.

- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (UNICEF, 2000).

In all four country programmes described in this volume there was emphasis on improving the quality of education. Measures ranged from the improvement of the curriculum and teacher education, to improved textbooks, educational materials, classroom processes and school management. Quality improvements included the establishment of gender education in all teachers' colleges in Zambia, and the introduction of gender training modules in Burundi.

Minimum learning packages proved successful in all four countries in different ways: in Zambia the Ministry of Education provided textbooks to community schools and in Burundi UNICEF provided millions of dollars of basic textbooks for schools. A gender audit in Lesotho combined with a five-year education plan to remove gender biases within the education system. Meanwhile, in Uganda, the Breakthrough to Literacy programme scored some remarkable successes. The security of girls, especially the ending of sexual harassment, has been a major contributor to success.

Material and Physical Facilities Were Provided…

In all four countries some limited material and physical facilities were provided. These were seen as symbolic of the importance of the programmes. Water and sanitation were crucial inputs. Temporary as well as more permanent classrooms were provided, generally including a community participation and contribution aspect. The contribution of a teacher's desk by IKEA, the Swedish furniture company, for every school in Burundi is a good example of the symbolism of solidarity. An important issue is how far outside inputs are linked to local inputs.

Whilst some material inputs are essential, there is also the real danger of promoting a dependency syndrome. The syndrome was in fact evident in a number of instances, for example when schools failed to build their own toilet facilities, expecting donor agencies to do this for them, or when parents refused to

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provide any inputs, because "free education" meant that government must provide everything "free".

Financial Provision Was Made by Both Governments and Partners…

Dependable financial resources ensure that reforms can be sustained over long periods. This was not always evident, although in a number of cases donor funding was combined with government funding in a phased manner so that continuity would be guaranteed. In Lesotho the school feeding programme was a joint World Food Programme (WFP) and Government of Lesotho initiative, with school feeding being linked to free primary education. The school grants programme in Zambia began with UNICEF funding, but has now graduated into a state funded programme. Other donors are now contributing to the state funding.

Sustainability is essential for the long term. This means that programmes need to be cost-effective and affordable to both parents and government. It also means that donor agencies need to implicate both the communities and the government in financial responsibility for programmes from the beginning. Unless this is done, programmes may be doomed to die after a short period of success.

Advocacy Played a Large Role…

UNGEI encourages UN agencies to develop a joint communications strategy and in all four countries, advocacy played a large role. Advocacy with government and with parents and communities has proved to be very

important for establishing successful girls' education programmes. In particular the use of posters and especially of radio has been effective. Many countries, notably Uganda and Burundi, have a wide network of radio stations.

Partnerships Were Developed for Girls' Education…

UNGEI is premised on the formation of partnerships for girls' education. Partnerships may involve donors and government departments; government and non-government organizations; and governments and private enterprise. Partnerships between governments and parents and communities are singularly important. The most successful countries have been those where there were many players working together to achieve agreed upon goals. All four countries displayed a willingness to bring in as many partners as possible to achieve the goal of girls' education.

A notable partner in several countries was the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). FAWE-Zambia has played a highly influential role in promoting and implementing girls' education programmes. FAWE-Burundi has also done some seminal studies, while FAWE-Uganda has established a large-scale bursary programme and has been responsible for working out the content and processes of the highly successful GEM programme.

> It is important for girls to start school early because the onset of puberty leads to withdrawal of girls from school, mainly for security reasons.

Reforms Were Institutionalized…

Reforms may begin with a few dedicated champions, but in order to be sustainable, they need to be institutionalized into education policies, plans and budgets. The highest level of institutionalization was in Zambia, where the PAGE priorities and systems became integrated into the national education plan and budget. This was particularly notable because Zambia has had experience with a sizeable number of very good quality education programmes that somehow failed to be sustainable over a long period. In particular, there is need to institutionalize reforms such as those that have been demonstrably successful in providing formal education for girls through non-formal means, such as the Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE) programme in Uganda. The formal and non-formal education systems need to dovetail into each other in complementary ways.

Girls' Education in Conflict and Emergency Situations

Burundi and Uganda have both had to deal with conflict and emergency situations in large parts of their countries. Education in the two countries has continued to play an important role in providing a foundation for conflict resolution and for future development. Conflict situations provide opportunities for both positive and negative societal changes, and education can enhance the

transformation of the society in more positive ways. Some of the opportunities provided are described below.

Developing a Corps of Professional Women Educators

A common feature in conflict and emergency situations is the flight of women teachers from conflict areas. In camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in both Burundi and Uganda, most of the teachers are male. It is also common to find only male teachers in remote rural areas in Zambia. The lack of female teachers leads to many problems, such as the paucity of role models for girls and the sexual harassment of young girls by male teachers. In Uganda, there is a special promotion post for women teachers who are responsible for the welfare, counselling and guidance of girl students. This teacher, known as the Woman Teacher in Charge, plays an important role in GEM clubs. Because there may be no women in many schools, the post is often held by a male teacher in IDP schools and in remote areas.

In such situations only a few girls manage to complete primary schooling, and many of those who do are unable to continue to secondary school because of the distance to secondary schools or the relatively high fees payable for secondary education. There is clearly need for developing a career path for the few girls who do manage to complete primary education, so that they can continue to secondary education and further training. Such girls can be enlisted as teaching assistants or as assistants in early childhood education centres, and can be further educated

Stereotyping, including gender stereotyping, is a constant danger facing all societies, but particularly so for societies in conflict, where oppression and suppression have become a way of resolving differences.

through scholarships to boarding schools, along with a combination of distance education and holiday courses. If such a course of action was embarked on, it would be possible to develop a corps of women educators within a decade, and such educated women could have a strong impact on future development.

The Utilization and Training of Paraprofessionals

In most conflict and emergency situations there is a shortage of professionals. This may be because professionals have fled, or because the emergencies tend to occur in remote areas where such individuals are already in short supply. Trained personnel brought in from outside may be linguistically and culturally alien, and therefore may not be able to understand local values and priorities. One expression of this alienation is the tendency of such outsiders to exploit the young girls in the conflict areas, leading to prostitution, teenage pregnancies and early marriages.

An effective policy and strategy is to build up a corps of professionals within conflict and emergency areas, drawn from the local population. As such populations may not have a large number of people with secondary or even full primary education, it would probably be necessary to begin by recruiting para-

professionals and providing them with suitable pre-service and in-service training through a combination of short courses and longer-term distance education. There are a number of successful models for such training that can be utilized.

"School in a Box" Approach

The minimum learning package concept, popularized as the "school in a box", can be utilized in all schools where there is a shortage of teaching and learning materials. It is particularly relevant in conflict and emergency areas. Materials can be specially developed, in particular

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in local languages. Existing textbooks can also be made available or can be adapted.

Coping with Teenage Pregnancy and Early Marriage

In both Burundi and Uganda, the soldiers who are responsible for guarding the camps may also be responsible for teenage pregnancies. Sometimes the poverty stricken parents may encourage such unions through a system of teenage marriages, as marriage to a soldier may be seen as a way out of poverty. Given the frequency of such happenings in emergency situations, it is necessary to take steps to minimize them. An important and effective approach is to empower the girls to make their own decisions. GEM clubs have been found to be highly effective in Uganda in this respect, with endangered girls able to find support through their schools and GEM clubs. It is a major function of those who are responsible for these camps to ensure that young girls are not sexually harassed or exploited.

Education for Peace

Education for peace has played a significant role in secondary school education in Burundi. It can and should be expanded to provide training and skills development in peace education and conflict resolution to a much wider audience, including primary school children as well as out of school youths. In almost all African countries only a quarter of the age group is able to access secondary education. A country that has been beset with conflict may have a large number of illiterate youths. Instilling

the ability to try to understand the other's point of view, and to tolerate it, is an essential part of education. In particular, understanding the girl's and the woman's point a view is important. Stereotyping, including gender stereotyping, is a constant danger facing all societies, but particularly so for societies in conflict, where oppression and suppression have become a way of resolving differences.

Conclusion

The four case studies that unfold on the following pages offer lessons that can be useful in other countries. Whilst it is not possible – or even desirable – to replicate programmes slavishly, it is certainly possible to develop a framework through which girls' education can be planned and evaluated. All four countries have been implementing girls' education programmes for some years, often in very difficult circumstances. All four have been able to develop plans that can take girls' education forward. Lesotho, Uganda and Zambia have instituted a free primary education policy. The doubling of enrolments in the lower grades in Burundi since the introduction of free primary education in September 2005 augurs well for the future.

Universal primary education has little chance of surviving, however, unless the quality and relevance of education are maintained, and indeed improved. This is evident in a number of countries where enrolments have deteriorated. Universal primary education cannot be sustained without a high degree of commitment by parents and their involvement in various ways in decision making in schools. Schools can be seen as microcosms of future societies, and as such are critical institutions for development. The role of girls and women in the education system, whether this is formal or non-formal education, is pivotal.

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Burundi: Coping with Conflict

the civil war in Burundi finally ended in 2005, after 12 years of conflict, with the coming into power of a new government. Constant conflict had a negative impact across the economy. The percentage of people living below the poverty line increased from 35% in 1992 to over 60% in 2001. Access to basic social services was considerably degraded during this period (Niane, 2003: 8). Education was seriously affected, with a net enrolment of 48% for girls and 59% for boys.

There are more than 4,000 orphans in Burundi's 15 orphanages – and doubtless thousands more in the country-side – for whom formal education is not assured. Hundreds of thousands of children exceeded school entry age because of the war and youths who dropped out of school are in need of non-formal or informal education. School infrastructure was never adequate in the first place, but the conflict destroyed more than half of the school facilities.

This chapter looks in depth at the special challenges conflict and post-conflict recovery pose to education, especially the education of girls.

> Burundi's school infrastructure was never adequate in the first place, but the conflict led to the destruction of over half of the school facilities.

Poverty and HIV/ AIDS – Making Matters Worse

Conflict aside, the education situation in Burundi has been poor for some time. In the four provinces where UNICEF has been supporting girls' education, for example, the net enrolment ratios for 2003–2004 varied between 31.7% and 42.1%. There is a severe shortage of teachers and didactic materials for pupils. On average three children share one textbook. Achievement levels and the quality of teaching are reported to be low. Repetition rates are high for both girls and boys: 28.4% for boys and 30% for girls in 2002–2003. The dropout rate

Children having children is a common occurrence in Burundi's IDP camps

is 4.4% for boys and 5.3% for girls in the same year (UNICEF, 2004a: 6–7).

Poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic make a bad situation worse. Burundi has a population of 7.2 million, of whom 3.6 million are estimated to be children under the age of 18 years. An estimated 200,000 children were unable to attend school in the school year 2003/04 as their families were too poor to pay the school fees. Although women represent 52% of the Burundian population, 72.6% of them are illiterate, while 51.6% of men cannot read or write. In total, 66% of the population is illiterate. Over 500,000 uneducated youths are subject to economic and social exclusion because of their lack of education, abject poverty and the rapidly spreading HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Approximately one in five (20%) of the country's urban population and 6% of

the rural population are HIV positive. Infection rates of girls aged 15–19 are four times those of boys of the same age. Many adolescents, particularly girls, lack basic skills to inform themselves on important health issues, like HIV/AIDS prevention. The necessity of strengthening the non-formal education system to address the urgent needs of uneducated adolescents, including those who will be demobilized and reintegrated into society, and the expected return of over 200,000 child refugees from Tanzania puts even greater demands on the already weak education system (UNICEF, 2004a: 3).

History of the Girls' Education Initiative in Burundi

The Ministry of National Education has identified the following barriers to girls' education:

- *Cultural factors:* Traditional values place higher priority on sending boys to school and on early marriage of girls, especially in rural areas.
- *Socio-economic factors:* The majority of Burundian households are poor and poverty has increased since the 1993 crisis. School fees are on the increase and families cannot afford the direct and indirect costs of education.
- *Lack of infrastructure:* Low capital investment in salaries, maintenance and supplies has resulted in dilapidated school infrastructure and a lack of adequate teaching materials. The shortage of class-rooms means that many children

who wish to enrol cannot be registered.

- **Safety and security issues:** Girls often have to travel long distances, which is untenable because of the precarious security situation. Early pregnancy is a widespread phenomenon in primary and secondary schools, and teachers and school officials are often implicated.
- **Gender stereotyping:** Girls lack positive role models in education and gender stereotyping is prevalent in household dynamics, community structures, within the classroom, and in school books and materials.
- **Impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic:** Many adolescent girls have been forced to become heads of households as a result of the loss of parents and close relatives to HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2004a).

Against this background, the Girls' Education Initiative (GEI) began in Burundi in 2001, led by the Ministry of National Education and supported financially and technically by UNICEF. UNICEF had established the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) in 1994,[1] and Burundi became part of this Africa-wide movement. The goal of the initiative was to close the gender gap in education. To accomplish this it intended to eradicate disparities and sexist discrimination within the education system and it sought to protect the education of girls in situations of crisis and conflict and in the post-conflict period. In general, AGEI aimed to eliminate the factors that lowered the demand for education for girls.

The strategies adopted were:
- Supporting the development and formulation of policies in favour of girls' education in national action plans, studies and through advocacy.

- Supporting the emergence of new complementary non-formal approaches to education of girls.
- Strengthening community participation, particularly of parents, in education.
- Strengthening dynamic partnerships among government, non-government organizations (NGOs), collective groups, families and international organizations for the benefit of girls' education.
- Revising the curricula and sensitizing teachers on gender issues.
- Contributing to the reduction of school costs for parents.
- Improving the learning environment (Niane, 2003: 11).

The programme was established in 56 schools in four of the poorest provinces in the country: Karusi, Kirundo, Muyinga and Ngozi. The gross enrolment ratios (GER) in these provinces were much lower than the national average, even though the provinces were not within the conflict zone. The teacher–pupil ratio was high, varying from 1:49.6 to 1:96.2 in 2000/01. A year later, however, in 2001/02, the teacher–pupil ratio had improved, particularly at the higher end, with a range between 1: 45.6 and 1:70.9 (Niane, 2003: 12–3).

The Girls' Education Initiative came under UNGEI in January 2005, when UNGEI was officially launched by the Burundi Minister of Education in the presence of five other cabinet ministers: the Minister of Social Action and Women's Promotion, the Minister of Skills Development, Technical Training and Adult Education, the Minister at the Presidency Responsible for HIV/AIDS, the Minister of Planning and Development, and the Minister of Works and Social Security. All of these ministries pledged their support for

UNGEI. This created a direct link between the ongoing Girls' Education Initiative and UNGEI.

In that year as well, the success of the first provinces prompted the expansion of the programme to a further three provinces to try it out. Two-day workshops were held in each of these new provinces, bringing together all provincial government, NGO, and community and other opinion leaders, whose participation is critical to the success of the initiative. UNGEI is fundamentally grounded in local, provincial, national and international partnerships.

An important partnership is the one with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) of Burundi, a non-government organization. FAWE-Burundi's programme contains the following elements:

◆ Advocacy for policies that promote girls' education and the empowerment of women.
◆ Sensitization of local leaders, parents, communities and the girls themselves on the importance of female education.
◆ Prizes for high achieving girls.
◆ Training in life skills.
◆ Publication of articles in the national language journal, *Tujijuke,* which focuses on issues related to girls' education, and organizing journalists to support girls' education.
◆ HIV/AIDS education and support for girls who have been left with the responsibility for looking after parents who are afflicted with AIDS. They have produced manuals and posters for girls and teachers and concentrated on peer education.
◆ Training women leaders.
◆ Research including a study of enrolment figures with special

> In Burundi, GEI included aspects of hygiene, human rights, psycho-social support for women and children who needed it, economic growth and poverty reduction, and the culture of peace and good governance.

emphasis on girls, a study on the barriers against girls' education in 2002/03 and a study on gender stereotyping within the education system.
◆ Radio programmes.
◆ Micro-projects.[2]

FAWE priorities fit well with those of GEI, whose programme also included advocacy, community mobilization, a media campaign and the introduction of gender in the target schools. GEI also supported research studies that could be utilized for evidence-based policy formulation, the improvement of the physical environment in schools including water and sanitation, classrooms and textbooks, and establishment of girls' clubs. An emphasis on monitoring and evaluation intends to keep things on track.

It is important to note that the Girls' Education Initiative took a broader approach than education alone. It aimed at the reduction of malnutrition, provision of HIV/AIDS education, and better access to water and sanitation. It also included aspects of hygiene, human rights, psycho-social support for women and children who needed it, economic growth and poverty reduction, and the culture of peace and good governance. For sustainability, the initiative sought to improve the quality of teaching, strengthen teacher education and

improve the management of the education system. The underlying philosophy was that the education system, in particular the education of girls, must have an impact on development as a whole.

This philosophy, as conceptualized within the Burundi context of an ethnically based civil war that had lasted more than a decade, placed great emphasis on the potential of education to improve democracy and governance. Education was seen as making a critical contribution to building national consensus and providing an impetus for development. The Girls' Education Initiative includes achieving durable human development as well as interaction between several basic social services:

- It is generally accepted that it is not possible to have development in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance.
- Development programmes, for example in health, that do not take into account education cannot have a durable impact.
- Education can contribute to poverty mitigation in many different ways; girls' education is bound to assist in poverty reduction.
- Improvement in basic health care and nutrition has a positive impact on learning and productivity. Amongst women in particular, increased education leads to improvements in the area of health.
- Poverty reduction allows people to redeploy their resources for learning, self care and environmental improvement (Niane, 2003: 11–2).

For women in particular, increased education leads to improvements in the area of health.

Gender Training Modules

A significant aspect of the Girls' Education Initiative in Burundi is the work done by the Ministry of National Education to train teachers and other educators on gender issues. The Ministry established a focal point for the Initiative in the person of Josephine Banguramboma, President of the UNGEI Committee and Director of Pre-School Education. Under her leadership a series of five training modules was developed for use by teachers, teacher trainers and secondary school children.

Targeted specifically at teachers who are dealing with adolescents, the modules are highly creative and detailed. They use a range of methodologies, including group work, plenary sessions, reading selected texts, use of videos, writing, analysis, synthesis and practical exercises. They provide a very important support to the classroom teacher on how to deal with the challenges faced by girls and women within the context of Burundi. Since only about a quarter of the population actually access secondary education, however, it is important to examine how these excellent modules can be adapted to the primary school. The content of the five modules is described below.

Module 1 – Setting Objectives

Module 1 deals with forming personal and professional objectives, managing time, solving problems, and making decisions. The formation of personal and professional objectives is a highly ambitious and difficult undertaking. It

deals with establishing certain ways of thinking and working. Although the module starts off in a rather abstract and intellectual manner, it is dealing with an extremely important set of knowledge and skills. The module begins by encouraging the teachers to try to understand themselves through introspection. It emphasizes the need for getting adequate rest and taking care of one's own physical, emotional and psychological health. It includes exploring personal strengths and resources, as well as overcoming personal weaknesses. Through this self-examination, the teacher, and later the students, will be able to work out personal objectives within a system of values. The emphasis is on teaching by objectives: that is, the teacher identifies exactly what must be achieved, and then teaches towards achieving these objectives. Finally, the teacher and the student can evaluate whether these objectives were attained.

The second theme is that of time management. This involves trying to distinguish between the essential and the peripheral, and concentrating more time on the essential. It seeks to train the teacher to utilize time carefully. It also emphasizes the need to alternate between different types of activities. The third theme is that of problem solving and decision making. Each participant identifies a problem related to gender and how it was tackled. This is then shared with the neighbour and eventually with the class as a whole. An exercise in identifying gender problems within the education system includes trying to identify possible solutions.

In seeking to deal with such fundamental but extremely difficult challenges, the Ministry of National Education has opened the way to tackling real-life problems faced by

teachers and pupils within their milieus. This module can be utilized in many other francophone countries. It can also be translated for use in other languages. There is clearly need for further development of the issues handled in this first module, particularly those related to personal development and understanding of oneself, forming one's own objectives, identifying problems and working out how to solve them. The existing module is designed to cover about eight hours of learning, but can surely be expanded to a more in-depth teaching and learning programme.

Module 2 – Human Rights

Module 2 concentrates on basic human rights, with specific emphasis on the rights of children and women. The module is extremely important in terms of applying human rights to an African context, within the real challenges faced by girls and women in Burundi. The different themes covered are:

◆ Theme 1: Protection of human rights at the international level.
◆ Theme 2: Protection of the rights of the girl and the woman by the United Nations.
◆ Theme 3: Protection of human rights at the level of the Africa region.
◆ Theme 4: The rights and duties of a woman in the divorce process.
◆ Theme 5: Ways of improving women's rights.

The aim of the module is to enable students to become familiar with the various United Nations documents on human rights. Some of the documents are studied in detail, for example the fact that the Beijing Platform of Action deals with 12 domains: poverty; education and training; health; violence against women;

Gender training starts early

armed conflict; the economy; decision making and power sharing; institutional mechanisms to promote equality; women's basic human rights; the media; the environment; and the girl-child. Students study these documents in small groups and then discuss them within the Burundian context, for example with reference to sexual violence and child abuse or by comparing the African Charter on Human Rights with Burundian laws that deal with women's rights. By presenting a number of locally applicable case studies and bringing human rights to the African and national level, the module enables students to look for local applications of human rights.

An interesting aspect of this module is the inclusion of areas that concern girls and women in Burundi, such as marriage, widowhood and divorce proceedings, with an emphasis on the woman's rights and obligations. These are very important issues within the African context, and indeed within the world context. In particular, some forms of African traditional law may deprive widows and divorced women of all property rights and even of rights over their children. Inheritance laws may contradict human rights.

The last theme in the module deals with possible ways of improving the economic welfare of women, including possible opportunities in the formal and non-formal sectors. This includes looking at possible forms of credit open to women.

Module 3 – Coping with Personal Problems

This important module presents innovative approaches to coping with some of the most pressing questions faced by adolescents. The central issue is reproductive health, with emphasis on:

- Theme 1: Self-knowledge.
- Theme 2: Self-confidence and self-respect.
- Theme 3: Family life education and population education.
- Theme 4: The management of problems linked to puberty.

The module deals with the physical, psychological and emotional changes characteristic of puberty. It includes Piaget's stages of development, with pre-adolescents being somewhat more limited to concrete concepts, whilst adolescents are more capable of abstract thought. It introduces teachers to the basic principles of guidance and counselling, including how to assist students to formulate a programme of study, to explore and develop values, and to experience success in school. It

introduces an innovative methodology through which different groups work within a circle that they identify with a location, for example, the home, and work out the problems faced within that location. From that identification of problems, the group goes on to examine the relationships between the home and the outside world, and the ways in which problems can be solved. Important issues such as group dynamics and social mobility are tackled. Methodologies include role play and different forms of communication, such as debates, films, videos, poems, stories, etc.

One of the problems addressed in the module is undesired teenage pregnancies, including methods of contraception. Adolescent girls are helped to understand their right to say no. Sexual problems faced by teenagers are dealt with, with specific focus on local case studies including sexual violence, sexual harassment, teenage sex, incest, relations between male teachers and female students, female genital mutilation, and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Module 4 – Sex or Gender?

Module 4 makes the distinction between sexual or biological differences and socially determined gender differences. In the classroom, teachers may subconsciously continue to perpetuate gender prejudices through their teaching methodologies. This module endeavours to sensitize teachers to gender issues and gender stereotypes, in terms of how to handle students in their classrooms. Skills are divided into cognitive skills and socio-affective skills. The aim is to enable teachers to develop a more positive approach to the teaching of girls, by creating more favourable conditions for the education of girls. The intent is to

change the way teachers treat girls in the classroom.

The themes covered are:

- ◆ Theme 1: The gender approach.
- ◆ Theme 2: Sexual stereotypes.
- ◆ Theme 3: Equity between the sexes in the school.
- ◆ Theme 4: Gender differentiation in society.
- ◆ Theme 5: Participatory classroom methodologies.

Under methodologies that will help girls to learn better, the following are proposed:

- ◆ Help each pupil to accept individual differences.
- ◆ Give each one every opportunity possible to make regular contributions to different class activities.
- ◆ Help each individual to understand and accept realities such as differences of race, religion, economic status and physical differences.
- ◆ Organize the work in such a way that the capacities of all members of the class are utilized, and do not be content with calling on only the boys.
- ◆ Demonstrate assurance and openness of spirit, by always explaining clearly what is expected of all pupils.
- ◆ Be attentive to individual and group problems and contribute to their solution.
- ◆ Use self-discipline in education and active methods of teaching.
- ◆ Encourage pupil participation.
- ◆ Provide positive reinforcement when possible.

