

Gender equality policy and strategy 2016-2020

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GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
for EDUCATION

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY AND STRATEGY 2016-2020¹

I. GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-responsiveness must be a core priority throughout the work of the Global Partnership for Education, given the vast mutual importance of gender equality and education. As the global community has become increasingly aware, education plays a key role in realizing progress toward gender equality, empowering girls and boys with foundational skills, knowledge and skills for work, leadership capacities, increased livelihood opportunities, influence and autonomy. At the same time, gender equality is indispensable to achieving educational goals that will make sustainable development possible. Experts have observed that education, along with economic growth, are the two key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) most critical for the rest of the Goals to be achieved,ⁱ and a recent report from the International Monetary Fund notes the centrality of gender equality to economic growth.ⁱⁱ Investments in education and gender equality yield private and public returns, supporting both economic and social development, as well as the advancement of global social justiceⁱⁱⁱ and the human rights agenda. Their benefits extend to individuals, families, communities, and society at large.

2. GLOBAL PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Since 2000, developing countries have made tremendous progress towards achieving gender parity in enrolment at the primary level. While there has been remarkable progress in boosting girls' enrolment and completion of primary school among GPE developing country partners during the period of the Millennium Development Goals, significant gender gaps remain.

Girls tend to drop out in rural and remote communities in underserved areas where there are no government schools. Adolescent girls often face significant barriers in making the transition from primary to secondary education. School infrastructure is not always ready for girls and may lack separate toilet facilities, soap, water, and safe places to manage menstruation. And in many countries, when girls reach puberty they are required to take on new roles that focus on marriage, motherhood, and employment instead of education. Gender-based violence in and around schools has negative impacts not only on girls' participation and achievements, but also on their physical health and psychological well-being. Families often favor investing in boys' education over girls' education. The poorest and most marginalized girls, including those living in conflict and crisis situations, face particular challenges.

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While girls are the most affected by gender discrimination in education, boys also face barriers to education. In particular, vulnerable boys living in poverty often drop out of school to go to work. Boys are involved in the worst forms of child labor, and in farm work, which families often consider a boy's responsibility. Poor families often prioritize the education of older boys over younger boys. In conflict-affected and fragile states boys are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and criminal gangs. There is regional variation in boys' participation and achievement in education: for example, in the Caribbean region, boys are more likely than girls to drop out of secondary school.

Barriers to gender equality in learning environments include stereotyping and sexism in curricula, textbooks, teaching training and classroom practices; school-related gender-based violence; and a lack of appropriate separate water and sanitation facilities for girls and boys. In addition, critical gender issues in children's lives, including child marriage, early pregnancy, child labor, poor nutrition and health status and negative social beliefs and practices, continue to have severe negative impacts on the educational opportunities and outcomes of girls and boys.

3. GLOBAL RESOLUTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

The global agenda for 2030 marks a new era with a strong consensus on the importance of gender equality in education, as well as education as an important vehicle for advancing gender equality. The Sustainable Development Goals confirm and amplify the strong connection between gender equality and education established in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and elaborated in 1995 in the Beijing Platform for Action, where education is identified as one of twelve critical areas of concern. SDG Target 4.5 specifically calls for the elimination of gender disparities in education and equal access for all, and the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goes further to underscore the centrality and mutual dependence of education and gender equality.^{iv} Gender equality is essential for the successful realization of SDG 4 regarding quality education for all,^v and inclusive and equitable education is likewise indispensable for the achievement of SDG 5 regarding gender equality and female empowerment.^{vi} Both are central drivers of the wider Sustainable Development Agenda, including Goal 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries.

Many other global resolutions on the 2030 Agenda underscored the vital importance of gender equality and education as well. The Incheon Declaration that came out of the 2015 World Education Forum stated, "We recognize the importance of gender equality in achieving the right to education for all. We are therefore committed to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools." Moreover, there was substantial language on the importance of inclusion and equity more broadly, including the assertion, "No education target should be

considered met unless met by all.” In the 2030 Agenda this principle is formulated in relation to the agenda as a whole, as the core principle, “leave no one behind.” The Muscat Agreement of the 2014 noted gender equality as a particular concern in achieving education for all, and the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda noted the importance of scaling up support to both to education and gender equality in order to achieve sustainable development.

4. GENDER EQUALITY LEADERSHIP MANDATE OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION

The global community has underscored the crucial importance of gender equality in, for, and through education and has named the Global Partnership for Education as a key institution for delivering on these priorities, in collaboration with other partners. The Incheon Declaration and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda respectively recognized the important role of the Global Partnership in global education coordination and resolved to scale up investment in it. Due to its nature as a unique multi-stakeholder partnership to support effective, equitable, and inclusive national education systems, prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable, the Global Partnership for Education is particularly well situated to advance gender equality. Going forward, strengthened attention to gender equality in its policies, planning and operations is vital for the Global Partnership to deliver on its mandate, including the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 and its results framework.

In light of these challenges, a robust Gender Equality Policy for the Global Partnership for Education is needed, and will directly support its ambitious mission. In implementing a combination of integrated and targeted approaches to mainstreaming gender equality, the Global Partnership aims to support a new generation of better educated and empowered girls and women, boys and men, promote more equal gender relations within education systems, and contribute to changes in gender norms and relations at school.

5. PAST AND PRESENT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORK OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION

The Global Partnership for Education’s operational model, funding mechanisms, and grants have increasingly supported gender equality through high-quality sector analyses, planning, implementation and monitoring. Girls’ education was one of five objectives in the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, in alignment with the focus of the Millennium Development Goals, and of the Education for All goals, on girls and on expanding access to education.

Accordingly, Developing Country Partners have made good progress to date on expanding access and completion for girls. Thirty-one GPE countries have achieved or are approaching gender parity in primary school enrolment. Sixty-nine percent of girls completed primary school in 2013, up from fifty-

four percent in 2000. And the number of girls out of school fell by twenty-two percent between 2000 and 2012.

As the sustainable development agenda makes clear the shift in focus from girls' education to gender equality more broadly, this has been reflected in the Global Partnership's Strategic Plan for 2016-2020. Our vision statement adopts Sustainable Development Goal 4, "inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all." The promotion of gender equality is one of the eight guiding principles of the new Strategic Plan, and features in Strategic Goal 2, "Increased equity, gender equality, and inclusion." As advancing gender equality is central to the achievement of all of the Global Partnership's strategic goals for 2016-2020, the Global Partnership collects sex-disaggregated data to report on the Results Framework for this period. This includes monitoring the learning outcomes, completion, and out-of-school rates of girls and boys, and the proportion of education sector plans with strategies to address gender inequality among other forms of disadvantage. The focus on gender equality in the Strategic Plan also reflects the incorporation of valuable inputs from partners and experts to a thematic consultation on the topic, co-convened by UNGEI and the Global Partnership in August 2015.

A Gender Equality Institutional Assessment (GEIA) of the Global Partnership for Education was completed in September 2015. The GEIA reviewed the Global Partnership's commitment to gender equality through five core areas: 1) its policy suite, 2) leadership and accountability, 3) institutional environment, 4) strategic planning, and 5) monitoring and reporting. The GEIA found that the Partnership demonstrated a commitment to girls' education over the period of the last Strategic Plan, notably through its collaborations with UNGEI. However, its overall rating of the Partnership was