Module 5 – Gender Equity

The last module looks at how gender equality can be established in health and education, in the socio-economic plane, in employment, in the legal field, and in

politics. The module is intended to promote greater participation of women in public life. The themes are:

- Theme 1: Level of participation of women in public life.
- Theme 2: Obstacles and barriers to women's participation in public life.
- Theme 3: Ways to improve the participation of women in public life.

Under women in politics, for example, the module notes that women number only 0–17% of the leadership of political parties in Burundi. Women comprised between 6% and 17% of parliamentarians over the period 1982–1998 and took just 3.7–5.03% of decision making posts in government.[3]

Women's participation in industry is insignificant, which is not surprising in a context where three-quarters of women are illiterate. Most women are in primary production, mainly in agriculture. Women are well represented in health and education, however, and there is good participation of women in lower levels of commerce, banking and tourism, but not at higher levels.

In terms of equity, the module looks at equal opportunities as well as at equal outcomes. Unless the opportunities are tailored to the characteristic features and experiences of each gender, equal opportunities may not lead to equal results. The module identifies five levels of progress necessary for women's empowerment:

- The first level is the improvement of the conditions of life for women. Women remain passive recipients, but resources can be made available to improve their standard of living.
- The second level comprises access to factors of development, such as land, inputs, credit, work and services. Women presently do not have equal access to education and

they do not have equal opportunities in other areas.

- The third level is social awareness through which the inherited discrimination against women can be questioned. The discrimination is systematized and institutionalized. Recognition of inequality between men and women is part of ideological development.
- The fourth level is participation. Presently women do not participate in many of the decisions that affect them. Project development should therefore involve the participation of women in needs assessment, problem identification, planning, implementation, management and evaluation.
- The last level is that of control. Presently women do not control the product of their labour in Africa: this is controlled by their husbands. If women have equal control over the factors of production, they will have achieved economic equality.

Gender Stereotypes in Burundi's Primary Education System

A study on gender stereotyping in primary schools was undertaken in 2003. It was jointly supported by the Ministry of National Education and FAWE Burundi. The study showed that there was a high degree of stereotyping in the way primary education was organized, beginning with enrolment. Because of the shortage of school places, boys were given preference to girls in Grade 1 enrolment and older children aged 9–11 were given

preference to younger children aged 7–8. As a result, both boys and girls reached puberty only a few years after joining school. This situation is particularly deleterious for girls, as the onset of puberty leads to withdrawal of girls from school, mainly for security reasons. There is a marked dropout of girls from Grades 2–5. Girls who remain until Grade 6 are aged 15–18 and are already preparing for marriage (Sinzinkayo, 2003: 20–1). One of the important recommendations made in the study is to enable children to begin school at the age of 5–6, so that girls can actually complete primary schooling before puberty.

Among the physical barriers to girls' education are the situation and structure of toilet facilities at the schools. Toilets are often located very far from the classroom, they usually have no doors and they are utilized by outsiders passing by the school. Thus the toilets can be considered a hazard for pubescent girls, who are not only teased but also sexually harassed and assaulted when they go to the toilet. In many schools in Burundi, girls go to the toilet in pairs, with one girl standing guard.

The Impact on Leadership, School Participation and Play

In the schools visited, 65% of management and 89% of the teachers were men. Student tasks were divided by gender, with girls being responsible for toilet cleaning and cookery, and boys for cleaning the grounds and the windows. Gender defined other responsibilities as well: girls do the sweeping and fetch water, and boys park the teacher's motorbike and write on the blackboard. Games are similarly divided by sex, with

boys playing football and participating in athletics, and girls skipping, playing hand games and dancing. Boys are given military training, during which time girls gather wood, fetch water or look for fresh vegetables (Sinzinkayo, 2003: 21–2).

It was noted that in schools where boys outnumber girls, the girls appear to be uninterested in school. Teachers did not call on girls to answer questions. On the other hand, in schools where there was an equal number of girls, the girls were more active. Seating arrangements in the classroom could disadvantage girls, for example when a girl was sand-wiched between two boys or relegated to the back of the classroom. When girls were seated by themselves in the front of the classroom, they tended to participate more actively. Apparently this is because boys are encouraged by their mates to prove they are better than girls, and are likely to physically attack a girl who appears to be a rival, such as pushing her off the bench or punching her.

Another point made in the study is that girls are so encumbered with domes-tic work, particularly in double session schools, that they have little time for homework or for study. Girls arrive late to school because of their household duties.

Gender stereotyping was common in some textbooks, particularly those based on traditional culture. In the illustrations, men and boys have more prominent roles. Women are pictured doing house-work, while men are shown bringing peaceful resolution of conflicts, in public affairs or looking after cattle – tasks that are considered important within the society. Men are making decisions, whilst

> Girls are so encumbered with domestic work that they have little time for homework or for study.

girls and women are accepting the decisions made on their behalf, for example the girl does not have the freedom to choose her own husband, as the father decides based on the wealth of the man. Girls and women are depicted as less capable and less intelligent. Gender stereotyping appears even in mathematics textbooks, with people being given their traditional roles: men are traders, entrepreneurs, managers, drivers, and directors; women are clients, housewives, farmers, mothers and

It appears the worst stereotyping is in the songs taught in school. In these songs girls are praised for being obedient to authority; a woman loses the esteem of her husband; the woman is seen as an object for monetary exchange, and at the mercy of her future husband – her family only regrets her leaving because they lose a domestic worker; girls are asked to obey their in-laws; a woman is encouraged to treat her husband well and to resign herself to her duties without revolting (Sinzinkayo, 2003: 28–9).

Teachers display gender prejudice within the classroom, adopting the gender stereotypes found in the textbooks without further reflection. Girls are seldom asked to participate in class or to answer questions. Younger male teachers are very often accused by older teachers of sexual harassment of the students. There is a tendency for boys and girls to tease and insult each other, with boys in particular making rude remarks about girls. There are often fights between boys and girls.

In the case of girls becoming pregnant, the girl is blamed and expelled from school. Her mother is also blamed for not having brought her up properly. The boy or man responsible for the pregnancy is not usually penalized in any way.

Recommendations for Change

The study makes a number of recommendations to Government, to the Ministry of National Education (MNE) and to supporters of the Girls' Education Initiative:

Recommendations to the Government

- Organize a sensitization campaign for legislators, curriculum developers and textbook writers, teachers and education leaders, taking into account that gender stereotyping within the school system is transmitted principally through the process of socialization based on agents such as parents, teachers, classmates and neighbours, through identified vectors such as the family, the school, textbooks and pedagogic supports, language, games, art, music and religion.
- Ensure that gender aspects are taken into account, not only in education policies and legislation, but also in development programmes and policies.
- Put into place legislation establishing free and compulsory primary school education for all Burundian children, in order to improve girls' enrolment and to contribute to combating certain stereotypes underlying the under-enrolment of girls in school.
- Reduce the school starting age to 5–6 years so girls can stay in school longer.

Recommendations to MNE

- Review school regulations and adapt to take into account gender issues, notably to permit girls who fall pregnant to return to school.

◆ Undertake a revision of school organization, teacher training programmes; textbooks and teachers' manuals, to make them more balanced in terms of gender, in order to ensure gender equity at school and to improve enrolments in Burundi. On this point, it is necessary to devise a specific guide for the elimination of gender stereotypes in all school textbooks and didactic materials adapted for Burundi, and targeting the people in charge of curriculum development.

◆ Insist that those responsible for education at all levels, in particular the inspectorate and the teacher educators, take into account the gender aspect in the administrative and pedagogic evaluation of school activities.

◆ Conceptualize and popularize master plans for new school construction that will take gender concerns into account.

◆ Increase and improve the infrastructure and school equipment in deprived provinces because raising girls' enrolment depends on this.

◆ Review double sessioning to include a period of study in the school each day or at least at the weekends, as this will help girls to have more time for study.

◆ Support community schools as this type of teaching has contributed in a

Education is essential for kids who are displaced by conflict

remarkable way to increased enrolment at primary and at secondary school.

Recommendations to Supporters of the Girls' Education Initiative, such as UNICEF

◆ Support the Ministry of National Education in its efforts to promote girls' education, notably to extend this study to secondary education.

◆ Carry out such studies in different regions.

◆ Assist the government to organize a Girls' Education campaign before they undertake a total reform of education so that gender can be taken into account.

◆ Continue to support the Girls' Education programme, FAWE and other NGOs that support sustainable human development, in particular the education of girls (Sinzinkayo, 2003: 44–5).

Back to School – With a Focus on Refugees and IDPs

More than 12 years of internal conflict have led to a situation in which about a million children are not at school. Life in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) is characterized by low school performance, especially by girls; poor nutrition and lots of illness; high levels of

dropout; girls leaving school to become domestic workers; a high pregnancy level from soldiers; and little being done to prevent HIV/AIDS infection. Children in the camps include refugees and displaced children, as well as indigent children whose parents were made paupers as a result of the conflict. In 2002, there were 350,000 Burundian refugees in camps in Tanzania, with a further estimated 400,000–500,000 illegal immigrants in Tanzania. In addition, there were 387,000 displaced people in 226 IDP camps. Many of the refugees and displaced persons have now begun to return to their homes.

The Government of Burundi has addressed some of these challenges with its Back to School Campaign, which promised free primary education in September 2005. Through this campaign enrolments in the early grades doubled overnight, with the resultant problems of overcrowded classrooms and high pupil–teacher ratios – and a shortage of funds that has made it difficult to employ more teachers. Nevertheless, as a result of the Back to School Campaign about half a million children were able to return to school or to start school for the first time in 2004. The plan for 2006 is to bring a further 510,000 children to school.

A teacher training programme has been established to train about 2,000 unqualified teachers and to update a further 2,000 already qualified teachers in gender issues, utilizing the five gender training modules developed by the Ministry of National Education. There is a large number of potential teachers among refugee populations, and these may be fluent in English as they have lived and worked in Tanzania for more than a decade.

Through the plan, existing schools were expanded to cater for returning refugees and displaced persons. For IDP

camps specifically a national plan of action was established to support the access of children in the camps to emergency schooling. This has been focused on nine priority and emergency provinces. It is estimated that another 2,234 classrooms, 74,755 desks and 2,234 teachers are required. UNICEF has supported the repatriation programme through the provision of water and sanitation, temporary school rooms, and textbooks and other educational materials, plus special programmes to promote girls' education. The key strategy was to sensitize the teachers and the community to the needs of children traumatized by conflict and displacement.

A key intervention was the integration of school feeding into schools generally. Most of the returning children are suffering from various levels of malnutrition. This is an important area of work for the Government, the World Food Programme (WFP), international donors, local communities and school authorities. Local interventions can include school gardens and school cum community organization of the meals.

The international community has partnered with the government in other ways, as well, by supporting free primary education through the publication and dissemination of textbooks, the provision of school furniture, and construction of both temporary and permanent classrooms. The system of partnership between the Government of Burundi and the donor community on education, chaired by UNICEF, has begun to operate effectively to deal with the educational problems.

Other important partners are non-government organizations including religious organizations, which were encouraged to provide educational services. For example, the Roman Catholic Church has provided a type of

non-formal education known as *Yaga Mukama* that offers illiterate youths a basic education that spans five or six years, at a pace of two or three days per week, depending on the diocese. *Yaga Mukama* has served over 500,000 youths in the country since 1992, but as a system appears to lack coherence, with insufficient teaching and learning materials and qualified teachers. It also has inadequate supervision. Steps have been taken to strengthen the programme.

HIV/AIDS and peace education are being promoted. The HIV/AIDS packs are linked to life skills, gender issues and reproductive health education. These materials must be gender sensitive as they will integrate positive messages and pedagogical approaches to stimulate girls' learning. The peace education programme was initiated in 1994. Teaching and learning packs have been developed and distributed on these issues, and teachers have been trained. Whilst the peace education programme has been highly successful according to some indicators, it has succeeded in reaching only a small proportion of the population, mainly those who have managed to access secondary education. As only about a quarter of the children who complete primary education are able to find places in secondary schools, it is clear that this programme is far too small to achieve a critical mass. In particular, there are large numbers of illiterate and semi-literate youths who have not even been able to attend primary schools. HIV/AIDS education, the Girls' Education Initiative and the Peace Education Programme will need to reach this larger group as well.

The UNGEI structure has been utilized to promote special protection measures for girls of school-going age, with the provision of technical and financial support for the identification, formulation and implementation of education activities that focus on the teaching and learning process that would promote girls' education and the mainstreaming of gender and equity issues.

Girls' education is seen as a vehicle for reconstruction and development. One of the objectives of the girls' education programme, in particular of the girls' clubs, is to build the self-confidence of girls. Girls' clubs to strengthen peer education were established in the 56 schools supported by UNICEF under the UNGEI programme. So far these clubs do not exist in other schools. The life skills component of the curriculum is being strengthened to respond to the needs of girls: their own rights and aspirations versus culture and community pressures, growing up, pregnancy, life choices, HIV/AIDS.

Other strategies include:

- Encouraging and building capacities of communities to take responsibility for the school enrolment of children in their areas.
- Mounting an early childhood development (ECD) pilot project to give special attention to young IDP children in five provinces in preparation for their schooling. In these provinces it is planned to train caregivers to provide integrated childhood care for 5,000 young children aged 3–6 in the IDP camps.
- Undertaking emergency construction of both permanent and temporary school structures, in combination with the provision of textbooks and other school materials. UNICEF has been leading in this area, including its "school in a box" approach. It is of interest to note that a Swedish furniture company, IKEA, has

donated a teacher's desk to almost every school in Burundi, a wonderful show of solidarity.

FAWE Burundi offers a small number of scholarships to girls. It is clear that this is an important strategy that should be provided on a large scale by a combination of Government, donors, NGOs and local communities. It could make a tremendous difference to girls' education in Burundi if the current tiny programme were brought to scale. Another area requiring urgent attention is the quality of learning, in view of the sudden expansion of primary education. The monitoring and evaluation of learning should therefore play an important part in the Back to School movement.

The Education of Adolescents in Burundi

Many adolescents are unable to attend school, and therefore do not acquire minimum basic learning and life skills (UNICEF, 2004a: 2). Yet adolescents constitute a tremendous force for positive change in Burundian society. Poorly educated and illiterate youths can also be a force for social and national destabilization. They may be unable to participate positively in and influence what is happening within the society, and may therefore indulge in risky and destructive behaviours. Risks include HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseaseas (STDs), early marriage, unwanted pregnancies and abortion, and the lack of economic opportunities. Other risks are exposure to exploitation and

Young people have something to say – and need to be heard

abuse (both within the family and outside), use of tobacco and other drugs, violence and accidents, and poor nutrition.

There are few available services for adolescents in Burundi and even if there were, most adolescents do not have the skills or opportunities to benefit from such services. Many will definitely miss adolescence forever, as a result of the war. Youths in such a situation may be easily attracted into training by insurgency groups, and to values and behaviours that may endanger stability.

Amongst these youths are child soldiers who need to be reintegrated into school or vocational education structures. They have grown up in a volatile environment characterized by violence and political instability and there is a danger that their attachment to para-military and military insurgencies may be renewed if they are neglected. The rehabilitation and reintegration process for former child combatants imposes a special burden on the educational system. Life skills training offers a means of directly addressing problems in school resulting from inappropriate behaviour learnt while with the military forces and can be instrumental in preventing the transmission of STDs among adolescents.

Among the rare national associations that have clout to address the needs of these youth is the Scouts Association of Burundi, which has, with UNICEF support, developed a peace education programme articulated in the "Let us build peace" project.

The reintegration of youths into society to enable them to take up employment and play a progressive rather than a retrogressive role in the future development of Burundi poses an extremely grave challenge to the country. Strategies that could help to ensure the inclusion of young people in the recon-struction, peace building and nation building programmes that have now begun, include:

- Providing a wide variety of basic literacy, life skills and vocational training programmes targeted at youths. This can include formal education, non-formal education, informal education, utilization of the mass media, utilization of youth clubs, etc. As these adolescents may not fit into existing primary school systems that handle much younger children, special programmes should be established either within existing schools[4] or in special schools.[5]
- Broadening peace education to include non-formal education activities of adolescents, the mass media, especially the utilization of radio, community programmes, etc.
- Making local communities aware of the needs of their youth and

involving the communities in the rehabilitation of youths to enable young people to play a positive role in nation building.

- Providing specific training and capacity building for teachers and others such as social workers, police and juvenile justice personnel who work with adolescents and youth.
- Sensitizing young people, both boys and girls, to the negative effects of gender stereotyping and ways of counteracting gender discrimination.
- Developing a better understanding of the situation of adolescents and youth by collecting specific age and gender disaggregated data.
- Promoting wider awareness among adolescents of global issues of development and justice within the education sector, the media and civil society.
- Supporting the development of suitable teaching/learning materials, disseminating such materials, training teachers, orienting NGOs and communities, etc.
- Developing and supporting programmes that promote the learning needs of youths in respect of their social responsibilities, preparation for adult roles and other appropriate life skills.
- Strengthening the capacity of young people to participate in and contribute to their own self-

realization and development of their communities and societies.

- ◆ Expanding and improving the quality of HIV/AIDS education in the context of the life skills programmes (UNICEF, 2004a).

Lessons Learnt: Girls' Education in Conflict Situations

Periods of extreme suffering, for individuals or nations, often precipitate major changes. When nations go through such periods, the old order and old institutions become weakened and may even be destroyed. Conflict and emergency situations thus offer the possibility of change – change for the worse or for the better. This potential for transformation can be utilized to bring about some of the much needed changes in favour of girls' education.

Burundi offers lessons on how to turn a negative situation into an opportunity for growth. Specifically, the lessons relate to strengthening education, particularly the education of girls. Among the lessons learnt from the Burundi programme are to:

- ◆ **_Ensure a sound policy framework:_** One of the most important steps is the development of policies, strategies and plans within the Ministry of National Education in support of girls' education. This entails both political and technical support. It is essential that there be sufficient technical expertise within the Ministry of National Education to formulate and implement realistic policies and plans for high quality education. There is a danger that the

expansion of education will lead to a lowering of educational standards. If, for example, the free primary education policy results in low quality primary education for all, this will constitute a step backwards rather than forwards. It is possible to develop technically sound expanded educational programmes at affordable costs. There are a number of successful models of this worldwide.

- ◆ **_Involve the media:_** Strong media campaigns can be launched during this period to promote girls' education, including the organization of days of sensitization and information on girls' education. This has already been tried with some success in the provinces where UNICEF has been working. In particular the utilization of the local language and of radio can be very powerful. The media campaign on girls' education can be combined with other focal areas such as peace and conflict resolution, education and skills training, health and nutrition education, HIV/AIDS education, etc.

Radio can be a powerful ally for positive change. Burundi boasts some 20 radio stations, including educational radio. Radio offers the opportunity for widespread as well as low-cost formal and non-formal education, and can be utilized creatively, combining music and drama with education. Radio can also be combined with distance education to provide in-service upgrading and training for teachers, primary and secondary school education for children and youths who have missed out on schooling, and non-formal education for adults.

- **Train the teachers in girl-friendly principles:** Teacher education is a key to transformation of the education system. Burundi has pioneered the development and utilization of five excellent modules in support of mainstreaming gender into education. These modules have been widely used for in-service teacher training. They can also be utilized for pre-service teacher training. The Ministry of National Education and FAWE-Burundi have worked on uniting women teachers in support of the Girls' Education Initiative, and this is one of the most important strategies.

- **Transform the curriculum and the teaching and learning materials to remove gender bias and promote peace:** The curriculum, particularly the school textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, needs to be transformed. The old curriculum and school materials in Burundi incorporated many traditional feudal concepts and values that are inimical to gender equity and gender equality, and to modern forms of development as a whole. A programme to improve and modernize textbooks, with special emphasis on removing gender bias and inculcating more democratic values, can be a valuable

contribution to developing a more progressive education system in the long run.

- **Bring communities on board:** The involvement of the community in planning and decision making in the school was started within the Girls' Education Initiative. This has concentrated mainly on improving the infrastructure and environment, but could be extended in phases to include educational programmes for parents, particularly for mothers, that will link up to what their children are studying in school. Useful topics can include population education, conflict resolution and micro-financing, which are covered in the teacher training modules. Other areas are child care, hygiene and nutrition. Such non-formal education programmes could be developed specifically for parents. Community involvement provides the most important foundation for education, and should play an important part in the organization of the school system. Already some provinces in Burundi have set up local fund raising systems to support education, and this has enhanced community involvement.

- **Give community schools the resources they need:** A school grants scheme could be introduced progressively in phases. This can strengthen local, especially parental, responsibility for the education of their children. There are a number of models. The common basis of successful models is the establishment of a needs assessment system within the community. Other important aspects are the setting up of a simple

accounting and banking system as well as simple ground rules for the utilization of funds; a regular monitoring and evaluation system, preferably annually; and a dollar for dollar approach to encourage local fund raising to complement government and donor support. Community inputs can be in the form of labour and materials.

- **Institutionalize change at all levels:** The establishment of UNGEI committees at national, provincial and communal levels provides important support for the Girls' Education Initiative, in particular bringing together professional women and government officials to support the programme.

- **Involve girls in decision making on issues that affect them:** The utilization of peer group education in the form of girls' clubs complemented the efforts made through the formal education system. Presently girls' clubs are found only in UNICEF supported schools. They can be expanded to cover all schools.

- **Involve as many partners as possible:** Burundi involved non-government organizations such as FAWE-Burundi to assist it in implementing its Girls' Education Initiative. It also partnered with religious organizations and traditional groups, such as Boy Scouts. This partnership between the Ministry of

National Education and non-government organizations enabled the programme to cover more ground more rapidly than if Government had tried to exclude other players. Moreover, these NGOs brought additional comparative value, as they belonged to organizations that had knowledge, skills and experience in various related educational fields. Churches were also able to bring in additional funds for school construction.

- **Enlist the donor community:** The Girls' Education Initiative was able to gain the support of the donor community. UNICEF is the coordinator of the donors who support the free primary education for all, and this new policy is extremely important for girls. A sector-wide approach to educational planning that brings all partners to the table is a useful mechanism for ensuring good coordination between the Ministry of National Education and donors.

◆ **Ensure the continuity of schooling for conflict affected children:** The construction of temporary classrooms and the supply of basic school materials through the "school in a box" approach had a significant role in reminding communities of the importance of continuity in education and enabling them to start new education programmes without waiting for more permanent structures. Whilst permanent school buildings are important in the long run, it should be emphasized that education is about developing cognitive and affective skills, and not only about establishing physical structures. The development of such skills cannot be delayed, and should be an integral part of emergency programmes. Education is as fundamentally important as water and sanitation, and schools should be established as soon as possible. The provision of school supplies is one of the most basic needs.

◆ **Provide special support structures:** The establishment of early childhood development (ECD) centres close to primary schools can be beneficial to girls, as girls are often kept at home to look after younger siblings. ECD centres can provide some hours of relief to girls, so enabling them to go to school. Bursaries for girls, even on the very small scale of the scholarship programme run by FAWE-Burundi, can also go a long way towards getting girls into school and keeping them there. The establishment of many more such programmes will be an important input to improvement of both access and quality of education for girls.[6] School feeding, linked to

improved and gradually increasing community responsibility for such programmes, is important as well. A partnership between WFP and the local communities through a state supported system can be strengthened.

◆ **Incorporate girls' education into poverty reduction strategies:** Many countries, including Burundi, are establishing poverty reduction programmes. It is important that girls' education be integrated into these programmes, as neglect of this issue has a major impact on all forms of development.

◆ **Ensure that education is relevant to other development concerns and priorities:** Linkages can and should be established between education and a wide array of other social concerns – nutrition, health, water, hygiene and human rights. Education can play a role in the psycho-social rehabilitation of women and children, economic growth, and building a culture of peace and good governance. All these improvements can have a positive impact on girls' education – and the quality of education in general – through their integration into the curriculum and through teacher education. Equally, attention is required to improve the quality of teaching, improve teacher education and improve management of the education system.

◆ **Keep your professionals connected:** One of the effects of conflict and emergencies is that people such as teachers and educational specialists become cut

off from the rest of the world. UNICEF has played a role in ensuring that educators continue to have some professional contact with their colleagues in neighbouring countries. This is a useful and low-cost intervention that can help improve efficiency and morale, whilst at the same time establishing much needed linkages after peace is established.

Conclusion

Burundi has had more than a decade of Education for Conflict Resolution and Peace programmes. While the impact of these programmes has not been properly evaluated, it appears that they have contributed to the resolution of the problems. It is likely that such programmes will continue to be important in the future, and should be improved as well as expanded to cover primary education and youth education through both formal and non-formal routes.

The experience of Burundi shows clearly that conflict and emergency situations can, and often do, continue for long periods. Education should be regarded as an essential priority throughout such a period. Education, dealing with the intellectual, psycho-social, emotional and character development of the learners, cannot be neglected without bringing about even greater difficulties once the conflict and emergency have ended. Children who have been brought up in a situation of chaos, who have been abused and whose education has been neglected, are likely to continue to be a problem. It is therefore imperative to ensure that education is provided from the beginning.

Conflict and emergency situations also provide opportunities to rethink the education system, and to provide better quality and more relevant education at affordable costs. One of the problems that may have led to the conflict in the first place is the neglect of a sizeable proportion of the population in terms of basic, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities. Many countries inherited expensive education systems that catered only for a small elite.

Refugee and IDP camps can and often do provide good, relevant and cost-effective education for all. Thus the conflict and emergency situation provides an opportunity to revisit the elitist form of education of the past, replacing it with a more democratized approach to education. The back-to-basics approach that is often required in such situations can be adapted for use after the end of the conflict. An example is the basic materials for good classroom teaching embodied in the "school-in-a-box" concept. This concept, developed to cope with the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda, is applicable in all situations, including after the cessation of hostilities.

The development of high quality gender training modules for teachers is one of the major achievements of the conflict period in Burundi, and these modules can be utilized in many other francophone countries (and translated for use elsewhere). At the same time, it is necessary to develop modules for utilization in primary and secondary schools, as well as for youths in non-formal settings. Burundi's experience shows clearly that the development of appropriate and imaginative teaching and learning materials can take place even during conflict periods.

Notes

[1] The African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) was initially funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA/ACDI), the Norwegian Government and other donors.

[2] Based on interview with Beatrice Nijebariko, National Coordinator, FAWE-Burundi.

[3] Module 5, pp. 9–12.

[4] An instructive example is the Complementary Opportunity for Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) programme, which has now been institutionalized into ordinary primary schools. COBET offers an accelerated primary education programme for older children. This can be terminal or it can offer the opportunity of going on to secondary education.

[5] In Zimbabwe, nine schools were established after Independence by a non-government organization, the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP), with government support to provide education and training for adult war veterans, former child soldiers and former refugee children. These students were able to obtain both a suitable academic education, with some going on to university, and job training in a number of trades such as carpentry, building, metalwork, agriculture, tailoring, tie and dye, etc.

[6] Zambia and Lesotho have both established successful scholarship programmes at primary and secondary school levels. In Zambia, scholarships are offered by both government and non-government organizations.

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Annex

Meetings and Interviews

UNICEF
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Cherif Benadouda, Programme
    Coordinator
Lawalley Cole, Education Programme
    Officer
Lea Harerimana, Education Section
    Secretary
Tomoko Shibuya, Assistant Education
    Programme Officer
John Virtue, UNICEF Consultant on
    Sector-Wide Approach to Planning

Gatumba III Primary School
Malaba Pelagje, Headmistress
Albert Sinzotuma, Vice Chair, Parents'
    Committee
Leonard Nkurunziza, member of Parents'
    Committee
Pierre Bigirimana, member of Parents'
    Committee
Jacqueline Ndarusanze, member of
    Parents' Committee
Lamtable Yamwari, member of Parents'
    Committee

Nutritional Centre of Gatumba
Aimable Kvuye, Director

Mirango Primary School
Jean Claude Ruberintwari, Principal

Government of Burundi
Honourable Alice Nzomukunda, 2nd Vice
    President of the Republic of Burundi
Honourable Saidi Kabeya, Minister of
    Education
Josephine Banguramboma, President of
    the UNGEI Committee and Director
    of Pre-School Education
Corinthe Nzohabonayo, Provincial
    Director of Education, Bujumbura

Non-Government Organizations
Beatrice Nijebariko, National
    Coordinator, Forum for African
    Women Educationalists, Burundi

Lesotho: Reaching Boys as Well as Girls

Unusual among African states, Lesotho apparently has more girls and women enrolled at almost all levels of education in the country than boys and men. The exception is at senior secondary level.[1] One reason for this disparity is that boys are expected to herd cattle, the main source of wealth in the country. Many boys are thus unable to go to school as children and on reaching adulthood, may go to South Africa to work as miners. Girls, on the other hand, if they are not needed for labour in the house or as housemaids, may be allowed to attend school.

The absence of boys, rather than girls, in Lesotho schools quite logically propelled the evolution of the African Girls' Education Movement into the Girls' and Boys' Education Movement –

> Lesotho is unusual among African countries because it has more girls and women enrolled at almost all levels of education in the country than boys and men.

GBEM. This chapter looks at Lesotho's education sector strategic plan, a gender audit conducted by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), and a study of child domestic workers, and then pulls the threads together in an in-depth discussion of GBEM.

School Enrolment in Lesotho

More than half – 51% – of pupils at primary education level are girls. In 2000, however, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was 90.1% and the net enrolment ratio was 64.4%, indicating that fully a third of Lesotho's primary school age children are actually not in school. Enrolment in urban areas is much higher than in remote mountain areas, where schools may be located at a great distance over mountainous terrain.

Girls maintain their lead at the junior secondary school level: in 2001 57% of the students were girls.[2] There is a high dropout rate of girls at senior secondary

school, however, which may indicate that in the near future more boys than girls will qualify for university and for tertiary education. The reasons for the dropout of girls at this level appear to be mainly financial: 71.4% of school dropouts cite financial problems such as lack of fees, uniforms and food as the cause of dropout. A further 4.4% say they had to go to work to support their families. Pregnancy and early marriage affected another 5.8%, whilst 4.2% were herd girls (GOL and Expanded Theme Group, 2005: 33).

At tertiary level, women still outnumber men slightly except in technical/vocational schools, where there are more men.

Another factor in the overall low enrolment rate is the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has hit Lesotho hard. An average of 23.5% of the population is HIV positive, with 26.4% of women and 19.2% of men affected. Younger women are disproportionately affected: 7.9% of 15–18-year-olds and 24.2% of 20–24-year-olds are HIV positive (see Table L1). This, along with poverty, has had a big impact on Lesotho's enrolment ratio. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has left a substantial number of children orphaned – an estimated 100,000 out of the total of 180,000 orphans in the country (UNICEF, 2005: 2).[3] Orphans are often deprived of basic rights like education and may be subject to abuse by caregivers. Girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys.

In a study of 10–20-year-olds attending school, 20.7% of boys and 17.2% of girls had one or more parents dead (GOL and Expanded Theme Group, 2005: 10). Only 51.1% of the young people live with one or both parents (GOL and Expanded Theme Group, 2005: 22). A large percentage do not live with their parents; 26.3% live with both

parents, 20.4% with their mother and 4.4% with their father. To some extent this situation reflects the shared responsibility for children that typifies traditional society, with many children living with the extended family in urban areas whilst their parents remain in remote mountainous areas where schooling may not be available. It may also signal the possibility of children being abused when they are separated from the biological and legal parents, who are more likely to take full responsibility for them. The proportion of children living by themselves is high: one in five for boys and one in seven for girls (GOL and Expanded Theme Group, 2005: 23).

The data in Table L1 indicate that HIV/AIDS has a disproportionate effect on girls and women, reflecting their weaker socio-economic power in the society as well as their greater biological vulnerability to infection. The figures also show that the majority of men affected are within the 30–44 age group, the most productive years of life, when most men

Table L1: HIV prevalence rates by age and by residence, 2004–2005			
Age	Women	Men	Total
15–19	7.9	2.3	5.3
20–24	24.2	12.2	19.5
25–29	39.8	23.9	33.3
30–34	39.3	41.1	40.0
35–39	43.3	39.1	41.8
40–44	29.1	33.9	30.6
45–49	16.8	26.2	20.0
Total	26.4	19.2	23.5
Residence			
Urban	33.0	22.0	29.1
Rural	24.3	18.5	21.9

Adapted from Table 16, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Bureau of Statistics, Lesotho *Demographic and Health Survey 2004 – 2005*, Maseru, 2005.

are working in the mines in South Africa, and returning home for holidays or for retirement. Women, on the other hand, become infected at a much younger age, including a significant proportion of teenagers. These younger women are infected by older men, showing a cross-generational pattern of sexual activity.

The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS within the society means that virtually all families are affected in some way, and there is serious anxiety to work out ways to address this challenge. The pandemic has had an impact on traditional attitudes and values, particularly in giving young people, including girls and young women, more of a say in decisions that affect them. Whereas in the past male elders had a greater role in making most decisions, today young people are more insistent on being heard. This is partially due to education, with young people being more educated than their parents and grandparents. It is also partially due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, where those most likely to be affected by the disease, the young, now have to take more responsibility for what happens to them.

Lesotho is a low-income country, characterized by high unemployment, as the country is not sufficiently industrialized to absorb most of the school leavers. At the same time, the South African mines appear to be absorbing fewer workers than in the past. As a result, most Lesotho school leavers remain unemployed, unless they are fortunate enough to gain a place in a tertiary education institution.

A Gender Audit conducted for the Ministry of Education and Training and UNICEF confirmed that the country's value system is highly traditional, placing greater value on boys and men than on girls and women. This is evident in looking at the power structure in most institutions, including the education system. For example, despite the fact that in both 2000 and 2001, 16% men and 84% women qualified as teachers, male primary school principals constituted 51.3% and female principals 49.6% in 2002 (Abagi, 2004: 24).

The Gender Audit also showed that the school curriculum and textbooks perpetuate gender stereotypes, and that much work is needed to redress this inequity. One of the major contributions of the audit was an analysis of the policy framework – including the 2001 Strategic Plan for education, as well as the sector's legal environment and governance, including budget allocation. Overviews of the Strategic Plan and the Gender Audit are presented in the following sections, as is a summary of a third influential document, the Child Domestic Workers Study.

Education Sector Strategic Plan and Free Primary Education

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) completed an Education Sector Strategic Plan in 2001, with the main aim of providing a free primary education programme. This plan intended to:
- Improve access, enrolment and retention up to Standard 7;

> Free primary education combined with free lunch is likely to have a strong positive impact on the development of the country as a whole.

- Develop equality of opportunity and equity of achievement;
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and the nature of classroom interactions;
- Develop curricula and models of assessment that ensure human, practical and vocational relevance;
- Decentralize the existing infrastructure and develop the human resource base supporting primary education; and
- Create appropriate linkages between primary education and other sub-sectors in order to establish sector-wide planning (Abagi, 2004: 4).

The subsequent Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005–2015, launched in 2005, is more comprehensive and aims at achieving universal early childhood development, including ten years of basic education for all and some preparation through secondary education, technical and vocational training, and life-long learning. The plan also intended to improve the quality of the curriculum, teacher training and classroom teaching to achieve more learner-centred teaching and learning and to rehabilitate school facilities.

The introduction of free primary education is a monumental step in any country, and clearly absolutely essential for the establishment of education for all. In the case of Lesotho, it was introduced in 2000 and has been combined with a free lunch service at every school. The free lunch has been introduced incrementally grade by grade, and aimed to reach Standard 7, the last grade in primary school, in 2006. The programme has the support of the World Food Programme (WFP) and is an extremely important input, particularly for orphans and children from poor families.

The partnership among the WFP, the Government and the parents is especially significant for a country where hunger is a serious challenge for a substantial number of children. Moreover, the food is prepared by the school community, involving parents in the preparation. Thus the school has become a source of employment for members of the community, as the cooks are paid for their services. Free primary education combined with free lunch is likely to have a strong positive impact on the development of the country as a whole.

The Gender Audit (2004)

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) embarked on a gender audit in 2004. This important study, based on the Forum for African Women Education-alists' guidelines (FAWE, 1997), covers a number of important areas of the Ministry's work, including the policy framework, legal environment, and governance and management of educa-tion. The audit also considered gender gaps in participation in education from early childhood to university level, gender gaps in performance, and gender sensitivity in the curriculum and learning materials. It looked as well at distances from school, the school environment, and HIV/AIDS and the education sector. From these it drew several conclusions.

Significantly, the audit recommends

that not only should primary education be free, it should also be compulsory. Whilst free education has now been introduced in about half a dozen African countries (out of a total of 53 African countries), very few countries have made primary education compulsory.[4]

The Gender Audit cites some key concerns that require redress and action:

◆ Policies and practices for recruitment, placement and promotions that are based on traditional gender perceptions and practices and the disadvantaged position of women.

◆ Conditions of service that take insufficient account of the special practical and strategic gender needs of women arising from their biological and socially-determined roles in their households and communities.

◆ Violent working environments, including sexual harassment of employees, especially women.

◆ Management structures and practices that do not ensure equity in opportunity for women and men and do not promote fair treatment for the disadvantaged.

◆ Lack of an effective framework for affirmative action and the management of gender diversity by gender, class, position and geographical location.

◆ Lack of an effective management system to deal with sexist and gender resistance from both male and female employees.

Education managers, principals and teachers have generally not been gender sensitive or gender responsive, not perceiving gender as a problem.

◆ Lack of gender responsive mechanisms for mentoring, career appraisal and management development training.

◆ Organizational and management cultures that promote masculinity and tend to be hostile to women employees (Abagi, 2004: 13).

In addition to the adverse effect of extreme poverty on the education of children, the mountainous terrain and scattered population also pose a serious challenge. The Gender Audit recommends the establishment of boarding schools (primary and secondary) in each rural mountain region. These schools should be equipped and inspected regularly to act as centres of excellence.

Another challenge to education for all is that of children with disabilities: schools and communities have not been well prepared to cope with such children, and special measures need to be taken to ensure that their welfare is guaranteed. In addition, sexual harassment, assault and corporal

punishment are still common in many schools, and require urgent redress. The Gender Audit recommends that MOET should provide guidelines within six months for what constitutes sexual harassment and assault and widely distribute these guidelines to education authorities, teachers, students, parents and school communities.

The Gender Audit further recommends strengthening the gender conceptualization and implementation of the strategic plan. This would include gender analysis, mainstreaming gender courses at the Teacher Training College and the National University of Lesotho (NUL), and making gender courses compulsory for all trainees. It would also involve training curriculum developers and teachers on how to promote and implement gender equity programmes with emphasis on mathematics, science and technology courses. Special institutions should be set up to ensure that the MOET incorporates and implements a gender policy combined with realistic, practicable strategies within its strategic plan.

The issue of suitable water and sanitation facilities in primary and secondary schools requires attention, so that schools become healthy, community-centred environments. These concerns need to be incorporated into the MOET's priority areas. Special focus on the toilet needs of menstruating girls is known to be a significant factor in keeping girls in school.

Gender issues have not been important in the management of the

In one primary school the majority of the members of GBEM clubs were orphaned and vulnerable children.

education system in the past. Education managers, principals and teachers have generally not been gender sensitive or gender responsive, not perceiving gender as a problem. Parents and communities have also been insensitive to gender issues. Moreover, local communities have not played a large part in the management of their schools, in particular in monitoring the participation of both boys and girls.

In order to increase participation in education, the Gender Audit recommends special steps to be taken regarding teenage pregnancy, such as allowing girls to be re-admitted into school after delivery and penalizing teenage fathers in the same way as teenage mothers are penalized by suspension for a year before re-admission. In this connection the Audit advocates dismissal and prosecution of teachers who impregnate schoolgirls, prosecution of adult men responsible for teenage pregnancies, and counselling for the affected students. The Audit also recommends giving girls and boys life skills training in order "to empower them to be responsible and committed to their learning and higher achievement" (Abagi, 2004: 36).

Child Domestic Workers Study

One of the important pieces of research sponsored by UNICEF Lesotho has been a study of child domestic workers (Mokuku, 2004). Net enrolment figures show that a third of primary school aged children are not in school, and the main reason for this is that young children join the working force at an early age, boys as herd boys and girls as domestic workers. The fact that there are about

A third of primary school aged children are not in school, mainly because young children join the work force at an early age.

180,000 orphans in the country makes the issue of child labour a highly pertinent one. Whilst it is recognized that education is an inalienable human right, in fact vulnerable children such as orphans may be deprived of this basic right.

Using methodologies that are suited to children, such as dramatization, diary keeping and interviews, the study found:

◆ Some adults regarded children's rights as somehow undermining their authority as adults.

◆ Drama can be utilized as a mirror of society, enabling both children and adults to reflect on reality. One example of this is a village chief who, having witnessed a play by the children, confessed that he had never thought about the plight of working children before, and was considering it for the first time.

◆ The children themselves suggested that radio was a very good medium for them for education and for information about HIV/AIDS.

◆ Working children were very keen on education, but were unable to go to school because of their working conditions. One way open to them was non-formal education, including literacy classes. Ways in which formal and non-formal education could dovetail with each other in a complementary fashion are urgently needed.

◆ Domestic workers are often the confidants as well as the victims of their employers' emotional problems. This places domestic workers in a vulnerable position, as employers with some emotional and relational problems may dismiss child workers peremptorily (or abuse them).

◆ Domestic workers do not often have formal contracts or job security. They are an "unseen" labour force that can easily be exploited.

◆ There was evidence of sexual abuse by some employers. The children themselves may not be aware of the Sexual Offences Act of 2003, which they could utilize to protect themselves. There was need to disseminate knowledge about this legislation, as well as to set up support groups for abused children.

◆ Interestingly, in a visit to a primary school, it was discovered that the majority of children joining the GBEM clubs were orphaned and vulnerable children. It appears that these children's clubs offer an extremely important network of support for vulnerable children.

Studies of this sort play an important part in identifying the challenges and dangers faced by children, and also provide possible solutions that can mitigate their plight. The introduction of free lunch at primary schools, as well as in many secondary schools, may make it less imperative for orphans and vulnerable children to find work in order merely to survive, and may enable more children to fulfil their wish to gain a good education. It is also possible that follow-up of the study can bring about more radical and long-lasting solutions to the children's problems.

Gender courses are very popular with both staff and students at the National University of Lesotho.

Institutionalization of Gender into the Ministry of Education and Training

Whilst a great deal has been done in Lesotho to promote girls' education and gender parity, it is nevertheless possible that these immense gains can be eroded unless they become institutionalized into the MOET and other organs of society.

A Gender Steering Committee, with four MOET officers, was established in 2004 and staffed by dedicated, enthusiastic and competent staff. It must be noted, however, that the staff were working on the Committee on a part-time basis while their actual positions were in other departments of the Ministry. This Committee was to be transformed into a Gender Unit. The Committee led initiatives to promote gender issues in the Ministry but the transformation into a Gender Unit has not yet materialized. The Chair of the Committee was promoted to a District Administrator, while the only male member left the Ministry and the country to work in South Africa. The third member of the Committee was also promoted and no longer had time to attend to Committee issues. The surviving Committee member was made the GBEM Coordinator. She continues to coordinate the GBEM activities on a part-time basis while her full-time position is

> The existence of "champions" who were absolutely dedicated to GBEM appears to have been essential for success at the initial stages.

that of Inspector in the Technical and Vocational Education Division of the Ministry. It is important to establish a Gender Unit as originally intended so that it becomes a stable and permanent feature of the MOET, with career prospects for its staff. This would ensure a more coordinated approach to gender issues in MOET at all levels.

Focus group discussions with some staff of the National University of Lesotho revealed that gender courses are very popular with both staff and students at the University, but these courses have been established through the initiative of individual lecturers and are not linked to MOET policies and programmes. It would be appropriate to link the teacher education offered at the University to what is happening in the school system, so that teachers are adequately trained for the challenges they will meet during their teaching career.

Presently MOET offers a large number of orientation courses for teachers. The courses are short, however, and a training of just a few days may be too superficial and inadequate in the long run. It may be necessary to augment such training by incorporating the courses into the curricula at the Lesotho College of Education and the University in various ways, including through in-service and distance education courses. The certification of such courses could also be utilized for promotion purposes, thus enabling recognition of the importance of gender issues to the education system.

Education Budget

The education budget represents 9% of Lesotho's gross domestic product (MOET, 2002), which is a high percentage by comparison with other

African states.[5] Primary education has the largest share at 3.8%, followed by tertiary (university) education (2.5%) and secondary education (2.1%). In 2003, education's share of the government recurrent and capital budgets was 28% and 19%, respectively. Primary education's share of the education budget increased significantly from 40% in 1997/98 to 52% in 1999/2000.

There is no specific budget for GBEM, but there is a budget for gender and for life skills within MOET, and this can include GBEM activities. GBEM is thus highly dependent on UNICEF financing. This may have been understandable at the beginning of the programme, but may constitute a problem once it is well established.

Advocacy, Social Mobilization and Networking

Lesotho adopted the UNICEF videos and comics based on the Sara Communications Initiative developed in the 1990s as the main foundation of their advocacy programme. The videos were utilized to arouse interest in issues that are fundamental to the health and safety of young people, such as HIV/AIDS and its impact on the family and the "sugar daddy" syndrome by which older wealthy men attract young schoolgirls for sex. They also aid discussion of boy-girl relationships, prejudice against sending girls to school and exploitation of young girl relatives as unpaid house servants. Female genital mutilation and the conscription of children into military service are other issues that are covered. The videos and comics provoke discussion among young people about how these issues can be dealt with within

GBEM members enjoy being "in charge" of themselves, defining their own priorities and deciding on their own activities. They don't want the movement to be controlled by teachers because they fear this would turn activities into classroom type lessons.

the Lesotho context. In some cases the children identify with Sara's predicaments.

Through their involvement in GBEM clubs, a number of young members have been able to participate in international events, travelling to South Africa, Swaziland, Scotland and Uganda. Participation in these conferences has served to increase the prestige and profile of the GBEM clubs and their activities, as well as enabling its members to share in a network of other Girls' Education Movement clubs.

Life Skills

Among the most important steps taken by MOET, together with UNICEF, has been the introduction of life skills training. Life skills cover areas that are often neglected within the formal education system – values and attitudes, particularly as they relate to tackling the real challenges of life faced by children at school and on leaving school. With HIV/AIDS ravaging the society, both parents and pupils are aware of the dangers of the scourge and are anxious to find ways of addressing these dangers: life skills provides one strategy. In other words, HIV/AIDS, one of the most serious problems facing the society, provides a catalyst for problem solving by looking within a person for the resources to handle

life situations. Presently young people are given little guidance on how to cope with these challenges, particularly so since parents and teachers feel too embarrassed to discuss sexual matters with children and young people and are likely to avoid all reference to such topics. This has led to the realization that there must be specific programmes to develop psychosocial life skills.

Why Life Skills Training Is Important
The life skills programme is based on the WHO definition of life skills. It is training that aims to develop abilities for adaptive and positive behaviours that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

The ten core life skills can be grouped into three areas: self-knowledge, relating to others, and creative thinking combined with problem solving. Self-knowledge includes self-awareness, self-esteem, self-control, and setting and following goals in life. Relating to others entails interpersonal skills through the formation of relationships, adjustment to society, advocating for change, empathy, ability to resist unhealthy pressures from adults/peers, and negotiating ways

Ten core life skills have been identified:
- ☛ Decision making
- ☛ Problem solving
- ☛ Creative thinking
- ☛ Critical thinking
- ☛ Effective communication
- ☛ Interpersonal relationship skills
- ☛ Self-awareness
- ☛ Empathy
- ☛ Coping with emotions
- ☛ Coping with stress

(UNICEF, 2003: 6)

through difficult life situations. Interpersonal skills include empathy building, active listening, giving and receiving feedback, nonverbal communication, assertion and refusal skills, cooperation and team work, and relationship and community building skills. The creative thinking and problem solving category entails making appropriate decisions and developing the skills to solve problems. These include skills for assessing risks, generating alternatives, identifying and acting on rights, responsibilities and social justice, and gathering information. Others are skills for identifying important influences on values and attitudes, skills for acting on discrimination and stereotypes, and skills for understanding different social norms, beliefs, myths and cultures, including concepts of gender (UNICEF, 2003). Life skills naturally take into consideration the actual social environment of the learners.

Just as important as the skills identification is the methodology used to build these skills. UNICEF has developed an interactive methodology that includes

working in pairs, group exploration, group discussion, role playing and use of media.

Examining and Forming Values

The life skills programme allows participants to explore their existing values and to form new ones. Exercises contribute to this self-exploration. Awareness of values enables participants:

- To have a feeling of self-worth – knowledge of self
- To know you have a purpose
- To know your needs
- To show other people their rights
- To be different
- To be able to defend your decisions
- To be yourself
- To act responsibly
- To be able to criticize other people's decisions (UNICEF, 2003: 10)

One of the exercises encourages participants to rank their values. In this exercise they have the chance to think more deeply about what is important to them. As the exercises are interactive, participants can discuss and clarify their values in pairs, in small groups and in plenary sessions. A debate format allows them to disagree with each other and to discuss these differences. The methodologies utilized allow participants to bring out their own experiences, and to try to solve their own problems directly or indirectly.

Role plays are like mini dramas that enable participants to imagine themselves in different personae, and imagine the different views people in different positions may have. The intergenerational gap, for example, can bring about radical differences in values and opinions and these can be explored by trying to put yourself in the role of the person on the other side of the gap.

Other areas might be the value of traditions; influences within the society; the family; stereotyping – including gender – and peer pressure. The uses and influences of media can form the basis for role plays, as can corruption within the society and education of boys and girls. HIV/AIDS and its causes is a good issue for role plays because the technique allows people to assume some distance from their personal concerns or involvement.

One of the most successful aspects of the life skills training undertaken in Lesotho is the utilization of UNICEF cartoon videos such as "Choices", which discusses teenage pregnancy, education and HIV/AIDS. After viewing the video, participants are divided into groups according to age and gender and discuss the following questions:

- Did you like the story?
- What is the story about?
- Who are the characters in the story?
- Who do you think is the main character in the story? Why?
- Which characters did you like best in the story? Why?
- Which ones didn't you like? Why? (UNICEF, 2003: 5–6)

Values clarification helps young people develop a feeling of self-worth:

- To know you have a purpose
- To know your needs
- To show other people their rights
- To be different
- To be able to defend your decisions
- To be yourself
- To act responsibly
- To be able to criticize other people's decisions

The video shows the importance of positive support (peer, family and community). Other issues that emerge from the video include:

- Teaching youth to be each other's keeper.
- Boy-girl relationships and assertiveness.
- Teaching youth to say no to peer pressure.
- Teaching youth to make positive life choices.

The popularity and relevance of the life skills programme for young people, in particular the interactive methodologies used that enable children and youths to develop and express their own values and views, suggest that this is one of the most important initiatives undertaken by UNICEF.

Girls' and Boys' Education Movement (GBEM)

The Girls' and Boys' Education Movement (GBEM) is an offshoot of the Girls' Education Movement (GEM), which was initially introduced through a UNICEF workshop held in Kampala, Uganda, in 2001. The underlying concept was to find ways of empowering girls themselves to take charge of their right to basic

> GBEM is much loved by the children and young people themselves. It gives them a voice and a forum – and self-confidence – for airing concerns and grievances.

education. In the case of Lesotho, it was felt to be very important to involve boys as well in promoting girls' education, hence the adjustment of the name.

In the short period since GBEM was initiated in Lesotho by the Ministry of Education and Training, it has proved to be a highly popular as well as highly relevant movement. Its activities encompass a wide range of issues. They centre around life skills, particularly based on the Sara cartoon videos and comics, dialoguing with parents on pertinent issues, protecting children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and discussing the problems young people face such as teenage pregnancy. Other activities involve assisting orphans and vulnerable children, protecting the environment, and learning about and discussing HIV/AIDS.

How GBEM Works

The establishment of GBEM clubs in schools began with an official letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Training introducing and supporting the programme. The Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Ntsebe Kokome, had been appalled by the results of the Gender Audit and was keen to take some positive steps to improve the situation of girls and women within the education system. She also established the Gender Steering Committee within MOET that would be responsible for gender issues, in particular for the GBEM clubs. The Gender Steering Committee organized a training programme for each district funded by UNICEF. The training programme included both children and teachers from primary and secondary schools.

The existence of "champions" who were absolutely dedicated to GBEM

appears to have been essential for success at the initial stages. This was in place as the Permanent Secretary and the then Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, Mrs. Mapitso Panyame, provided initial leadership at national level. Later Mrs. Panyame was transferred to become a District Administrator, and in this position she was again able to promote GBEM in her district. GBEM is very much a district phenomenon, with a strong presence in some of the districts of Lesotho, and has been incorporated into local government structures. The setting up of the Gender Steering Committee with four staff within the MOET gave a boost to the establishment of GBEM. The GBEM Coordinator plays a key role in training, information dissemination, monitoring and evaluation. At school level it was noticeable that when the head teacher was keen on the concept, it led to tremendous support for GBEM. Where head teachers were not supportive, GBEM members struggle to make themselves heard.

At district level, district officials such as Youth Officers and Health Workers have become involved in GBEM. GBEM members are also formally part of the team of peer counsellors for teenagers who come forward to test for HIV under an HIV/AIDS treatment centre known as Senkatane.

Parents' willingness to discuss sexual issues with their children is an attitude change of historic significance – brought about by the devastation of the AIDS epidemic.

Although some institutionalization of GBEM had taken place through the establishment of the Gender Steering Committee within the MOET, the committee membership was on a part-time basis. The GBEM Coordinator, for example, is also an Education Officer responsible for supervising and supporting the teaching of technical vocational subjects nationally. Thus, she has a double work load. There is often a temptation in many organizations to place gender as a part-time job. Given the importance of the issues, the MOET should consider establishing a Gender Unit with full time staff.

During focus group discussions, GBEM members were asked what they required to be successful within the school context. Their response was that they needed official support from the head teacher in terms of allowing the existence of GBEM: the form of the support consisted mainly of assigning a room for GBEM meetings on a particular day at a particular time. At one school, for example, Thursday afternoon was designated club activities time and the head teacher assigned GBEM a meeting room. This was sufficient support to enable GBEM to blossom. Schools that were highly supportive could also fund travel for exchange programmes within the district or within the country. Networking with other GBEM clubs required some modest funding. GBEM members pointed out that the support they required from UNICEF was in the

form of publications, videos, DVDs, etc. UNICEF has also been helping to fund courses, networking programmes and the road shows.

Teachers in focus group discussions expressed disappointment that they were not more fully involved in GBEM. They believed that in order to achieve long-term sustainability, teachers should be more involved in this movement. GBEM members, on the other hand, did not want the movement to be controlled by teachers, fearing that this would allow teachers to turn activities into yet more classroom type lessons. GBEM members enjoyed being "in charge" of themselves, defining their own priorities and deciding on their own activities. They wanted responsibility for themselves and said that teachers wanted to treat them as "children". But the teachers said that children tended to "play" too much when they were on their own, as in GBEM.

A solution to this dilemma is possible: the young people, particularly the girls, need to remain in charge of their own organization and to arrange their own activities. They may find it useful to involve adults, however, including their teachers, in certain of their activities, such as contributing to research and discussions. Some useful work could be done with teachers to determine exactly what comparative advantages they could contribute to GBEM without undermining the

leadership and autonomy of the young people. Exchange visits and networking, for example, are already done in collaboration with teachers. Working with other ministries such as the Ministries of Local Government, of Youth and of Health could involve teachers at some stages. From time to time joint meetings could be held between pupils and teachers.

One issue is what form of incentive can be provided to encourage teachers to participate in GBEM. Financial remuneration is often not a good idea, as it increases the cost of GBEM and other clubs, and involves a mercenary element. Providing courses for teachers who are supportive of GBEM such as participating in life skills or environmental improvement courses can be a strong incentive: in many countries teachers value the opportunity to improve themselves as individuals and as professionals. Such courses could be incorporated into distance education diploma and degree programmes, which may prove valuable professionally and in terms of career development. Participation in club work and other extracurricular activities can also be institutionalized into the promotions system so that work with GBEM and other clubs is recognized.

HIV and AIDS

The devastation wrought by the HIV/AIDS epidemic has forced the very traditional Basotho society to see the empowerment of their children as an important tool for protecting them from this threat. The traditional value of obedience and submissiveness to authority, particularly to the authority of adults, can be seen as problematic in view of the fact that HIV/AIDS is mainly

transmitted through heterosexual inter-generational sex: Young girls are being infected by older men. In focus group discussions with GBEM members about how their parents viewed their GBEM activities, many said that their parents wholeheartedly welcomed their participation, and particularly welcomed information about HIV/AIDS. Thus whilst it is usually parents and adults in African societies who feel it is inappropriate to discuss sexual matters with their children, it appears that in the Lesotho context parents have welcomed open discussion on these issues – even when they were introduced by their children.

Such an attitude change is of historic significance. That children, including primary school pupils, have been encouraged by their parents, teachers and community to solve their own problems and make their own decisions is indicative of the crisis the society faces in the challenges of HIV/AIDS combined with poverty and unemployment. In such a crisis, children have to save themselves from danger, and knowledge and problem solving skills are critical for this. Thus GBEM has served as the voice of the young. Besides a forum for airing social concerns, it has become a platform to discuss with youth their views on legislation that concerns them such as the Education Act, the Child Protection and Welfare Bill, and the poverty reduction strategy paper.

GBEM is an important way to allow children to share their problems and provide support to each other. Meetings become opportunities for children to discuss the problems they are experiencing in a nonthreatening environment amongst their peers. It is therefore not surprising that GBEM clubs are especially popular amongst underprivileged children, such as child domestic workers and orphans, who are eager members. GBEM allows them a voice to air their grievances, as well as to solve their problems. In a visit to Moyeni Primary School, it was discovered that 70% of GBEM members were orphans and vulnerable children, indicating that GBEM plays an extremely important role for these children.

One phenomenon is that the GBEM clubs are much more popular and much commoner in primary schools than in secondary schools. The explanation given during focus group discussion was that secondary school pupils were too absorbed in studying for examinations to participate in club activities. Yet it would appear that it is the teenage years, when children are at secondary school, that are more problematic, and when GBEM clubs should be most influential. That this is not the case in Lesotho may reflect the situation where only 24.5% of children are at junior secondary school and only 15.2% at senior secondary school (GOL and Expanded Theme Group, 2005: 31–2). Thus only a minority of children are able to access secondary education. Access is through financial means as well as by examination. Those who have been fortunate enough to be admitted to a secondary school are likely to concentrate on utilizing this golden opportunity, and neglecting extramural activities such as GBEM.

The Road Shows

A significant characteristic of GBEM is that it is *fun*. One of the projects the movement has run are "road shows", which constitute "edutainment". The road shows have built on a number of activities that mix education and entertainment, and are based on developing life skills. The initiative has three elements:

- ◆ Edutainment,
- ◆ Advocacy, and
- ◆ Social mobilization.

Organized by young people themselves, a road show lasts three days and includes drama, music, dance, poetry, traditional games, sports and workshops on problems youth face, including HIV/AIDS and health issues. Films are used to further debate about the overall aim of workshops. The three road shows so far organized have attracted more than 5,000 youths.

One of the games played at the road shows – called the "string game" – involves story telling about sexual activities within a small community. The "string" is used to link up people who potentially infect each other with HIV/AIDS. This game is apparently quite startling and fascinating for the young teenagers.

Peer Counselling

An important element of the road shows has been peer counselling. An HIV/AIDS peer counsellor was appointed to train young people on counselling techniques. Some 60 GBEM members from different districts received initial training. At the road shows, some of them participated as peer counsellors for teenagers who wished to undertake HIV/AIDS

> In Lesotho, 7.9% of 15–18-year-olds are HIV positive, but HIV tests are not available to anyone under the age of 18.

tests. Presently this test is not available to anyone under the age of 18 in Lesotho. Young people who had been interviewed by a peer counsellor would then be referred to a professional health worker to provide testing. The underlying concept was that teenagers could provide each other with psycho-social support and understanding.

In order to work as peer counsellors, participants receive training on the laws that affect young people such as the Sexual Offences Act (2003) and the Child Protection and Welfare Bill (2004). The young people were very appreciative of the opportunity to participate and react to proposed legislation that affects them as it helped them understand the legal framework for their work. Other aspects of the training are gender issues as they affect sexual relationships, such as stereotyping, power relations and socialization. The peer educators were also provided with basic information on HIV/AIDS such as the phases of HIV infection, opportunistic diseases such as tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, infection control, prevention of mother

Road shows are popular means for talking about serious issues

to child transmission, nutrition, etc. They learnt to deal with myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS and as peer counsellors they also learnt the general techniques of counselling such as self-awareness and attitudes, ethical issues, counselling in context/model, ongoing counselling and care, crisis intervention, and stress management.

In discussions with GBEM members, they said they considered their work as peer counsellors to be one of the most important tasks they had so far undertaken. They believed it was very important for them personally as well as for the teenagers who came forward for counselling to be able to discuss these issues responsibly.

They were provided with support in the peer counselling by a number of organizations, including partnerships with Population Services International (PSI), which offers voluntary counselling and testing; the Sesotho Media and Development Group, which shows educational films on a mobile video screen in Sesotho and other languages, and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, which provides health support staff.

The peer education sessions enabled young people to discuss the different sexual expectations of boys versus girls. For example, many boys assume that if a girl accepts to be their girlfriend she automatically accepts to sleep with them. After group discussions and interactions the boys were surprised to discover that girls reacted very negatively to this assumption.

Impact and Challenges

GBEM provides a youth-to-youth forum and has increased the self-confidence of children. GBEM members have now become confident enough to speak in public and act as a voice for children. They have begun to take the initiative such as engaging taxi drivers against HIV/AIDS, trying to publish their own newsletter, and organizing radio shows and road shows. They are helping orphans (by providing stationery and making toys), doing environmental improvement work such as planting trees, and acting as peer counsellors. They are more accustomed to sharing problems, controlling emotions and shouldering responsibilities. They are also more assertive. In other words, GBEM enabled its members to develop organizational and leadership skills. Other areas in which GBEM played an important role have been encouraging girls to continue with science, maths and technology, providing some form of career guidance, and discussing the dropout of girls.

Clearly, GBEM is much loved by the children and young people themselves. Parents and the local community have been highly supportive, seeing the movement as a tool for preventing their children from being infected by HIV/AIDS. The MOET and the ministries of Health, Youth and Local Government have also been very supportive. The private sector is beginning to support GBEM, as well. Thus there is a strong

The popularity and relevance of the life skills programme for young people, in particular the interactive methodologies used that enable children and youths to develop and express their own values and views, suggest that this is one of the most important initiatives undertaken by UNICEF.

possibility of sustainability. School projects can be done without outside help, but training requires some money. Some education officers have been trained, while ten teachers were trained per district, comprising seven primary teachers and three secondary teachers. There is a shortage of materials: teachers who have been trained take the materials with them when they are transferred, and there appears to be a high rate of transfers in Lesotho.

Challenges include developing a database for clubs and going into an e-school initiative.

Monitoring and Evaluation

UNICEF Lesotho has assisted MOET to carry out a number of evaluations, such as the Gender Audit and the Child Domestic Workers Study reported above. These two important studies have helped the ministry to review its policies and strategies in order to enable girls to access education. The surveys have contributed to enabling women to attain gender parity.

The GBEM clubs have provided detailed reports on their activities, particularly on the road shows that they have organized. These reports provide critical feedback on the positive as well as negative aspects of these large events as organized by the young people themselves.

Lessons Learnt

Several important lessons are suggested by the Lesotho experience, not least of which is that educational opportunities must be extended to girls and boys alike. Of note is that the road shows and GBEM as a whole attracted more girls than boys. This suggests the need for widening outreach. Other lessons are to:

- ◆ *Trust young people:* Youth can – and sometimes must – be agents of change. The focus on a real, life-threatening scourge, HIV/AIDS, has made the GBEM movement a serious attempt to utilize children and young people as agents of change within a highly traditional society. This focus is appreciated by the young people themselves, and leads them to be taken seriously by their parents and teachers. As a result of this focus, GBEM has succeeded in breaking the taboo against discussing, or even mentioning, HIV/

AIDS. This is an invaluable change in societal attitude towards HIV/AIDS. The GBEM movement has succeeded in bringing the issue out into the open.

- ◆ *Fill important gaps in academic education with life skills training:* The focus on developing life skills is also an important contribution to the education process. Life skills offer a way of examining interpersonal relationships and help the participants to understand themselves better as well as to focus realistically on their future values, attitudes and goals. Life skills training emphasizes developing personal skills to deal with real-life challenges, rather than on gaining more examination-oriented facts. This emphasis provides an important balance to the education system, which is very much concerned with passing examinations and obtaining certificates.

- ◆ *Exploit the power of visual materials for educating children and youth alike:* Videos and comics have been well utilized as educational tools in Lesotho and moves are in progress to develop more such materials. UNICEF Lesotho has recently reprinted a comic book for children on human rights (RAPCAN, 2005) that is likely to prove both popular and educative. This is an area of demand: GBEM members said that the main input they would like is educational materials.

- ◆ *Give young people opportunities to make decisions about their own lives – they will react positively:* In the short space of time since they

were established in Lesotho in 2001, the GBEM clubs have succeeded in gaining very enthusiastic support from young people themselves. The young see the movement as addressing their concerns, providing them with a voice to share their views on legislation and other important processes such as the poverty reduction programme that affect them. The life skills training has enabled young people to empower themselves through the development of self-knowledge and self-confidence, enabling them to be more capable of making their own decisions.

Conclusion

GBEM has demonstrated its ability to reach and influence Lesotho's young people and their communities. It is important to consolidate this influence.

The fact that there are more GBEM clubs in primary schools, and that the majority of members are orphans and vulnerable children, points to one of the functions of GBEM, as a support system for these young children. On the other hand, the participation of high school and university students through GBEM in the process of the formulation of legislation and as peer counsellors points to another function of GBEM. In all cases, GBEM appears to be highly popular with young people.

As noted earlier, MOET should consider setting up the Gender Unit with some full-time staff at this point, when its activities are beginning to expand, so as to sustain the accomplishments already made.

Notes

[1] Government of Lesotho and the Lesotho UN Expanded Theme Group on Gender and Reproductive Health, 2005: 1–2.

[2] Figures from Ministry of Education and Training, Planning Unit, 2001.

[3] The total population of Lesotho is 1.8 million. Assuming that a third of the population are children, this would mean about 30% of children are orphans. If the assumption is that half the population are children, then 20% of them are orphaned. Regardless, the number of orphans is clearly very high, and imposes a heavy burden on the society as a whole.

[4] Moreover, the word "free" is open to misinterpretation: in a number of countries it has led to parents and communities refusing to do anything to improve their schools.

[5] Under the African Union's Decade of Education (1997–2006) Member States accepted the recommendation of investing at least 6% of GNP on education.

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Annex

Places Visited

Maseru
Quthing
Moyeni Primary School
Mopholosi High
Leribe
Moselinyane Primary School, Ha Nyenye
St. Boniface High School, Maputsoe

Persons Met

UNICEF
Nadi Albino, UNICEF Chief of Education
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Clelia Barbadoro, UNICEF Assistant
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Bernard Batidzirai, UNICEF Education
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Bertrand Des Moulins, UNICEF
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    Coordinator, Lesotho
Madome Mohale, Programme
    Communications Officer
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Kekeletso A. Morolong, UNICEF
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Malebajoa Sesoane, GBEM Coordinator
Malefetsane Khemisi, Education Officer,
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Khaketla Lesley Khabele, Teacher,
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Thato A. Kabeli, Headmistress, Moyeni
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National University of Lesotho
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Uganda: Ensuring that "All" Includes Everyone

a rights-based framework informs education programming in Uganda – in other words, education is identified as one of the human rights to which all people should have access. Uganda is a signatory of the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Dakar Framework of Action of Education for All (EFA).

Consequently, Uganda is committed to providing education for all and to improving access to quality education for girls and women. This commitment is further reinforced by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1991), which also recognizes children's right to education and to protection from all forms of discrimination and harmful cultural practices.

The introduction of universal primary education (UPE) in 1996 was a landmark in the provision of education as a right to all children in Uganda. The government declared that it would achieve UPE by 2003. Towards this end, the government abolished fees for up to four children per family, two of whom were girls. This was followed by total abolition of school fees

> Sustainable development and the eradication of poverty can only be achieved with quality education for all – boys and girls alike.

in primary schools. Statistics indicate a higher increase in enrolment of girls compared with that of boys as a result of UPE, from 1,420,889 in 1996 to 3,721,911 in 2004.

Additional progress in the provision of primary education is reflected in the reduction of gender gaps in enrolment at the national level. By end of December 2003, the gross enrolment rate at primary level was approximately 3.9 million for boys and 3.8 million for girls.

In 2004, the gender enrolment gap decreased tremendously at the national level, with the proportion of girls at 49% in 2004 up from 44.2% in 1990. This is not the case in remote areas, however, and especially in northern Uganda where conflict and other barriers to education result in non enrolment and high dropout rates especially for girls in primary school.

At Napumpum Primary School, Kotido District, children babysit their siblings even during school time. Attendance, performance and retention levels remain low because of such circumstances.

Sustainable development and the eradication of poverty can only be achieved with quality education for all – boys and girls alike. This chapter focuses on the implementation of the Girls' Education Movement (GEM) and UNGEI in Uganda. Both have emerged as successful interventions for addressing the various challenges in education, specifically focusing on girls. Both acknowledge that girls face greater barriers than boys in pursuit for education, hence the need for specific strategies focusing on eliminating/reducing the barriers. Two important aspects of the strategies are highlighted, young peoples' involvement and effective partnerships. These have emerged as good practices that have yielded great results in the provision of girls' education in Uganda. Notably, boys have also benefited from the interventions.

Challenges to Education in Uganda

Despite the obvious success of Uganda's UPE initiative, it is estimated that some 15% of children are still not in school and there are about 15% more boys than girls enrolled in primary schools. Statistics vary from one region to another, with the Northern and Eastern regions having the widest gender gaps compared with other regions. This can be attributed to the complex context of northern Uganda, which is characterized by high levels of conflict, displacements, insecurity and harmful traditional practices, in addition to the effects of HIV/AIDS.

Illiteracy rates are still high, although showing a downward trend; the rates for women are worse than those for men. The proportion of illiterate women aged 15 years and above declined from 73% in 1986 (compared with 58% for men) to 52% in 1998 (compared with 38.2% for men). One source of this problem is the high dropout rate, particularly of girls, beginning after Primary 4. As a result, there is a conspicuous gender gap after Primary 4. The primary school completion rate (2001–2004) was 72% for boys, compared with 51% for girls. (ROU and UNICEF, 2005: 2).

The factors affecting education in Uganda can be categorized into two, in-school factors and out-of-school factors. Notably, most of them affect girls more than boys.

In-School Factors

Factors within the school system that affect the quality of education begin with the availability of school places, the

curriculum, and the education and training of teachers. They include textbooks, educational materials, classroom processes and school management, and for girls the problems they face just because they are girls.

Inadequate Physical Facilities

The lack of infrastructure and suitable facilities is a significant, though not fatal, impediment to education for all and particularly to the quality of education. In this category are insufficient school, teaching and learning facilities and overstretched sanitation facilities. The lack of adequate schools close to homes often means that children have to walk long distances to school.

Shortage of classroom space results in overcrowded classes and poor quality teaching and learning. In some areas, classes are reported to have 120 pupils. Few teachers would be able to deliver quality education in such an environment.

Besides basic academic facilities, the lack of sanitary facilities particularly affects girls' participation. Girls are more comfortable in schools where separate toilets are available and suitably located.

Lack of Teaching and Learning Materials

Inadequate teaching and learning materials limit the activities a teacher can engage pupils in. Teachers have more work, as they have to write notes on the board and demonstrate every activity, whereas if materials were available, pupils would be instructed to carry out activities on their own. The overall effect is the use of teacher-centred methods instead of a child-centred approach, which limits children's participation in learning.

Curriculum

The current curriculum appears to be irrelevant to both immediate and future needs of students and the society. Today's curriculum should be designed to equip learners with life skills that will enable them to deal with issues in society such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, insecurity and gender concerns. The curriculum should focus on empowering learners with life skills in addition to the academic content.

The current curriculum underplays science, mathematics and technology. As a result, few primary school students will have had the opportunity to conduct hands-on experiments in science, and yet the majority of children in Uganda are not able to gain a secondary education. The implication is that most students do not receive a practical grounding in science. A more experiment-based primary school science curriculum, grounded in local realities such as

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A Karamojong girl practises writing on a slate in an open-air classroom at the Namijij ABEK Centre, in Moroto District, one of the districts of the agro-pastoralist Karamoja subregion in northeastern Uganda

agricultural productivity, animal diseases, tropical diseases, clean water supply, etc., may provide a better preparation for the realities of life.

Counselling and guidance are weak in the overcrowded schools, yet this is an important component of a curriculum in an environment where most pupils are affected by various issues such as conflict, sexual harassment and abuse among others.

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Children inside Padibe IDP camp of northern Uganda's conflict-affected Kitgum District

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of girls by boys and male teachers is common. This results in dropout of girls and in some cases pregnancy. Sexual harassment occurs at school, on the way to school and in the communities.

Inappropriate Disciplinary Methods

Corporal punishment, although prohibited under the Children's Act, persists in schools. Corporal punishment causes fear among both girls and boys and has been identified as a cause of high rates of dropout and absenteeism in schools.

Leadership and Management Problems

Poor leadership and management skills negatively affect access to and quality of education in a school. This is reflected in inadequate record keeping, insufficient data and learning environments characterized by poor management of resources. One result is poor planning and implementation of activities.

Poor School–Community Relationships

Schools that have good relationships between teachers and parents are able to address issues that affect pupils. In addition, the performance of pupils is likely to improve when there is follow up and support at home as well as at school. Where there is little or no cooperation between teachers and parents, teachers are likely to feel they are overworked, under-resourced and under-supported by the management system and by parents and community.

Invisible Barriers to Girls' Education

An effective school has the capacity to recognize children who may be facing problems at home and in school. Examples of such problems are difficulties in coping with sexuality and menstruation, the impact of sexual harassment or abuse, effects of HIV and AIDS, bullying by other pupils, and others. These may be manifested in low academic achievement, absenteeism and sometimes dropout.

Out-of-School Factors

Several factors outside the school affect participation of both boys and girls in school. Such factors exist within the community and at the household level. A majority of these factors are poverty related, such as forced/ early marriage, child labour and in some cases early pregnancy. Other out-of-school factors

are sexual harassment and assault, insecurity, and traditional cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). HIV/AIDS has worsened poverty.

Poverty

The opportunity cost of sending a child to school, especially a girl-child, vis-à-vis the child's labour contribution to the household can have negative effects on participation in school. Children are regarded as a source of income and are expected to work in order to supplement family resources. The situation is worse for child-headed households in which children have to fend for their siblings. Girls are often more affected as they are forced to work or stay at home to look after their siblings or work to earn money. Further danger arises when the income-generating activity involves brewing local beers for sale as this exposes them to sexual harassment, in some cases leading to dropout or HIV infection.

HIV/AIDS has had a devastating effect on family incomes. When parents are infected, girls especially drop out of school to nurse them. Orphaned children are often subjected to mistreatment by relatives. Some end up in the street,

Poverty is at the root of many barriers to education. Children are regarded as a source of income and are expected to work in order to supplement family resources. The situation is worse for children who are heads of households and have to fend for their siblings. The result is that they don't have time to go to school.

where they are vulnerable to disease, malnutrition and sexual abuse.

Closely linked to poverty is child neglect. It is reported that many orphans suffer from neglect. Even children with parents may be neglected, as the parents may be too busy earning a living to pay much attention to their children (Katahoire and Ndidde, 2004: 19–24). One result is a high dropout rate in schools.

Early Marriage, Early Pregnancy and FGM

Most traditional practices affect girls, resulting in denial of girls' right to education. In Uganda, such practices include FGM and early marriage, which most often lead to dropout from school. Uganda has the highest adolescent pregnancy rate in sub-Saharan Africa: 43% of girl-children are pregnant or have given birth at least once by age 17.[1] Partly this phenomenon is due to poverty and conflict, where early marriage may be seen as a way out of the poverty trap by both the young girl and her parents. Cases of parents insisting that girls leave school and marry early so that they get the benefit of the bride price are common. Some girls succumb to this pressure, leading to dropout.

High Prevalence Rate of HIV/AIDS amongst Girls

Linked to early sexual activity is the high rate of HIV infection amongst girls aged 15 to 19 years. Prevalence is reportedly twice as high as for males of the same age group, while for young women aged 20–24 it is four times as high as that of males. The majority of sex workers are aged 15–24 years, and 46.8% of them are HIV positive.[2] HIV/AIDS prevention education is therefore extremely important.

Low Economic Status of Women

The high prevalence of early sexual activity and HIV/AIDS amongst women can be linked to the low social status of women. Women are often economically dependent on men, and therefore unable to exercise decision making power. Lack of schooling reduces their potential for economic independence. As a result, men exploit women sexually, exposing them to HIV and other diseases and effectively keeping them "in their place".

Low Preference of Girls' Education to Boys' Education

For a variety of reasons, parents prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters, with the result being lower enrolment of girls especially in the northern conflict affected areas of Uganda. Girls are often kept at home for domestic labour while boys are sent to school. The negative attitude towards girls' education has been exacerbated by the lack of positive female role models and teachers, resulting in poor perception of the benefits of girls' education.

Conflict

Northern Uganda has been a battlefield for nearly two decades as a result of the rebellion by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). It is estimated that the lives of

Activities of GEM Uganda
- Capacity building of members in guidance, counselling and mentoring
- Debates, music and drama
- School mapping
- Psychosocial support
- Advocacy for girl-friendly facilities and schools

300,000 children in the region have been disrupted by conflict.

Girls and boys have been abducted in large numbers to serve in the LRA, and girls suffer additional abuse as sex slaves. Whilst many are killed, the survivors are emotionally and physically ruined, yet counselling services are rare. Such girls and boys may give up education.

Because of the high levels of conflict, parents prefer to keep their girls at home for fear that they may be abducted. In some cases, enrolment is delayed until they are "old enough" to protect themselves.

The conflict has forced hundreds of communities from their homes to camps for the displaced. While many schools have been established in the IDP camps, the insecurity and harsh environment mean that few women teachers are willing to work in the camps. Here, too, the lack of women teachers as role models negatively affects girls; they have no confidant to share issues that may affect them. In some schools, even the "senior female teacher" positions established to address gender issues are held by male teachers.

Long Distances to School

The impact of conflict is further perpetuated by the long distance between schools and homes. Long distances expose girls to more risks such as rape, sexual harassment and abduction – often resulting in HIV/AIDS infection. Girls are less able to protect themselves than boys, given their upbringing, which does not empower girls with life skills but emphasizes submissiveness. As a coping strategy, parents delay enroling their children in school until they are "old enough" to trek the long distances.

Improving Access to Quality Primary School Education, Especially for Girls

Various approaches have been taken to address gender disparities in education in Uganda. Two outstanding interventions are the Girls' Education Movement (GEM) and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). These interventions, although implemented under different titles, have similar goals, both working towards the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and the gender parity Millennium Development Goals (MDG), with a focus on eliminating barriers to girls' education. GEM, as a young people's network, is also a partner in UNGEI, complementing UNGEI activities at the grassroots through its participatory model. The major distinction is that GEM is led by young people while UNGEI is a partnership of government ministries and development institutions. Both initiatives recognize partnership and involvement as key strategies to success in eliminating barriers to girls' access to and completion of primary education.

The Girls' Education Movement

GEM is a young people's network in Africa established to promote access to quality education for girls. Its premise is that the empowerment of girls and women is critical to overcoming the many barriers to development. Education is the tool used for empowering girls to overcome barriers to development, sustain healthy families, and build stable and productive communities. The underlying principle of GEM is the involvement of girls themselves as key players in ensuring that they receive a good education.

GEM was launched in Kampala in August 2001 at a conference that drew

participants from all over Africa. Following the launch, the participants were expected to form national chapters in their respective countries. GEM was subsequently established in Uganda as a membership organization with a mission to promote accessible and quality education for girls by creating opportunities for them to develop their leadership and technical skills so that they can effectively participate in issues that concern them. GEM membership is open to both girls and boys from primary grade four up to 25[3] years of age.

GEM as a Good Practice in Girls' Education

A number of outstanding characteristics have contributed to GEM's success, thereby making it an overall good practice. Perhaps the single most important aspect is GEM's unique membership of young people and the emphasis on their participation, involvement and partnership. Other characteristics include the organizational and leadership structure, areas of focus, and opportunities for replication. GEM's innovative ways of community mobilization, advocacy and dissemination of education messages through the use of creative media are also important contributors to success.

An Organization Structure That Offers Opportunities for Expansion and Replication

There are three different levels of operation: national, district and school. At the national level, the steering committee is in charge of GEM chapters in the district, while the district chapter is responsible for the school clubs. This organizational structure enables easy replication. The national chapter establishes the standards and ensures that they are followed; it is also a model for the district chapters. Given that GEM clubs are established in schools, it is easy to expand the project to cover the entire country. GEM clubs are self-sustaining in the school once they are recognized as part and parcel of schools co-curricular activities. Capacity building activities of GEM are organized at the national level and implemented at the grassroots level.

Inclusiveness

GEM is inclusive in terms of gender and age. Boys are viewed as strategic allies in girls' education. Both genders are engaged in all activities. This is embedded in the operation guidelines, which specify that membership is open to boys and girls below the age of 25. GEM clubs have membership from Class 4. Once members attain the age of 25, they cease to be GEM members but are recognized as "Wisdoms" who can be patrons or advisors to GEM. GEM taps into the wisdom of the elders including the "wisdoms".

©Bako/GEM Uganda

Children of Orum Primary School participate in nominating and electing GEM executive members in a gender friendly ratio of 2:1 (two girls, one boy)

Leadership Training and Succession

The structure of GEM facilitates the development of leaders through training and experience. As GEM members roll on to become "wisdoms" when they turn 25, younger people take leadership positions. At the school level, successive leaders from lower classes take over leadership as others proceed to secondary schools. One of GEM's greatest achievements has been this empowerment and development of leaders. Young people have gained leadership skills through practical experience and training.

Community Involvement

A child-to-child approach marks the implementation of all GEM activities. The community is largely involved in needs assessment and seeking solutions to problems. A good example of community activities is the identification of out-of-school children and facilitation of their enrolment. GEM members locate such children within the vicinity of their school and follow up with visits to the children and their families. After discussion, the children may be allowed to go back to school. Local community leaders offer support by visiting the families to ensure that the children remain in school. GEM uses community elders as advocates for education.

Strategic Focusing

GEM's areas of focus are geared towards increasing access to quality education for girls. Towards this, GEM interventions are designed to address barriers to girls' education in Uganda. A holistic approach is applied in the design, starting with policy advocacy, capacity building and actual implementation of activities.

GEM Clubs

GEM clubs have been particularly active in conflict areas where security is a major threat to girls' education. In these areas, parents are reluctant to enrol their children in school for fear of attack. Girls are more at risk of being abducted and raped. GEM clubs encourage boys to protect girls on the way to and from school.

GEM clubs also provide a forum where both boys and girls can freely share their problems and fears. Cases of girls being forced into marriage by parents have been addressed in GEM forums. GEM has been at the forefront in the campaign against child marriage and is reported to have conducted a peaceful demonstration outside the house of a man alleged to have married a schoolgirl. As a result of the demonstration the man released the girl.

GEM operates on the premise that a girl-friendly school is a child-friendly school and lobbies for the establishment of separate toilets for girls, the return to school by child mothers and the integration of GEM into co-curricular activities. Other activities include peer counselling, peer teaching, and support for needy children through mobilization of scholastic materials and finances from members.

Capacity Building of Young Members

To facilitate this, GEM has developed a training manual and trained a pool of facilitators who have in turn trained GEM club members in schools. The training manual covers core challenges in education. Among the key issues are girls' education, gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, management of menstruation, child-friendly schools, planning, and school mapping. The training empowers GEM with knowledge and skills required to implement GEM activities.

As indicated earlier, GEM is a movement "of young people, by young people and for young people". Through GEM, young people have been given a voice to identify issues that affect them and have been empowered to seek solutions and address the issues. This makes the movement responsive and ethical as it is respectful of the interests and desires of members and beneficiaries.

The focus on girls' education is best illustrated in the structure of GEM clubs. The chair and vice chair are girls. Membership of GEM is in the ratio of 2 girls to 1 boy.

Effective Communication

Community capacity development is the mechanism GEM uses for communication. In this approach, communities are encouraged to analyse their situations and define their own strategies. UNICEF supports GEM with technical, human and financial resources to enable members to develop, articulate and share their messages about girls' education with other girls, parents, teachers, community leaders, boys and policy makers. GEM members design and participate in radio programmes, dramas, debates on topical issues, music and dance. Through discussions, they are able to identify barriers to education at the community level and design suitable intervention strategies.

Partnerships

From the onset, GEM established and has maintained a partnership with the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports, UNICEF, and the Forum for African Women Educationalists Uganda Chapter (FAWEU). GEM is also a major partner in UNGEI, bringing in young people's

participation and creative methods for advocacy and social mobilization. The partnership with government and UNICEF starts at the top. President Yoweri Museveni himself officiated the launch of GEM in 2001, with the UNICEF Executive Director participating.

Participatory Monitoring

Monitoring activities of GEM are as unique as the movement and conducted by the young people themselves. Monitoring is a continuous activity by university student members of GEM, carried out using a GEM monitoring tool developed in 2004. The tool, designed as a questionnaire, is a mechanism for gathering comprehensive data on GEM clubs such as when and how the club was established, leadership, election procedures, existence of rules and regulations, activities so far implemented such as school mapping and home visits, challenges and constraints, plus recommendation for the way forward. The information provides useful feedback to GEM for planning purposes. In addition, members who conduct the monitoring acquire and improve data collection skills.

Use of Creative Media and Advocacy

Effective use of media for advocacy ensures that intended messages reach a wide audience. The most popular channel of communication in Uganda is radio. Uganda has many locally-based FM radio stations and GEM has tapped

> With a structure that reaches from policy makers deep into communities, UNGEI is able to mobilize and advocate for girls' education from the national to the community level.

them to promote girls' education and gender equity.

Drama, music, dance and poetry are all used in community mobilization activities. These have proved very popular, given that messages and themes are identified by GEM members from the community and presented in the local language.

Key Successes of GEM in Uganda

GEM Uganda has been operational for over five years. During this period, the movement has made a remarkable contribution towards increasing girls' access to quality education. The following are some of GEM's successes to date:

- From an initial national chapter, GEM has established 7 district chapters and is operational in 30 districts.
- A GEM focal point has been established at the MOEST to support GEM.
- 415 GEM clubs have been established across Uganda.
- Previously out-of-school children have gone back to school.
- Child mothers have gone back to school.

- Peer guidance, counselling and mentoring has led to better menstruation management, which has in turn reduced school dropout among girls.
- Improved communication between girls and boys has enabled them to share information freely on education and other issues.
- GEM sensitization on HIV/AIDS has led to responsible behaviour.
- GEM's advocacy activities have increased enrolment of girls in schools.
- Boys in schools with GEM clubs protect girls in cases where the security of girls is compromised.

UNGEI in Uganda

As launched in Uganda in 2004, UNGEI is a multi-sector initiative under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and integrated within the Ministry of Gender, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health. A wide range of partners has been drawn from government ministries, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, community-based and faith-based organizations (CBOs and FBOs), the private sector, and donors with an interest in girls' education. UNGEI works with existing institutions, including GEM, bringing them together as partners and strengthening their capacity to accelerate girls' education.

Good Practices of UNGEI in Uganda

Several characteristics of UNGEI in Uganda make it a good practice. These include the composition of UNGEI membership, the structure of the

initiative and the strategic focus on girls' education.

UNGEI Structure

At the national level, UNGEI is steered by an advisory committee of 25 members. Membership is drawn from UN and bilateral donor agencies, civil society organizations, government ministries and institutions such as the ministries of Gender, Health and Finance, representatives from teacher training institutions, and supervisory services under MOES. Additional members are members of parliament and regional NGOs. All are linked by their common interest in promoting girls' education and gender equality directly or indirectly.

UNGEI is chaired by the MOES and co-chaired by FAWE-Uganda (FAWEU), with support from a working group of 15 members mandated to provide strategic guidance and implementation of the UNGEI vision, strategies and plans at country and district levels. UNICEF is the convener of the partnership.

Establishment of the UNGEI structure at district levels began in 2005. Here partners represent all organizations working in the education sector in the district. These include UN agencies, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, youth groups, the private sector and the district local government. At this level, the UNGEI partnership is referred to as the District Advisory Committee (DAC). Within DAC, a working group has been established to handle the administrative work of the partnership. A district local government official is the chair of the partnership, while the co-chair is selected from a local NGO. The office of the District Education Officer (DEO) provides technical support.

At community level partnership works under the banner of Camp Education Committees (CECs) in conflict affected districts and other structures at sublevels in other districts. The committee membership consists of a camp leader, a head teacher, a GEM representative and a member of the local government. In line with UNGEI goals, the committee is chaired by a woman.

With this structure, reaching from policy makers deep into communities, UNGEI is able to mobilize and advocate for girls' education from the national to the community level. Guidelines are provided from the national level, but the district and community structures ensure implementation at community level.

Strategic Design

UNGEI is very broad and ultimately envisions eliminating virtually all barriers to education. MOES has thus accelerated the attainment of objectives to accomplish this. Strategies include the creation of a gender task force and the launch of the Gender Parity Campaign Initiative.

The Gender Task Force under MOES has FAWEU, the Forum for Education NGOs (FENU) and the Ministry of Gender as its members. The role of the task force is to develop workable strategies for girls' education and to monitor implementation. Members of the task force are also involved in the formulation and translation of policies that promote girls' education into action. They also advocate for girl-friendly schools.

FAWEU is a key member of the gender task force. Renowned for its role in advocacy for girls' education and interventions to address barriers, FAWEU brings to the gender task force a

> The emphasis on close collaboration with communities brings together community leaders such as parish chiefs and religious and cultural leaders.

Child-friendly schools are:
- Rights based
- Gender-friendly/girl-friendly
- Healthy
- Safe and protective
- Strong on community linkages

*Girl-friendly schools
are child-friendly.*

broad experience and knowledge of gender. At the continental level FAWE has attained remarkable success in its role in gender-friendly policy formulation, advocacy and empowerment of girls through education and its role in establishing demonstration interventions in girls' education for governments to replicate. FAWEU taps this regional expertise and builds on its own experience as well.

The Gender Parity Campaign Initiative is a strategy of the MOES through UNGEI to ensure that Uganda achieves gender parity in education among pupils and the teaching staff. The campaign makes use of the UNGEI partnership as a channel for social mobilization. This initiative applies four main strategies:
- Youth participation
- Strengthening partnerships
- Media campaigns
- Gender sensitization

GEM is a key partner in UNGEI, representing young people and pushing their agenda. Through the gender parity campaign, a strategy paper for achievement of gender parity in education was developed. The paper outlines the categories of children unable to access education.

Emphasis is given to close collaboration with communities, bringing together community leaders such as

parish chiefs, religious leaders, cultural leaders and community-based organizations.

The Gender Parity Campaign Initiative engages GEM in some of its activities, such as school mapping and gender parity awareness.

The campaign identified a number of strategies to boost retention in schools:
- Child profiling – Children's profiles are documented to facilitate teachers' understanding of children and issues that are likely to affect their education
- Peer counselling
- Improving school environment
- Life skills, sexual maturation, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education
- Support to GEM clubs
- Remedial teaching in science and mathematics

The Partnership

By its very nature UNGEI is a partnership. Partnerships facilitate harnessing of synergy towards desired goals. The UNGEI partnership is wide-ranging, involving donors, technical personnel, financial commitment and a broad base of experience. The diversity of the partnership is further reinforced by the presence of UNGEI at all levels, from national to community. This not only ensures effective implementation of activities but also accelerates implementation. UNGEI develops work plans at all levels as well, which enhances the effectiveness of the use of available funds by reducing the risk of duplication of activities.

The UNGEI partnership makes use of existing structures – MOES offices, health institutions, schools, district offices, churches, teacher training colleges, among others. This strategy ensures that funds mobilized under UNGEI reach the community, for the sole

Analysis of GEM and UNGEI Interventions

GEM and UNGEI case studies present models for replication and expansion. The following analysis summarizes the interventions, highlighting strengths and impact.

Variable	Evidence
Innovation	Both GEM and UNGEI apply unique strategies. GEM applies a child-to-child approach in all activities. The GEM slogan, *Girls in the lead, boys as strategic allies while tapping into the wisdom of elders,* summarizes the uniqueness of GEM. GEM uses creative media – drama, poetry, music, dance, talk shows – to disseminate key messages identified by GEM members through school and community mapping exercises. UNGEI partnerships are thematic and focused on girls' education. Unique strategies such the Gender Parity Campaign Initiative are applied. The involvement of a large number of partners drawn from different interest groups is a great strength. Messages are sent via churches and mosques, movements, politicians, business community, donors, etc.
Effectiveness/ impact	Evidence of the positive impact of GEM is reflected by the capacity it has developed in young people who have acquired computer skills, seized opportunities for work experience in partner organizations, and are more focused on education, with clear objectives and goals. Most GEM members who joined while in secondary school have attained university degrees and employment. The impact of GEM and UNGEI can be seen at the grassroots levels in the general increase in enrolment in schools and in particular the increase of child mothers in school. This is also reflected by the proliferation of GEM clubs in 30 districts in Uganda. GEM has developed a team of young leaders and has been able to stop many child marriages. UNGEI has been very effective in policy advocacy and institutionalization of reforms such as a senior woman teacher in every school, gender training in teacher training institutes and gender mainstreaming within the MOES.
Reliability	GEM is a demonstration intervention. Since both GEM and UNGEI activities build on existing institutions, they are easy to replicate. GEM clubs are part of co-curricular activities in schools.
Relevance	Both GEM and UNGEI focus on issues that affect girls' education. Main areas of focus are increasing enrolment, addressing issues that affect participation of girls, e.g., security, making schools child-friendly, HIV/AIDS, support to orphans, help for child mothers, among others. These areas are key to attaining EFA and gender parity in education.
Responsiveness	GEM empowers members through training to conduct community mapping. Since members are from the community, they identify

	issues, seek solutions and work with the Members of the community are represented in the steering committees, hence ensuring that issues of concern are addressed.
Sustainability	Key aspects of GEM and UNGEI are social mobilization and advocacy. The two initiatives have built the capacity of young people and partners, equipping them with needed skills to demand their rights. Empowerment of people is a major factor in ensuring sustainability. Once people identify and realize their potential, nothing can stop them from demanding their rights. UNGEI is embedded in the MOES, while GEM is a key partner. The integration of UNGEI and GEM into MOES ensures that activities will continue through government allocation to education, although funding may not be adequate. UNGEI and GEM have built the capacities of members and partners at national, district and school levels. GEM clubs have been mainstreamed into schools as co-curricular activities. At the national level, GEM has introduced membership fees. Registration of GEM as an NGO is in process; when registered, GEM will be able to do its own fund raising. GEM activities have been recognized by local governments, which are willing to donate premises to GEM.
Efficiency	GEM members are volunteers. They have been trained and their capacities built as facilitators. Since GEM activities are implemented through partners such as FAWEU, UNICEF, MOES, etc., the network has not handled funds except membership fees, which are saved for the establishment of an office once GEM is registered. Both GEM's and UNGEI's use of partnerships is cost-effective as it ensures that there is minimal duplication and maximum utilization of available resources by the community to address concerns. UNGEI has established structures from national to community levels.

purpose of implementing activities. Resource limitations are addressed by engaging technical persons from government ministries, UN agencies and NGOs. Since their salaries are covered by their respective employers, UNGEI is able to cut down costs.

FAWEU complements the activities of UNGEI at both national and local levels. Through its scholarship programme for bright and needy girls for secondary education, the organization has succeeded in providing role models for girls' education. The bursary fund also counters anxiety caused by uncertainty about continuing to secondary education for lack of finances.

Through its role in influencing policy and curriculum design, FAWEU advocated for and supported the development of a curriculum for a fishing community in Uganda. Among other contributions of FAWEU has been the implementation of a science, maths and technology (SMT) project to propel girls into these disciplines. The SMT project has reversed girls' negative attitudes towards maths and science and resulted in improved performance among girls and boys in target schools. It is

anticipated that this will serve as a demonstration to other schools.

Achievements of UNGEI

The Ugandan government's ability to draw such a large number of partners into its promotion of access to quality education for girls' and attainment of gender parity is one of the key reasons for the high level of success of UNGEI in Uganda. UNGEI has emerged as an effective strategy for social mobilization at all levels. UNGEI partners contribute in complementary ways, bringing in different expertise, skills and experiences, as well as funding. The inclusion of NGOs and CBOs, plus private sector companies, has contributed to acceleration of UNGEI in Uganda. Some of UNGEI's achievements are detailed below.

Strategy Paper for Girls' Education
A key product of the broad UNGEI partnership framework is the development by MOES of a draft strategy paper entitled *Achieving Gender Parity in Education in Uganda: A Strategy Paper and Framework for Action*, June 2005. This document seeks to coordinate efforts by the different players in the country to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with priorities as gender parity and gender equality by 2015. The paper provides a useful guide to the implementation of UNGEI activities from national to community levels.

> Sensitization campaigns at district and community levels yielded efforts to find and enrol out-of-school children, such as orphans and child soldiers.

> A child-friendly school facilitates attainment of quality education for both boys and girls.

Extensive Outreach
Another success of Uganda's UNGEI programme has been its roll-out to the district and community levels. UNGEI provides a channel for social mobilization, through which campaigns such as the Gender Parity Campaign have been implemented. As a result of the training and sensitization efforts in the campaign, committees have been established at district and community levels and action plans developed. There has been a resultant campaign to find and enrol out-of-school children, such as orphans and child soldiers.

Institutionalization of Reforms

Reforms aimed at increasing access to education and ensuring completion at primary schools have been implemented at school, district and national levels of MOES.

Reforms at the National Level
Girls' education and gender empowerment are key areas of focus for the Ministry of Gender, a key partner in UNGEI. The gender ministry is at the forefront of formulating gender related policies and advocating for their implementation.

Emphasis on girls' education and young people's participation has been entrenched at the national level of MOES. The focal person has worked with GEM in implementing the gender parity initiative activities such as gender sensitization trainings, monitoring and

evaluation of girls' education initiatives at the district level, and support for the roll out of UNGEI to sub-county level in Kaberamaido District, where a bylaw on education has been developed and implemented.

Reforms at School Level

The greatest reform at the school level is making schools child-friendly. Child-friendly schools have strong emphasis on human rights – including the right to education for both girls and boys. In child-friendly schools, efforts are made to improve the school environment in order to realize the rights of the child. Activities towards this include use of child-friendly teaching methods and provision of playing equipment for children. These are reinforced by a gender responsive environment with female teachers and separate toilets for boys and girls in suitable locations. Provision of adequate water and sanitation facilities also promotes general health in a school.

A child-friendly school facilitates attainment of quality education for both boys and girls. UNGEI partners strive to achieve this by ensuring that schools have trained teachers through in-service training programmes, providing adequate teaching and learning materials and suitable furniture, and ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of children.

Through UNGEI, the capacity of schools to establish and maintain co-curricular activities is built through trainings, such as those by GEM. The introduction of guidance and counselling provides a channel through which girls and boys discuss and seek solutions to issues that may affect their education. UNGEI introduced the concept of peer counselling in schools. GEM members trained peer counsellors who in turn offer counselling services to their peers.

Members of the GEM club of Mabale Primary School, Kamwenge District of western Uganda

As a safe haven for children, the child-friendly school empowers girls through life skills to address issues that affect their lives such as HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and insecurity. Through UNGEI, schools have signed "safe school contracts" in which schools commit themselves to ensure that they are safe for girls.

Teachers are encouraged to document cases of absenteeism and the reasons for it, and to maintain profiles of children. Such records provide valuable information for interventions and follow up.

As mentioned earlier, the MOES has applied a broad based approach in UNGEI. All partners and structures of UNGEI are aware of child-friendly principles and hence all activities are implemented with the intention of making the schools child-friendly.

Challenges and Recommendations

The successful implementation of GEM and UNGEI has not been smooth. Various challenges have been encountered – financial constraints,

uncoordinated structures, inadequate capacity at various levels and sometimes lack of policy implementation. A number of recommendations are made to address these challenges.

Policy and Administrative Issues

Translation of Policies into Action and Follow-up Mechanisms

Uganda's legislative framework includes the Children's Act and the Children's Statute of 1966. These laws have not been effectively disseminated and enforced, however, as evidenced by the lack of awareness of the content amongst the communities. Enforcement of these laws would promote girls' education, as they seek to protect the rights of all children to education and to protect girls against forced marriage and FGM. UNGEI and GEM both advocate for the rights of children and strive to enforce the right of girls to quality education.

Recommendation: UNGEI structures can support the implementation and enforcement of laws and policy at the national, district and community levels. GEM, on the other hand, can monitor implementation in the schools.

Registration of GEM

GEM in Uganda has not been registered and therefore lacks identity as a legal entity. Although GEM is recognized as a young people's movement by the MOES, lack of a legal identity prevents members from conducting such activities as fund raising and designing and managing their own projects. Since its establishment, GEM has been operating from the FAWE-Uganda offices. To some extent,

this has been advantageous as members have acquired experience from FAWEU. In addition, they have volunteered in FAWEU and UNICEF activities, gaining the necessary skills required to run an organization. Such benefits notwithstanding, registration of GEM would create more opportunities for young people to gain and practise administration and management skills.

Recommendation: Hasten registration of GEM as a non-government organization.

Financial Constraints

With their wide coverage – GEM in 30 districts and UNGEI countrywide – the two initiatives require large amounts of funds. Donors have been the main source of financial support to date, and both GEM and UNGEI are heavily dependent on UNICEF funding. Reliance on donor funding does not ensure sustainability of a project.

Recommendation: In order to ensure continuity of activities, the MOES and GEM will need to identify other sources of funding. Whilst more donors can be brought on board, it is also important that both projects identify local sources of funding. A good opportunity lies in tapping the private sector. Both GEM and UNGEI can take advantage of the President's Partnership Programme, which encourages foreign and local companies to participate more actively in development as a social responsibility. Girls' education and HIV/AIDS are areas of interest for private companies. In addition, GEM should focus its capacity in fund raising and target outreach to a wider funding base. The Prominent Women's Network is a resource that GEM can use to raise funds.

> Enforcement of existing laws would promote girls' education, as they seek to protect the rights of all children to education and to protect girls against forced marriage and FGM.

Inadequate Facilities to implement UNGEI and GEM Activities at School Level

GEM and UNGEI share the aim of enhancing girls' education in primary schools by reducing barriers. Effective implementation of some activities requires physical and human resources, such as the presence of female teachers in schools, facilities to cater for babies for child mothers attending school, available space for guidance and counselling and the senior female teacher office, among others.

Recommendation: Lobby MOES to provide facilities to schools. UNGEI partners can also provide the facilities in schools in their areas of operation.

Data Collection Issues

Weak Data Collection and Monitoring Mechanism

Both GEM and UNGEI are decentralized from the national, district and community levels. Both projects require data for planning purposes. Availability of relevant and updated data would enhance planning and interventions and such information could be made available to all education partners.

Recommendation: UNGEI can support the establishment of an education management information system for the MOES. Through UNGEI, MOES can build the capacity of GEM to collect data and maintain the data bases.

Community Issues

High Expectations from Communities
Community expectations of GEM and UNGEI are beyond the capacity of the initiatives. According to GEM members, some people in the communities expect promises of support for secondary education once they enrol their girls in school.

Recommendation: UNGEI and GEM should both embark on activities aimed at changing attitudes amongst the communities. Women role models and guest speakers should be involved in enhancing appreciation for education. Communities should also be encouraged to plan for secondary education. Bright and needy students should be linked to the FAWEU girls' sponsorship programme for secondary education.

Lack of Gender Awareness in the Community
Inadequate knowledge of gender limits the impact UNGEI and GEM activities. Partners should be knowledgeable to be able to incorporate a gender perspective in all activities. Unfortunately, capacity in gender issues is limited from national to community levels, in spite of gender trainings having been conducted in the past.

Recommendation: Gender involves change of attitude, which is very difficult. Gender concepts are largely foreign to many communities and thus are difficult to put into practice. Gender training should therefore be held on a regular basis.

Lessons Learnt

A number of lessons can be drawn from GEM and UNGEI. These lessons can be applied to improve performance in existing and new projects. They include to:

◆ **_Systematically train young people in life skills to help them find solutions to many problems:_** Most of the challenges experienced by girls in education result from a lack of life skills. Girls in Uganda do not have the necessary expertise for dealing with situations in life. They lack confidence and self-esteem. Skills in communication, negotiation and conflict resolution, in addition to the knowledge they acquire in schools, would empower the girls. Self-awareness and self-esteem would make the girls work towards their highest potential. This would enable them to confront challenges such as sexual harassment and abuse, avoid pregnancies, and be able to say no to FGM. Life skills have proved successful in empowering girls to prevent, control and deal with issues related to HIV/AIDS.

◆ **_Bring beneficiaries on board early to enhance commitment:_** Full participation of beneficiaries in planning and decision making promotes their ownership of projects and a high level of commitment. Such projects are more likely to yield results and bring about anticipated change.

◆ **_Involve young people so that their full potential can be exploited:_** The potential of young people is well illustrated in GEM. GEM members have built their own capacity and that of others in MOES, in the districts and at school levels. They have adopted their own methods that have proved most effective in pushing the GEM agenda.

◆ **_Nurture partnerships as an effective strategy for implementing and sustaining projects:_** UNGEI's broad partnership strategy has been very effective in accelerating the achievement of EFA. The MOES has identified partners from the private sector, NGOs, donors and UN agencies. UNGEI and GEM have established partners in different levels in the country, hence reaching out to policy makers, donor agencies and the communities.

◆ **_Tap and consolidate locally available resources:_** The two case studies in Uganda demonstrate the existence of valuable resources, human, financial and physical. Financial resources can be tapped from the private sector, from the communities and from like-minded organizations. Physical resources are available in the form of institutions such as colleges and schools, while human resources can be found in partner organizations. Through partnerships, these resources are consolidated, resulting in effective utilization of funds and avoidance of duplication.

Conclusion

The success of UNGEI and GEM in the very complex situation in Uganda – characterized by conflict, a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst girls,

huge numbers of orphans, among others – demonstrates the power of an idea to overcome challenges that at times may seem insurmountable. The approach of "giving it all" calls for a commitment by duty bearers and rights holders to change the status quo. Change is difficult to initiate, and even more difficult to manage. Capacity building of rights holders is an effective way of facilitating and maintaining change.

Notes

[1] Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 1997.

[2] From UNICEF Uganda Programme Profile on HIV/AIDS. The information is from EvaluationInfo.coc, AIDS Information Centre website, http://www.aicug.org/Evaluation/

[3] There is no minimum age for GEM members as long as they are in P4. Some children in P4 are overage while some are underage.

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Annex

Places Visited

Amuru IDP Camp
Awer IDP Camp
Gulu
Kampala
Makerere University

Persons Met

UNICEF
Berna Babagura, UNICEF Education
    Section Administrator
Edward Bwengye, UNICEF, in charge of
    conflict areas
Joan Ejangu, UNICEF gender consultant
Peter Kabagombe, UNICEF Assistant
    Project Officer, Eastern Region
Kirsi Peltola, UNICEF Gulu Zonal Office
Sheila Wamahiu, Chief of UNICEF
    Education Section, Uganda

UNGEI and Gender Task Force
Atwine Immaculate, UNHCR
Beatrice Byakutaga, Makerere University,
    Principal Investigator, Nakaseke
    Primary Teachers' College
Edgar Byaruhanga, Christian Children's
    Fund
Stephen Kasoma, Straight Talk
    Foundation
Margaret K. Lubega, Kyambogo
    University
Kate N. Tibagwa, Acting Commissioner
    Pre-Primary and Primary Education,
    MOES
Connie Tinka, Thematic Director, Uganda
    Society for Disabled Children

Prominent Women's Group
Hon. Nvumetta Ruth Kavuma, Member
    of Parliament
Hon. Laetitia Mukasa-Kikonyogo, Acting
    Chief Justice

Private Sector
Serame Taukobang, Chief Operations
    Officer, Mobile Telecommunication
    Network

Makerere University
Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo, Associate
    Professor, Women and Gender
    Studies
Francis Nyachowo, Director of Gender
    Mainstreaming Programme in the
    Academic Registrar's Office

Gulu
Jeffrey Akele, Community development
    officer
Achalo Sidawa, Deputy Head and Patron
    of GEM Club, Pakewelo Primary
    School
Headmistress, Jimo P7 School, Awere
    IDP Camp
Amono Naiti, schoolgirl, Jimo P7 School,
    Awere IDP Camp
Rev. Vincent Ocheno, MOES, Gulu
Hon Okello Jocelyn, Gulu Member of
    Parliament
Langoya Otto Pamek, Chief
    Administrative Officer, Gulu
Okwarmoi Ben Walter, Acting District
    Education Officer, Gulu

FAWE Uganda

Rose Izizinga, FAWEU Vice Chair
Deirdre Mukweli, Board member
Dorothy A. Muhumune, Programme
    Officer
Martha Muhwezi, Technical Assistant
    FATA
Christine K. Rwankote, Programme
    Officer
Agnes M. Wasike, Programme Manager

GEM Members

Abalo Josephine
Akloi Ann
Babinrye Angellah
Damulira Christopher
Nakimbugwo Caroline
Nalwaya B. Caroline
Namanya Patience
Namiiro Milbert
Wamala Edward

Zambia: Turning a Page in Girls' Education

education in Zambia, especially for Members of the community are represented in the steering committees, hence ensuring that issues of concern are addressed.

Girls' Education before PAGE

At the time PAGE was established, the situation of girls' education was precarious, as indicated in a study by M.J. Kelly (1994). Both the availability and the quality of education had seriously degenerated over the previous decade. Under-investment in primary education was such that it comprised only 0.8% of GNP in the early 1990s. Primary education enjoyed only 29% of the education budget, compared with a historical 45% in the earlier decades after independence Kelly, 1994: 23–4).

The degradation of education was manifested in the serious demoralization of teachers. A sense of hopelessness and helplessness developed within schools.

One symptom of this breakdown of morale was the sexual harassment of schoolgirls, sometimes by teachers themselves. As a result, many parents, urban as well as rural, began to question the value of schooling for any child. At the classroom level, absence of materials, overcrowded conditions, teachers' attention to boys and the generally low opinion teachers have of girls' ability made it difficult for girls to participate with enthusiasm or to perform well.

One of the problems was the poor level of dialogue between the school and the community. This lack of close collaboration particularly constrained girls' participation in education. Few

> Before PAGE the school environment was so unfriendly that teachers were demoralized and parents began to wonder why they should send their children to school at all – but most especially their daughters.

Girls' Eduation in Zambia – Before PAGE

- Almost half the girls of school-going age were not in school. The dimensions of this problem were larger in rural areas where much more than half the school-aged girls were not in school.

- Primary school completion rates had been declining for some years. The decline occurred in all parts of the country and affected both boys and girls. But because the completion rates of girls were already low, especially in some rural parts, this decline put girls at a greater disadvantage than boys.

- The achievement levels of both boys and girls, as manifested by literacy attainments and examination performance, were low. Only two-thirds of those aged 13 could read and write. Literacy performance was better in urban than in rural areas. In every part of the country, the proportion of girls, at all ages above 13 or 14, who could read and write was less than the proportion of boys. Despite being selected on highly meritocratic grounds, secondary school students did not perform well in national examinations. In all public examinations, girls underperformed in relation to boys. Moreover, the performance of girls in the examination at the end of primary school had deteriorated, whereas that of boys had remained unchanged. Girls' performance in mathematics and science subjects was particularly poor [and] imposed severe restrictions on future training and career options.

- At the tertiary level, the number of female students in technological areas and the hard sciences was minuscule. In consequence, the number of females in certain professional and technological fields was minute, a factor that resulted in an absence of role models.

- Although newly developed textbooks did not portray sexist stereotypes, several of the older, more prejudiced materials were still in use. Teachers and parents had themselves been educated through these older stereotyped texts and hence had incorporated many of their prejudicial attitudes.

- The introduction of cost-sharing measures as a result of structural adjustment had stretched the ability of poor families to meet the costs of education. Where parents had to make a choice because of limited resources, the boy-child was more likely to be favoured.

- The girl-child was perceived ... as submissive, lacking in personal autonomy, and suffering from a debilitating inferiority complex. The ideal and almost only role envisaged for a girl was to become a wife and mother. She was expected to devote herself to children and chores so as to prepare herself for this role. Many regarded schooling as little more than a conventional intermission in this preparation for life and one that had little or no relevance once the girl reached puberty.

- The stirring of her own emerging sexuality, the pressures and values of society in relation to procreation and marriage, the too early attention of males (as older men targeted children and teenage girls as free from HIV/AIDS), and the presence in class of many late adolescent boys affected the chances a girl had of continuing in school or of performing well if she did continue (Kelly, 1994: 67–71).

communities considered that they had any role in the provision of education other than participating in building activities. Parents believed they had little control over the school. Many felt that what actually took place within the school was extrinsic to them and beyond their competence. From the other side, schools did little to involve parents and often reinforced parents' sense of inferiority in school-related matters.

One result was that cooperation between the school and the community was poor, sometimes nonexistent. Teachers appointed by Government came from outside local communities and often had little in common with illiterate and semi-literate traditional farmers. They often did not even share the same language or culture as the community. The school, on its part, made demands on parents in terms of fees, uniforms and participating in building activities at the school, as well as opportunity costs such as forgoing their children's labour.

Another problem was the high dropout rate of girls, sometimes caused by early marriage or teenage pregnancy. Other girls left school to take jobs as maids. Under existing policies, girls who dropped out could not return to school. Since many girls quit at Grade 4 or 5, they never managed to complete primary education.[1]

It was within this context that PAGE was conceived and initiated by the Ministry of Education (MOE), with the assistance of UNICEF.

One of the main policy outcomes of PAGE was the integration of gender into MOE policies and strategies.

PAGE strategies aimed at increasing the number of women teachers, women head teachers and women education managers.

The Establishment of PAGE

PAGE was a holistic and extremely ambitious programme. Initially funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), it aimed to transform the situation of girls' and women's education in Zambia. It is pertinent to examine in some detail 11 years later whether these highly ambitious objectives were actually attained, and if so the inputs and processes that enabled the programme to succeed.

The objectives of PAGE included:
- Creating public awareness through advocacy for girls' education and empowerment amongst grassroots communities as well as amongst decision makers at national, provincial and district levels.
- Strengthening Ministry of Education institutions at national, provincial, district and school levels to monitor and analyse data on girls' education.
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of classroom practices in providing learners, especially girls, with basic competencies.

PAGE outlined strategies at all levels. At national level, these included:
- Building leadership commitment and carrying out public advocacy for PAGE.
- Promoting policy development for the improvement of primary education, with special reference to girls.

- Supporting research to enable the documentation, dissemination and discussion of PAGE through symposiums, media presentation and other means.
- Promoting the development of gender sensitive, relevant and appropriate learning materials.
- Advocating for an increase in the proportion of women teachers, women head teachers and women education managers.

Interventions at provincial and district levels included:
- Orienting staff and increasing their capacities to support the development and implementation of PAGE.
- Supporting strategies aimed at increasing the number of women teachers, women head teachers and women education managers.
- Strengthening provincial and district capacities to include PAGE philosophies and objectives within annual plans, to monitor gender issues and targets, and to monitor, document and report on the experiences and lessons learnt from PAGE.
- Mobilizing support of government, political, religious and other opinion leaders in support of PAGE.

The school-based interventions included:
- Orienting head teachers and staff to PAGE and creating supportive learning environments.
- Advocating for school management and staff to be more supportive of girls' education.
- Training teachers to upgrade their pedagogical skills with particular emphasis on mathematics, science and the motivation of girl students.

- Providing relevant and appropriate learning materials.
- Defining and strengthening life skills pertinent to the needs of girls, for example, their aims and aspirations versus cultural and community pressures, growing up, pregnancy, etc.
- Introducing single-sex classes.
- Mobilizing community and parental support through community campaigns and the introduction of *Familypac*.
- Developing and introducing *EDUKIT* in conjunction with the Curriculum Development Centre.

PAGE Achievements

PAGE became an intrinsic part of the Ministry of Education strategy for achieving education for all (EFA), with special focus on the needs of girls in primary school, for more than nine years (1994–2002). It began as a pilot project in two provinces, Eastern and Lusaka Provinces, and then spread to cover Southern, Western, Copperbelt, Central, Luapula and Northern provinces. By 2002, when it was agreed to end PAGE as a separate and distinct project, it was also agreed that the PAGE best practices should be replicated nationwide. By then PAGE was entrenched in 2,080 schools out of a total of 4,556 basic schools in Zambia. That year, the Ministry of Education embarked on the Basic Education Programme (BEP). Many of the key PAGE policies and interventions were then integrated into BEP, which was developed by the Zambian government as a sector-wide approach to educational planning, financing and implementation.

Some PAGE achievements since 1994 have been impressive, given the extremely ambitious nature of the agreed upon objectives. At the same time, since the objectives were not quantified in measurable terms, the evaluation cannot be strictly quantitative. It is possible to critique weaknesses in the implementation procedures and processes, however, with a view to learning from the experience of Zambia.

In evaluating PAGE, outcomes can be divided into:

◆ Policy and strategy outcomes;
◆ Institutionalization of PAGE;
◆ Advocacy;
◆ Impact of PAGE on enrolments;
◆ Quality outcomes;
◆ Community participation and empowerment; and
◆ Partnerships.

Policy and Strategy Outcomes

At this stage, it can be said that the policies that made PAGE work have become institutionalized within the MOE as well as within communities; this has indeed empowered girls and women and their supporters. Among others, the policies focused on integration of gender issues into MOE policies and affirmative action for women staff members.

Integration of Girls' Education into MOE Policies and Strategies

Prior to PAGE, education policy was "gender blind", without any specific focus on gender issues. Notable policy changes included:

◆ Disaggregation of enrolment and examination results according to gender.
◆ Affirmative action in the bursaries programme.[2]

◆ The re-entry policy for pregnant schoolgirls and other dropouts, established in 1997 (MOE, FAWEZA and UNICEF, 2004),[3] which enabled substantial numbers of girls to return to school who would not otherwise have been able to do so. A total of 1,650, roughly a third of the girls who had left school because of pregnancy, were able to return to school between 2001 and 2003 under the re-entry policy, a significant achievement (MOE and UNICEF, undated/a: 4).

◆ The reorientation of textbooks and educational materials to remove gender bias.

It is important to note that policy went beyond the stage of rhetorical statements at ministerial level to include their institutionalization into the day-to-day functions of the Ministry of Education at all levels – national, provincial, district, school and community. For example, the collection and utilization of gender disaggregated data for planning, monitoring and evaluation have been systematized within the Ministry. The establishment of bursaries included both government and non-government funds and incorporated those provided by non-government organizations, in particular the Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA) through which donors could channel funding.

By favouring a diversified approach to the implementation of policies, the Ministry of Education was able to utilize capacities outside the state bureaucracy, thus markedly increasing its capacity. The disbursement of bursaries included, at school level, the parent-–teacher associations as well as members of NGOs and other organizations. FAWEZA members, for example, are involved in the selection of recipients of FAWEZA

bursaries and scholarships and are able to offer special tutoring programmes for bursary holders. These include both remedial teaching and specialist courses on science, mathematics and technology. Thus the Ministry of Education was able to utilize a wide variety of policy implementation instruments. This is also true of the re-entry programme, which involves both teachers and parents at school level in an individual case-by-case examination of the situation of girls and boys who apply for re-entry. Such close monitoring of policy implementation made it possible for PAGE to achieve a higher degree of success.

In examining how MOE policies and strategies, and their implementation, became effectively "genderized" it is important to note that there was a systematic programme to involve key decision makers at national level in examining existing policies in the face of emerging challenges. This was done through a series of national seminars. At the same time, these key decision makers were empowered to carry out the plans and decisions they made. Through UNICEF they were able to access hardware and software tools such as computers and photocopiers, as well as bicycles for teachers to visit absent students and dropouts in rural areas.

One key to success was the identification of "champions" within the MOE who were highly committed to gender equity and gender equality, and who ultimately continued to promote PAGE over a period of a decade. Without such consistent and firm political commitment for such a long period, success would have been difficult if not impossible.

Undertaking Affirmative Action for Women Members of Staff
One of the objectives of PAGE was to ensure that women are appointed as

teachers and are promoted within the education system. This required affirmative action and has been systematized into MOE regulations so that when a man is the school head or director, his deputy should be a woman, and vice versa. This simple rule has made a dramatic change in the number of women in decision making roles in the education system.

A monitoring exercise done in 2002 showed that the policy of affirmative action regarding the appointment of women teachers to schools and of women managers in education had made a difference: some 300 female managers and teachers had been promoted to positions such as head teachers, deputy head teachers, examination officers, education officers and inspectors of schools (UNICEF, 2002). Central Province had 73 out of 525 promotions for teachers and education managers that were women, an increase of 13.5%. The number of women teachers going for further studies was the same as that of men. In Copperbelt Province, women in management positions included 28% as Senior Inspectors of Schools, 40% as District Education Officers, 50% as District Inspectors of Schools, 45% as heads of 100 PAGE schools and 65% as deputy heads of PAGE schools.

Whilst overall national figures including a baseline study are not available, existing evaluations (which are generally limited to evaluations of work in different provinces) show a remarkable increase in the percentage of women in decision making positions. This is particularly notable in more urbanized areas.

In remote rural areas, however, there is still a predominance of men both as teachers and in decision making posts. In a visit to Shikabeta Basic School in Chongwe District by the evaluation team

in September 2005 there were only two teachers, and one head teacher, all of them males, with an enrolment of 281 pupils, thus with a teacher pupil ratio of 1:93. This appears to be rather typical of remote rural areas,[4] where there are few or no women teachers. Thus although the policy of affirmative action is working well at national level, in some districts and provinces, and in more developed and urbanized areas, it is not operational in remote rural areas.

There are several reasons for the absence of women teachers and head teachers in rural areas. Among these are the social and other problems experienced by young single women teachers in such environments, the difficulties faced by married women and mothers who would prefer not to be separated from their families, and the very poor transport facilities.[5] Teachers generally do not come from within the local communities, nor do they belong to the same socio-economic class as the pupils and their families and many of them have lived in urban areas for most of their lives. They therefore find the normal rural challenges such as lack of water and transport unacceptable.

Given this situation, a more focused and differentiated strategy is necessary for rural schools. This can include the posting of husband and wife teacher teams in such schools. Such an option may be attractive if service at these schools provides a ready road to promotion for young and ambitious teachers. A regulation requiring any teacher applying for a promotion post to have spent at least five years in a remote rural posting may change the picture

When a man is the school head or director, his deputy is a woman, and vice versa – a simple rule that has made a dramatic change in the number of women in decision making roles in the education system.

considerably.[6] The provision of bicycles under the PAGE programme provides a response to the huge distances separating settlements in many parts of Zambia.

The training of local girls and women to participate as assistant teachers would be a major step towards providing a cadre of locally born women who are accustomed to the hardships of such areas: these women could undergo in-service and distance education training to enable them to qualify first as para-professionals and eventually as fully qualified teachers. Although the number of girls completing Grade 7 in such remote areas is minuscule, a support programme for the girls who do could go a long way to addressing the problem.[7] Unless some concerted effort is made in this direction, schools in remote rural areas of Zambia will continue to have few or no women teachers – and thus no role models for local girls.

Institutionalization of PAGE

It is well known that unless improvements and innovations are institutionalized into national and local regulations and as routine bureaucratic requirements and processes, they may die away. Moreover, successful programmes must be supported by adequate locally available human resources institutionalized into either jobs or volunteer organizations. They must also have consistent and dependable financial provision, even if this is not high. Without such institutionalization, they will remain ephemeral and may

easily disappear. Zambia is particularly prone to this type of challenge, having been the experimental ground for numerous excellent educational innovations that somehow did not survive the test of time. Such innovations may have been highly dependent on outside expertise and funding, and failed to be sufficiently institutionalized into Zambian systems. It is important to examine the legacy of PAGE in terms of how successfully it has been institutionalized into both state and non-state systems.

Institutionalization into MOE Structures

Initially PAGE was institutionalized into the MOE through the formation of committees at national, provincial and district levels. A PAGE Steering Committee made up of senior officers from the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, as well as the cooperating partners, gave policy direction. The executive body answerable to the Steering Committee was the PAGE Management Team composed of heads of four key departments in MOE and the National Implementation Committee, which comprised national and lower level MOE officials. At provincial, district and school levels there were PAGE Action Committees, charged with ensuring the implementation of PAGE as well as monitoring the programme at their levels (Mumbwa et al., 1998: 5–6). In the districts, a Gender and Equity Focal Point was appointed at teacher level, with the responsibility of monitoring PAGE implementation. Such officers received a one-week training. Their tasks included:

- Sensitizing community and teachers.
- Providing guidance and counselling to girls.
- Providing support to orphans and vulnerable children at schools.

- Taking charge of bursaries for grades 1–12.[8]

The strategy was successful, particularly at the outset, where the various steering committees participated in incorporating PAGE principles into the MOE functions. Once this had been done, however, some committees no longer felt a need to meet, so that meetings became less frequent. The irregularity of steering committee meetings may have had an adverse effect on PAGE's ability to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges. This would indicate that new committees, with specialized functions, may be very important initially, but once the programme is well under way, decision making may need to move to established committees that meet much more regularly. For example, senior management meetings within the MOE at different levels may be held weekly or fortnightly, and it would have been important to ensure that PAGE issues were brought up regularly at such meetings. Meetings of national and provincial heads of education may also be held regularly, usually quarterly or once a term, and again PAGE could have been integrated as a regular area for systematic monitoring. Some system-atization, such as bringing up PAGE progress and challenges every quarter or half yearly, may have been a useful mechanism for institutionalization.

Inservice courses can be utilized as criteria for the promotion of teachers and head teachers, providing an in-built incentive for regular updating, monitoring and evaluation.

PAGE concerns were institutionalized into the data collection system and into the Grade 1 enrolment system where 50% of enrolment is supposed to be of girls. At the appointments and promotions levels, major improvements were institutionalized and the percentage of women in the MOE has increased.

These activities were funded by UNICEF and other donor agencies. Assuring that there is sufficient funding for planning, training, monitoring and evaluation of the programme within the MOE's financial allocation constitutes an important part of its institutionalization into the education system. From this perspective, PAGE remained dependent on donor funding, which can be seen as a weakness that can be tackled by incorporating PAGE into ongoing MOE upgrading, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation programmes.

Funding at school level, a PAGE innovation, has been successfully implemented by the MOE, which has provided funds to schools since 2002. However, the utilization of and accountability for such funds still requires considerable refinement.[9]

The management and development of human resources are key forms of institutionalization. In this area PAGE has scored some successes, such as a change in the regulations for promotions. The percentage of women going for further training is equal to the number of men. It was nevertheless apparent that there is a high rate of staff turnover at all levels, caused by deaths, transfers and promotions. HIV/AIDS may play a part in contributing to this high turnover. Thus within a short time, it is possible for very well trained staff to be lost to the system or to the locality. The serious and continuous shrinkage and reduction of the human resource base of the education system, and in this case, specifically of the PAGE programme, must be addressed.

The PAGE in-service training approach was to train two teachers from each school. These two participants were expected to train their colleagues through the cascade model. There is need to ensure that the orientation and training programmes are more permanently integrated into the education system, so that the majority of teachers, head teachers especially, receive regular courses particularly at school level. A number of ways exist to approach this challenge: one would be to institutionalize the PAGE in-service training into every school, so that the school leadership is obliged to upgrade and update staff regularly utilizing the PAGE materials. This can be done by holding weekly or fortnightly professional seminars based on the materials developed for the PAGE programme. These are of an excellent quality and are highly relevant. Inservice seminars held frequently at school level would enable all the teachers in the school to become familiar with the PAGE principles as well as implementation methodologies.

Such in-service courses can be utilized as criteria for the promotion of teachers and head teachers, providing an in-built incentive for regular updating,

> The PAGE school grants programme intended to empower grassroots communities, foster decision making processes at school and community level, and promote local accountability.

monitoring and evaluation. Prizes including certificates that can be displayed at the school can also be awarded for high achieving schools. The Gender and Equity Focal Point can play an important role in introducing such an in-service approach for all teachers. From interviews with teachers in visited schools there is a high demand for courses as well as for recognition of achievements.

Another approach that is complementary to the school-based in-service training is to provide every teacher with the opportunity to enrol in a distance education staff development programme that incorporates the PAGE training as an integral part of the diploma or degree programme. Already the MOE has established a requirement that all primary teachers should be upgraded to diploma level and all secondary teachers to degree level.[10] PAGE training materials could be incorporated into new and ongoing distance and in-service training programmes. In this way the PAGE methodology, as well as other excellent curriculum and methodology materials already developed in Zambia, can be more firmly institutionalized into the education system.[11]

Two teacher training institutions – Chipata Teachers College and David Livingstone Teachers College – experimented with the integration of PAGE principles and issues into their courses. They produced modules entitled "Gender Studies and Social Change",

and sensitized lecturers on gender issues. This pilot programme has since been implemented in almost all colleges. By 2002, all first-year teacher trainees, an average of 250 a year, were taking gender studies and developing materials for gender-friendly pedagogy (UNICEF, 2003: 12). Institutionalization of gender training into the teachers colleges constitutes one of the most important ways of ensuring that the PAGE concerns and methodologies become a long-term part of the education system.

One observation was that many staff had responsibility for PAGE only on a part-time basis. For example, the Gender and Equity Focal Point at district level worked on PAGE part-time. This is also true at national and provincial level. There is need for some full-time staff to be totally devoted to gender and equity issues in the MOE; there is adequate work at the various levels to justify some full-time appointments, particularly in terms of teacher training, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, having an officer on the ground checking on the implementation of the programme has been one of the major contributory factors to its success.

Transformation of the Curriculum

Curriculum work was initiated at the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of the Ministry of Education to introduce gender across the curriculum. Among the excellent materials developed by CDC was *Familypac* and educational materials, "edukits", and other teaching and learning aids. Initially produced by CDC in 1996, *Familypac* intended to strengthen participation of parents, teachers and pupils in the teaching and learning process to ultimately improve pupils' performance. Dissemination began in 1998. Increased parental interest in school activities and support to

homework was reported in this period. Since then *Familypac* has been reprinted and has been utilized for a large number of workshops in all provinces.

Institutionalization of Single-Sex Classes

One of the innovations introduced by PAGE was the establishment of single-sex classes in larger schools. The recommendation was that in large schools, there would be one class of girls only, one class of boys only and one mixed class. This innovation was enthusiastically supported by girls themselves, but parents in some schools expressed reservations on the grounds that the isolation of girls in their own classes would not provide them with sufficient experience in handling life situations where sexes would not be isolated. The impact of single-sex classes in PAGE schools on girls' performance was identified as:

- Increased confidence in themselves and their abilities.
- Increased willingness to participate in class discussions, answer questions, and take part in reading and other activities.
- Evidence of more learning taking place, such as pupils going to schools to study at weekends.
- More positive interactions among pupils, teachers and parents with respect to learning.
- Girls able to express their ideas better.
- More competition among girls and between single-sex and mixed classes (Mumbwa et al., 1998: 11).

By 2000 there were 314 single-sex classes in seven provinces. The 2001 PAGE report states that "Tests and questionnaires administered point to higher levels of achievement and

> PAGE is sustainable because parents are involved in reinforcing the basic principles of girls' education: this is an outcome of the highly successful advocacy campaign.

confidence from girls in single-sex classes compared to their counterparts in coeducational classes although the differences were not significant" (UNICEF, 2003: 13). On the Copperbelt, the increase in learning achievement in Grade 7 from 48.3% in 2000 to 61.1% in 2001 was attributed mainly to single-sex classes.

Institutionalization of the School Grants Programme

PAGE initiated a school grants programme as a way to ensure empowerment at grassroots level, foster decision making processes at school and community level, and bring about more local accountability. This important innovation has since been integrated into the MOE financial disbursement system. At one school visited, it was confirmed that the school had received Kwacha 6 million from the MOE.[12] There is clearly need for much more work on this programme, however, as school staff and parents have not had sufficient guidance, training or experience on budgeting and accountability. For example, some schools spent their grants on football team uniforms and refreshments during football matches; although this would appear a reasonable way to spend the school grant, it was observed at one school that more urgent priorities had not been attended to, such as lack of blackboards, lack of textbooks, falling ceiling, etc.

Establishment of Bursary Schemes

The establishment of bursaries for lower income families who could not afford to pay school fees for their daughters was one of the important interventions in Zambia. It was not directly introduced by PAGE, but it supported PAGE work. There is now a well-established bursary system for girls, which includes bursaries by the MOE and from various NGOs and donors. Parents play an important role in deciding how such bursaries are awarded. The most active of the NGOs has been FAWEZA, whose bursary holders also enjoy additional advantages, such as remedial classes, an important intervention to provide support for vulnerable girls. The bursary system has increased secondary school access for girls.

Advocacy

One of the major successes of PAGE was its advocacy role. From its inception PAGE maintained a vigorous national awareness and mobilization campaign in support of girls' education. Radio and television programmes were utilized to sensitize the community at large. A National Symposium on Girls' Education was held in 1997.

Advocacy was carried out at various levels, including among top political and technical leaders at MOE who participated in working out the details of the PAGE programme. It was also a powerful instrument at grassroots level, where traditional attitudes and customs, such as early marriage and childbearing, may impede the education of girls and women.

Whilst advocacy has been one of the most important achievements of PAGE, there is evident need for advocacy content and targeting to be more refined. For example, it was reported that

illiterate mothers did not find the PAGE advocacy programme, *Familypac,* intended to assist parents to support their children's learning, to be helpful or even possible. The fact that 30% of adult women are illiterate should have been taken into account. Moreover, the advocacy programme did not utilize African languages sufficiently. It would have been more empowering to have community-focused materials available in local languages. One possibility is for the advocacy to be integrated into literacy lessons in local languages, with a special target of mothers of primary school children. Such a programme has already been initiated by FAWEZA, enabling mothers and daughters to learn from each other, and can usefully be expanded to all schools. The FAWEZA programme entails daughters teaching literacy to their mothers and the mothers teaching traditional skills to their daughters, such as the cooking of some exotic Zambian dishes.

UNICEF has a strong comparative advantage in utilizing advocacy through the use of mass media, as well as through girls' clubs, conferences and seminars. As a UNICEF sponsored programme, PAGE was able to benefit from the use of advocacy tools, so that some of the key concepts of PAGE have now won common currency with the Zambian public. One result is that it is now well accepted that schoolgirls who become pregnant should be dealt with sympathetically and allowed to complete their education wherever possible. Advocacy regarding HIV/AIDS prevention has had a strong impact on the school system, enabling the problem to be discussed openly and publicly. Confronting rather than hiding these challenges has made problem solving more possible.

PAGE is sustainable because of the involvement of parents in reinforcing the basic principles of girls' education: this is an outcome of the highly successful advocacy campaign.

Impact of PAGE on Enrolment

For some years, the impact of PAGE on enrolment appeared to be negligible. The cumulative effect, however, particularly on institutions, attitudes and values, meant that the sudden availability of resources resulting in the introduction of the policy of free primary education in 2002 led to an abrupt rise in enrolments. In 2001 only 66% of Zambia's 2 million 7–13-year-olds were in primary school. Of the 700,000 school-aged children not in school, 56% were girls. NER increased from 69.3% in 2001 to 71% in 2002, to 75.3% in 2003 and to 84.7% in 2004, when the gender gap narrowed to 0.97% in favour of boys (MOE and UNICEF, undated/a: 1, 3). By 2004, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) had increased to 108.5% for boys and 102.2% for girls.[13] The sudden increase in funding is linked to the reduction of Zambia's debt through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative beginning in 1999 (IMF, 2005).

Even though the jump in enrolment in 2002 cannot be attributed solely to the work of PAGE, there is little doubt that some aspects of PAGE such as its advocacy programme, its efforts to improve classroom learning processes, its inclusion of gender awareness in teacher education at both pre-service and in-service levels, the inclusion of parents in school decision making, and the re-entry programme for dropouts, contributed substantially to the

increase.[14] The focus period showed a substantial increase in the primary school completion rate, about 11% for both girls and boys within four years (see Table Z1). It is important to notice that the gender gap did not decrease substantially, and in fact increased in 2003, a year after the introduction of free primary education, despite the evident success of many aspects of PAGE.

The retention rate for basic education pupils in Grade 6 rose from 83% in 2001 to 95% in 2003, however, an increase of 5 percentage points above the target set for 2006. The higher retention rate may be due to a number of factors, including the strength of the community school programme, which ran parallel to PAGE, and the introduction of free education. The convergence of a number of programmes proved to be mutually reinforcing. Nevertheless, about a third of girls who enter primary school do not complete their studies. This points to the need to examine additional tactics and strategies to boost the enrolment and retention of girls in primary schooling.

Table Z1: Primary school completion rates 2001–2004

	Girls	Index increase	Boys	Index increase	Gender gap
2001	58.85%	100.00	71.77%	100.00	12.92
2003	65.66%	111.57	80.26%	111.83	14.60
2004	65.83%	111.86	78.31%	109.11	12.48
Increase in percentage points	*6.98*		*6.54*		

Source: Statistics taken from Ministry of Education and UNICEF, *UNICEF Programme Report for BEP Project 01: Learning Achievement (LA), Education for the Mid-Term Review of GRZ/UNICEF Country Programme 2002–2006*, pp. 1–3.

Quality Outcomes

One of the most important issues in education is that of the quality of the education: It is well understood that we cannot judge educational goals only in terms of enrolment figures – it is also essential to have high quality and relevant education. As noted in the Introduction to this volume, UNICEF has identified a number of the key aspects of quality education, including healthy learners, safe and healthy school environment, relevant curricula for imparting basic skills, child-centred teaching methodologies, and linkages with national development goals and priorities.

Guidelines for Establishing "Girl-friendly" Schools

The UNICEF quality ingredients were incorporated in whole or in part into one of the key documents developed by the MOE, the *Guidelines for a Girl-Friendly School,* which provides indicators and processes by which a "girl-friendly" school can be established and measured (MOE, 2004a). The *Guidelines* are also directly based on some key PAGE principles, such as:

- ◆ To advocate for girls' education.
- ◆ To develop self-esteem and assertiveness among girls.
- ◆ To carry out affirmative action in the promotion of women in education management positions, so as to provide more role models for girls.
- ◆ To improve efficiency and effectiveness of classroom practices for the benefit of all pupils.
- ◆ To collect and analyse data on girls' education (MOE, 2004a: 7).

Thus the MOE has integrated PAGE concerns as fundamental to the girl-friendly school. Continued focus on these key areas for more than a decade has helped to ensure that the principles are more deeply ingrained into the system. Moreover, the MOE has worked out in some detail how head teachers, teachers and communities can actually transform their schools into girl-friendly schools. The concept of quality education is clearly defined under five sections:

- ◆ Physical facilities
- ◆ School administration and organization
- ◆ Curriculum
- ◆ School health and nutrition
- ◆ Community participation

The *Guidelines* include a very useful checklist of indicators for measuring whether a school has managed to

achieve a satisfactory quality of education. The area of physical facilities, for example, covers issues such as basic classroom requirements (ventilation, lighting, chalkboard, etc.), toilet and water facilities, and others. School administration and organization encompasses gender sensitization and gender equality, sexual harassment, accountability, in-service training of teachers, pupil governance, professional codes of conduct, and involvement of the local community in some aspects of school administration.

The curriculum should include life skills relevant to the local community, attitudes and values, entrepreneurial skills, problem solving skills, and social skills. The teaching methodology should be pupil centred, including group work. School health and nutrition covers environmental health, water and sanitation, personal hygiene, nutrition, and guidance and counselling.

Finally, community participation is seen as essential for the wellbeing of the school and its pupils and includes parental involvement in many types of school projects and activities: fund raising and open days, counselling, the preventive maintenance system, cost-sharing to help vulnerable children including through bursary schemes, and provision of specialized skills that link school work to community life.

The "Go Girls" Campaign
Launched in 2004, the "Go Girls" campaign focused specifically on increasing school enrolment. The intention was to get more girls into school, to enable them to remain in school and to equip them with skills necessary to succeed in life. It was based on successful elements of FAWEZA programmes. The "Go Girls" campaign aimed at school level

> The dependency syndrome can be a serious barrier to real local development: Some parents refused to take responsibility for any improvements at their schools after "free primary education" was introduced because all school costs should be the responsibility of government!

sensitization and re-registering girls who had dropped out. An evaluation of the programme showed that it appeared to be largely managed by teachers, with a lesser role for the community (Gwaba and Namalambo 2005: 14, 25). In order to enhance its effectiveness there was need to have greater community involvement and to review cost implications.

Provision of Physical Facilities in PAGE Schools
One of the important interventions for the girl-friendly school under PAGE was the provision of water and sanitation, including through a large programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Water and sanitation are fundamental to a healthy school environment. It was observed, however, that this is one of the most expensive of interventions and also one that caused disputes, with some communities accusing the authorities of favouring certain schools over others.

A dependency syndrome was also observed in some communities, which were waiting for toilet facilities to be provided by the state, whereas it may have been more practical for schools and communities to provide such facilities themselves. It is necessary to review how toilet facilities are being provided to schools, and how far toilet construction

could be delegated to the school and local community. As the technology for building good toilets is not very difficult, it is possible for local contractors to receive training and supervision, with responsibility resting with the school authorities.

The provision of a clean water supply also required attention, although in this case local interventions may not be sufficient. One observation was that non-target schools were much more able to improve and maintain their physical infrastructure, because they were more self-reliant, whereas target schools were more likely to wait for physical improvements to be done through donor funds by outside contractors (MOE and Royal Netherlands Embassy, 2003: 39).[15] An additional observation was that some parents refused to take any responsibility for any improvements at their schools after the introduction of "free primary education" in 2002, as they felt that all school costs were now the responsibility of government. The dependency syndrome constitutes a serious barrier to real local development.

A number of methods can be used to prevent donor dependency, for example rewarding self-help by parents and communities by providing subsidies that are only available to parental and community groups undertaking certain responsibilities. Fixed grants can be made available for specific improvements, such as building new classrooms, maintaining and improving old classrooms, providing electricity, constructing toilets, building a library, buying books for the library, etc.[16]

The recent introduction of funds directly to schools could include specific amounts for improving and maintaining school facilities. During school visits, we saw schools without chalkboards and toilets, both of which could be provided locally at very low cost.

Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

At school level there was a shortage of materials for pupils, teachers and parents, yet ready availability of materials is recognized to be critical for quality maintenance and improvement. The lack of materials was more observable in non-PAGE schools. The present system of distributing materials is through MOE structures. The existing system can be retained, but should be complemented by other forms of distribution. It may be necessary to include commercial availability of PAGE teaching and learning materials, so that schools can buy additional copies. Materials can also be distributed to the already existing network of NGOs and CBOs that are participating in programmes to improve education. MOE can play a critical role in subsidizing and negotiating with commercial publishers to ensure that prices remain low. Having several distribution systems is much more efficient than depending solely on the state system. Bulk procurement was recognized as a comparative advantage of UNICEF that assisted the MOE and the school system as a whole, and has been commended as an important contribution to programme success.

Teachers complained that they needed to know more about how to implement the PAGE principles in the classroom. There is thus a strong demand for more materials, in terms of both the availability of existing materials and the need for greater diversification of materials. Teachers were also keen to adopt more pupil-centred learning, and would appreciate more modelling of teaching content and methodologies.

Improvement of Teacher Performance

According to one evaluation, teacher morale and performance improved in PAGE schools, leading to higher quality teaching and learning. This was indicated by the following observations:

- Desk arrangements in some schools that suggested pupil-centred teaching approaches.
- Teachers who appeared to be highly motivated despite the absence of personal incentives.
- Use of innovative teaching materials.
- Teachers ready to use their spare time and weekends to assist slow learners.
- Teachers following up absent pupils with the use of PAGE bicycles.
- Sharing of PAGE lessons with other teachers.
- Female teachers being used as role models for girls.
- Teachers involved in sensitizing parents and communities about the importance of girls' education.
- General support and encouragement for all children (Mumbwa et al., 1998: 10).

On the other hand, another report indicates that the quality of teaching in both target and non-target schools remains poor:

> In target as well as non-target schools methods and techniques used in the classroom were generally inappropriate and teacher rather than learner centred.... Teachers appear to use the traditional didactics of teaching and rote learning and this makes it difficult to bring in learner centred activity-based approaches...
>
> In some classes, especially grades 4–7, there is much repetition and classes are sometimes too big for effective teaching due to the re-entry policy and the advocacy programme putting emphasis on sending back the girl child to school.

> Class observations revealed weaknesses in both timetable management and quality control. Both the target and non-target schools showed that teachers have a basic understanding of what constituted good teaching, but do not effectively apply it in their daily work.
>
> A review of the exercise books showed that pupils' minimum competencies of say copying from the textbook without making spelling mistakes, reading competence, the management of homework in both target and non-target groups were relatively low due to the poor comprehension of instructions in the English language, a factor which affects their learning abilities (MOE and Royal Netherlands Embassy, 2003: 27).[17]

Moreover, during school visits for this evaluation it was observed that because of the high turnover of staff in schools, teachers who had been trained as PAGE coordinators were not necessarily still at the school – originally two teachers had been trained for each PAGE school. Such a high turnover has had a destabilizing effect on the education system, including on the PAGE programme. As mentioned earlier, the existing PAGE training could be institutionalized into in-service teacher upgrading and updating run by the head teacher and senior staff as part of staff development. Such school-based courses could also be integrated into distance education diploma or degree courses, which would be beneficial to the teachers in terms of career development and promotion.

Inservice training of head teachers as well as of all teaching staff to familiarize them with more modern and interactive teaching methodologies would be highly beneficial to the school system as a whole, and could substantially improve the quality of learning and achievement. Such practical training

could also be readily included in the proposed in-service distance education diploma and degree courses.

Some work has already been done to in-service college lecturers, head teachers and teachers utilizing Module 7, a module developed to promote gender sensitive teaching for student teachers. Several hundred participants have been trained each year since 2000. This type of training needs to be stepped up. Despite the success of these courses, there is nevertheless a recognized need for development of clearer guidelines for managers on how to institutionalize gender in their schools.

Strengthening Local Leadership for Better Decentralization

The MOE has adopted a policy of decentralization, so that decision making and responsibility can be located closer to the service delivery locations. It is recognized that decentralization of budget responsibility and decision making will enable greater community empowerment, as this will allow control over human and financial resources to be vested at local levels. The provision of grants to schools – pioneered by PAGE – has now been incorporated into the MOE's disbursement system. This will

result in the empowerment of schools by involving parents and teachers in the management of resources.

Decentralization can imply devolution, i.e., the transfer of legislative, political, administrative and financial authority to plan, make decisions and manage public services and results to local communities, and involving local NGOs and CBOs in the management of local public services. It can, on the other hand, be deconcentration, i.e., the decentralization of powers to local level bureaucracies.[18] In the case of Zambia, the decentralization process is still at an early stage. Accordingly, "the decentralization of education to ensure that the education system is professionally managed by local level structures has remained a dream and has often been implemented selectively. Also these factors affect the quality and efficiency of provision of basic education" (NORAD and UNICEF, 2002: 11). The same evaluation reports that the "vicious cycle of ineffective management continued to haunt the programme: late submission of work plans led to delays in the disbursement of funds, this in turn led to delayed and inconsistent liquidations of funds which in turn led to delayed implementation of activities" (NORAD and UNICEF, 2002: 5). According to some evaluation reports, target schools have managed to keep up-to-date financial records, but other evaluations point to poor record keeping in other respects at district and school levels.

In addition to accurate record keeping on finances, there is evident need for further in-depth training of school leadership in professional areas such as pupil-centred teaching and learning methodologies. The low levels of achievement in examinations in most schools is symptomatic of weaknesses in the school leadership as well as in the training of

teachers. Inservice training of head teachers through a longer-term professional formation than allowed by short orientation courses may contribute to the strengthening of leadership at local levels.

A comparison made in an evaluation of the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) in Western Province shows that there is a substantial difference in the effectiveness and efficiency of education services in target schools compared with non-target schools (MOE and Royal Netherlands Embassy, 2003: 31). For example, the decentralization of decision making was "moderate" in target schools, but "rather low" in non-target schools. Decentralization of budget responsibility to the districts and schools was "rather high" in target schools, compared with "moderate" in non-target schools. The roles and responsibilities of the key players at districts and schools are well defined and operational in target schools, but "rather low" in non-target schools. In general, it can be said that the additional work done to embody decentralization in target schools has resulted in a higher level of attainment than in non-target schools. Some of the training programmes that have worked so well in the target schools could well be expanded to cover all schools.

Achievement

Tables Z2 and Z3 show Grade 5 achievement results in English and mathematics, respectively. In both subjects there are improvements of a few percentage points. The mean score in English increased from 33.2 in 2001 to 34.3 in 2003, while the mean score in mathematics rose from 34.3 to 37.9 in 2003. The fact that only a third of Grade 5 pupils are able to attain the minimum desirable levels of achievement must be a cause for concern and requires focused interventions.

The gender gap in terms of achievement does not appear to have narrowed over the period (Table Z4). However, it appears that in selected schools where the Primary Reading Programme was in place, both boys and girls scored higher in English, with girls scoring higher than boys (38.5% for girls vis-à-vis 37.8% for boys).[19] This appears to be a viable intervention for improving achievement in English.

HIV/AIDS Education

HIV/AIDS education comprised an important part of the PAGE interventions from the beginning, and school and classroom interventions in this area have been complemented by utilizing children's clubs and peer group discussions. Anti-HIV/AIDS books were developed, published and distributed to all PAGE schools to sensitize pupils on

Table Z2   Grade 5 achievement in English 1999–2003

1999			2001			2003		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
34.1	33.4	33.2	33.6	33.0	33.3	34.4	34.2	34.3

Table Z3   Grade 5 achievement in mathematics 1999–2003

1999			2001			2003		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
35.7	33.9	34.3	36.9	34.4	35.7	38.8	37.0	37.9

Table Z4   Gaps between mean percentage points by gender over 1999–2003

	English	Maths
Boys	34.03	37.13
Girls	33.53	35.10
Gender gaps in percentage points	0.50	2.03

the dangers of HIV/AIDS. A National Youth Symposium to establish an understanding of young people's perception of HIV/AIDS as well as arm them with basic life skills with which to fight the pandemic was held in 1999. At that symposium, all schools were mandated to form anti-AIDS clubs, which would work closely with non-government and community-based organizations (NGOs and CBOs). A booklet entitled "Happy, Healthy and Safe Youth Activity" was developed, printed and distributed for use in the AIDS clubs. The anti-HIV/AIDS programme included courses for the most senior officials within the MOE as well as for tens of thousands of teachers, pupils, youths and adolescents in all provinces (NORAD and UNICEF, 2002: 14).

Curriculum developers and writers were trained and HIV/AIDS issues were incorporated into the curriculum in the form of life skills, which were introduced into schools. Such a concerted and intensive programme of HIV/AIDS education comprises a major achievement for PAGE.

Reports indicate that teachers are still embarrassed to speak about HIV/AIDS, however. This is a common finding in traditional societies. In a situation where teachers and other adults feel unable to address the pandemic directly, the utilization of peer group education will play a major role. The involvement of the mass media will also comprise an important input.

Research and Development Support
PAGE established a pattern of utilizing the University of Zambia and individual consultants to undertake research, followed up by seminars and workshops to discuss the findings with all stakeholders. Research included analysis of the educational situation of girls prior to the establishment of PAGE, annual

reviews of how PAGE was being conducted, and the development of teaching and learning materials.

The MOE also commissioned the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) to undertake a gender audit of the Ministry. The result of this was the development of a tailor-made gender course for education managers, which was to be implemented in collaboration with the In-Service Training Trust (ISTC) commencing in 2003 (NORAD and UNICEF, 2002: 17).

The participation of the University of Zambia in informing policy and strategy formulation by the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders ensured that PAGE decisions and activities were grounded in a sound research and development base. This is a very important achievement of PAGE, as Zambia is one of the few countries in Africa where policy and strategic planning have been informed by high quality research, and where there is no blockage between academic research and policy makers and implementers.

Community Participation and Empowerment

Communities, in particular parents, became more involved in the decision making at school level, beyond the traditional responsibility of paying fees and participating in building classrooms. Communities were expected to:

- Enrol their children, especially girls, in school.
- Encourage their children to stay in school until they complete their education.
- Take a keen interest in the performance and progress of their children at school by participating in *Familypac* sessions at school and

home. *Familypac* is a programme involving children, teachers and parents in positive learning experiences in specific areas of the school curriculum.

- Instil good moral and spiritual values in the children.
- Improve the learning environment to make it child-friendly through the provision of infrastructure, rehabilitation, furniture, learning and teaching materials, and labour.
- Discourage any customs that hinder girl-child education.
- Ensure a fair distribution of household chores between girls and boys in the home.
- Provide role models that will inspire girls to remain in school.
- Assist their children with homework, read with them, etc.
- Strengthen the community school linkages through regular interaction (Banda et al., 2005: 19).

Schools were to foster "cordial and supportive" community–school relation-ships by involving parents/guardians in school projects, fund raising and open days, in counselling both teachers and pupils, and in teaching specialized skills to link school work to community life. In addition, parents were to participate in cost-sharing, including in payments in kind and the establishment of local bursary funds. Bursary funds have become an important mechanism for enabling needy children, particularly girls,

to attend secondary school and parents participate in the selection processes for a number of these schemes.

The Curriculum Development Centre developed a manual to help teachers to involve parents in the actual teaching and learning processes (Banda et al., 2005). The aim was to enable parents to support their children's learning more effectively. Parents are oriented to utilize some simple teaching techniques to help their children's reading and mathematics. Moreover, parents are encouraged to ensure a good balance between the work required of the child at home and the school work children are expected to do.

A monitoring and evaluation study done in 1998 recorded the following examples of parents' involvement:

- Parents were going to school to observe teaching and learning in their children's classrooms.
- Parents were volunteering to participate in school activities and do work around the schools.
- Parents were cooperating on school committees.
- Public relations between school and parent communities had improved, making the work of PTAs easier.
- Some parents had agreed to be used as role models.
- Increased appreciation of girls' education among parents (Mumbwa et al., 1998: 9).

In an interview with a member of the Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) of Mukamambo High School, a mother indicated that the PTA now played a more important part in decision making in the school, especially in the sharing of the available resources such as bursaries, the construction of additional classrooms and the provision of free labour to improve the school, in particular through participation in the

building programme. The parents believed that their concerns at this school were seriously taken into account. Issues such as the poverty level of the parents, as well as the interest and ability of the girls, were considered in deciding on the re-entry of dropouts and in the award of bursaries.[20] At this school 14 girls had benefited from the re-entry policy, 13 of whom had left school because of pregnancy and one who had left because of financial difficulties. Some 14% of the girls had benefited from bursaries.

The training and updating of parents and communities regarding school matters is an area that needs strengthening. Some important work has already commenced under the *Familypac* programme. However, it will clearly be helpful to involve the parents more actively than is presently the case, as without such parental support it will be difficult to improve the quality of schooling. This will mean further training of parents and communities on issues related to education, beginning from the level of illiterate mothers to more sophisticated understanding by parents of the school goals and processes. Zambia has inherited a tradition where teachers are in control of schooling, and parents have little say in what happens in the school. This barrier between the school and the community needs to be bridged. Parents could progressively take a more active part in the governance of their schools.

Partnerships

The ability of PAGE to draw in a large number of partners who were able to contribute in term of human resources, experience and funding is one of its most important achievements. In particular, attention needs to be paid to the contribution of effective partnerships with

> The longevity of PAGE is itself an achievement in a situation – common to many developing countries – where policies and strategies may be subject to frequent changes.

the international community and with local and other non-government organizations in supporting and implementing the programme.

International Partners

The MOE was able to bring in partners such as UNICEF, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Norwegian Agency for International Development Cooperation (NORAD), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Irish Aid, the Netherlands government and the World Food Programme (WFP). Each of these partners was able to bring specific interests and specialist skills to the table.

Institutionalization of NGOs as Players in the Education System

The MOE also worked closely with NGOs and CBOs to make PAGE work. This contributed considerably to the programme's success. Foremost amongst the NGOs was the Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA). FAWEZA's mission is to advocate for educational policies and programmes that favour the education of girls and women, and to enhance participation of all those involved in the promotion and provision of girls' education, with special attention to science, mathematics and technical subjects.

FAWEZA's goal is to improve girls' and women's enrolment, retention, progression, performance and completion rates at all levels of the education

system. These are the same goals pursued by the Ministry of Education and by UNICEF through the PAGE programme. Thus a strong alliance was formed between the state sector and the NGO sector, supported by UNICEF.

FAWEZA enjoyed the advantages of being able to work at the grassroots with local communities, in particular with mothers and their daughters, a different level from the operational and bureaucratic levels of the Ministry of Education. At the same time, through its membership of women teachers and other educators, FAWEZA was able to reach out into every school. Each FAWEZA member is expected to work on a voluntary basis in one of five areas: research and programmes; community work and advocacy; science, mathematics and technical subjects (SMT); monitoring and evaluating; or resource mobilization. Among the most significant of FAWEZA's activities is the work at community level, including advocacy directly with parents and grassroots organizations, school level bursary programmes, learning support groups at school level, and work with mothers. In its work with girls, FAWEZA has strengthened guidance and counselling, especially peer counselling, and provided extra tuition through remedial learning camps and computer literacy lessons.

Other achievements have been establishment of the Reading Circles

Among policies that worked were the establishment of single-sex classes, the re-entry programme for girl dropouts, the incorporation of gender issues and HIV/AIDS education into school clubs, and the integration of gender training into teacher training colleges.

Programme and interventions to improve girls' participation in SMT subjects. In addition, FAWEZA helped to analyse curriculum material for gender bias and to develop gender responsive teaching and learning materials.

Lessons Learnt

PAGE continued as a distinct programme from 1994 until 2002, when it was integrated into the sector-wide approach to education planning and funding. When it was integrated, its principles and concerns were also clearly integrated. In other words, the programme has survived in one way or the other for a period of more than a decade. Its longevity is itself an achievement in a situation common in Zambia and many other African countries where policies and strategies may be subject to frequent changes.

Such changes may be due to discontinuities in funding of donor-dependent programmes and to the instability of political leadership at a time of frequent elections under multi-party democracy when ministers of education may hold their posts for a very short period of time. Although some terms of office may be three or four years, sometimes they are as short as nine months. In many countries, including in Zambia, the change of political leadership also comes with a change of the bureaucratic leadership. Added to this political and bureaucratic instability, donors, who have played an important part in supporting PAGE, are also subject to changing fashions and priorities.

Among the lessons of PAGE are to:

- *Remember that commitment is essential:* Incorporation of gender in

education policies is highly feasible, but takes effort and commitment. It requires consistent focus over a long period, and the support of powerful "champions" within the political and bureaucratic leadership of the Ministry of Education who are prepared to ensure that steps are taken over a substantial period of time to integrate gender issues into the system. It requires training of staff at all levels and support at the bottom as well – from girls and boys themselves and from their parents. Finally, it requires some physical symbols of commitment, which were provided for by both the Ministry and UNICEF in terms of physical inputs such as courses, construction, equipment and materials.

- ◆ *Move from rhetoric to action:* The programme's powers of survival may be because of its initial holistic and seemingly over-ambitious approach, aiming at the transformation of the whole education system. In particular, PAGE sought to integrate gender issues into educational policies and strategies. In this objective it was singularly successful, as gender entered the educational arena not only in policy statements, but also through institutionalization in a number of areas, such as gender disaggregation of data; affirmative action on behalf of women members of staff; and the transformation of the curriculum and textbooks, including the development of a number of manuals like *Familypac* on how to integrate gender at school level. Other policies that worked were the establishment of single-sex classes, the re-entry programme for girl dropouts, the incorporation of gender issues and HIV/AIDS education into

school clubs, and the integration of gender training in teacher training colleges. In addition, the list of successful policies includes fostering greater community participation in education through a process of decentralization, including the seminal move of providing school grants, a strategy that has now been accepted within the system as a whole.

- ◆ *Tap the experiences of others:* The fact that PAGE coexisted with a number of other disparate projects, such as SPRINT, AIEMS, community schools, and debt reduction for education and other social services, led to a happy convergence of objectives and outcomes to some extent. For example, higher enrolments partly occurred because of the establishment of community schools, which provided a 50% increase in the number of schools located closer to children's homes. Community schools followed a streamlined, highly creative yet very practical and pupil-centred curriculum and methodology, incidentally created by staff at Makerere University in Uganda. At the same time, the introduction of free primary education, coinciding with a huge reduction of Zambia's debt, made it possible for the MOE to increase its investment in education. The worldwide concern about the spread of HIV/AIDS during the decade also coincided with the early integration of HIV/AIDS issues and awareness into the PAGE schools.

- ◆ *Train the teachers in girl-friendly principles:* PAGE has been based on holding short orientation and

sensitization workshops, and these have been successful. Further institutionalization should include making such workshops and courses available through distance education and in-school in-service teacher upgrading on a voluntary basis, but linked to the promotion system. Already the MOE has established a policy of enabling teachers to upgrade their qualifications to diploma and degree levels. This policy can include the integration of the excellent PAGE materials into distance education in-service training for teachers.

◆ *Take decisions closer to the people:* The decentralization policy that moves responsibility and decision making closer to where services are delivered is important, not only for efficiency and effectiveness, but also for more democratic governance. Zambia is only at the initial stages of this process, however, and much more intensive work is required in order to ensure that local managers, teachers, parents and communities are better able to take on more of the responsibilities for running a school successfully. Progressive decentralization of responsibility may counteract the problems caused by frequent staff turnover, which is presently a feature of the education system.

Conclusion

The major achievements of PAGE are evident in more than half of the primary schools in Zambia. Even in those schools that were not officially target schools,

some aspects of PAGE have managed to filter through, such as in the appointment and promotion of women teachers and school managers. There is nevertheless need for further work to strengthen the gains that were made in terms of the transformation of the education system.

Further work should include better and wider dissemination of the manuals and textbooks already developed within the country as well as the development of more such materials. The present dissemination system needs to be supplemented by several other distribution mechanisms so that textbooks are more available in all schools. The introduction of more bookshops, including enabling village general stores to sell books as well, will not only make educational materials more widely available, but also provide a possible boost to the Zambian economy.

Finally, the readiness of the MOE to embrace an approach involving multiple partners working towards the same goals and processes has contributed significantly to the success of the programme as a whole. By allowing a diversity of approaches, but a unity of purpose, PAGE was able to remain focused on its original goals.

Notes

[1] On a visit to Mutakwa Basic School on 14 September 2005, it was found that whilst there were 50 girls in Grade 1 compared with 30 boys, by Grade 6 there were only 17 girls compared with 30 boys.

[2] In an interview with FAWEZA staff on 12 September 2005, it was reported that 60% of university bursaries provided by the state were reserved for women students.

[3] In September 1997, the Minister of Education, D.S. Syamyjaye, announced that schoolgirls who became pregnant would no longer be expelled. He also declared that those who had been expelled in 1997 should be allowed to return to school.

[4] This is supported by an evaluation done by Alice Siachitema et al. (2002) on the situation in remote rural areas in Southern Province.

[5] Shikabeta School is about 38 kilometres from the main road, and the only form of transport available is access to a bicycle. The long distance by cycle entails some security problems for all, but more particularly so for young women.

[6] This type of systematized rotation of teachers exists in Australia, Canada, Zimbabwe and many other countries. Teachers would thus see their stay in a rural area as part of their career development path, leading to eventual promotion. Teachers who have not served in remote rural areas would then find it difficult if not impossible to obtain promotion posts.

[7] At Shikabeta School there were only 13 girls out of a class of 80 pupils in Grade 7 (about 16% of the total) in 2003. There was reported to be a threefold increase in the number of girls, as a result of the Ministry of Education and UNICEF "Go Girls" Campaign.

[8] Based on interview with Ms. Monica Dhaka, Gender and Equity Focal Point, Chongwe District, 14 September 2005.

[9] According to USAID Education Advisor, Rick Hennings, in a meeting on 13 September 2005, work is being done by a team consisting of MOE and donor partners to fine tune the framework and accountability for funds disbursement. Observations during a school visit to Mutakwa Basic School just outside Lusaka showed that although a relatively substantial MOE grant was received, it was not utilized to redress obvious problems faced by the school, such as lack of toilets, blackboards and learning materials, but was instead spent on uniforms and sports equipment.

[10] Information from Dr. Richard Siaciwena of the Distance Education Department of the University of Zambia.

[11] In addition to PAGE, Zambia is fortunate to have had a number of excellent initiatives such as SPARK, a high quality teacher training programme developed for community schools. Two other well known good quality programmes developed in Zambia are School Programme of Inservice for the Term (SPRINT) and Action to Improve English, Mathematics and Science (AIEMS). Moreover, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has developed many high quality materials that can be utilized in such in-service and distance education courses. The institutionalization of all this work into the education system will provide a valuable way of strengthening the reform of the system, particularly the improvement of the quality of education.

[12] Equivalent to about US$1,500.

[13] Source: Education management information system (EMIS), MOE, December 2004.

[14] It is to be noted that Zambia is a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) and had a substantial debt reduction programme. Education was one of the sectors that benefited from HIPC financing. It should also be noted that the Community School Programme supported by the MOE and UNICEF expanded school access considerably during the same period.

[15] The report indicates a lack of parental and community ownership when infrastructure was provided free of charge by outside authorities.

[16] This is the system in practice in Zimbabwe, where the Ministry of Education provides grants for infrastructure to responsible authorities, mainly churches, local authorities, communities and parents, as well as a separate fund for the purchase of school materials known as a "per capita grant".

[17] "Target" schools were those included in the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) programme, which had incorporated the PAGE inputs.

[18] This distinction between "devolution" and "deconcentration" is introduced in the evaluation of PAGE entitled Education for All Programme, Learning Achievement Project, August 1997–December 2002, NORAD and UNICEF, Lusaka, 2002, p. 12.

[19] Statistics from Ministry of Education and UNICEF, Programme Report for Basic Education Programme (BEP) for the Midterm Review of the GRZ/UNICEF Country Programme 2002–2006, p. 3.

[20] Interview with Mrs. Shonkola, parent and PTA member at Mukamambo High School. This was predominantly a girls' boarding school, but also took in local children, both boys and girls, as day scholars.

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Annex

Places Visited 12–16 September 2005

Lusaka
Chongwe District
Makamambo Basic School, Chongwe District
Chief Shikabeta, Chongwe
Shikabeta Basic School, Chongwe
Mutakwa Basic School, Mungule District

Meetings and Interviews

In Lusaka

Matildah Fikoloma Mwamba, Campaign for Female Education Programme Manager, former PAGE coordinator in MOE

Barbara Chilangwa, Permanent Secretary for Youth, former Permanent Secretary for Education

Prof. Richard Siacewena, Distance Education Department, University of Zambia

Daphne Chimuka, Director, FAWEZA

Dorothy Kasanda, Programme Manager Access and Quality, FAWEZA

Gloria Muyunda, Programme Manager, HIV/AIDS and Advocacy, FAWEZA

Mrs. Mbewe, Technical Assistant, FAWEZA

Margaret Akinware, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF

Michael Banda, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF

Regis Mary Gwaba, UNICEF consultant

Celina Namalambo, UNICEF consultant

Winnie Chilala, USAID

Rick Hennings, USAID

In Chongwe

Monica Dhaka, Gender and Equity Focal Point, Chongwe District

Rhoda Khalawula, Head Teacher, Mukamambo High School

Margaret Phiri, Deputy Head, Mukamambo High School

Mrs. Shonkala, Parent and Member of the Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), Mukamambo High School

Mr. Dhaka, Head Teacher, Mukamambo Basic School

Y.B. Mbewe, Head Teacher, Shikabeta Basic School

G.I. Mukansi, Teacher, Shikabeta Basic School

Levison Banda, Teacher, Shikabeta Basic School

PTA of Shikabeta Basic School

In Mungule

Head Teacher Mutakwa Basic School

Jacqueline Mutewa, Administrator of Zambia Hope International, a local NGO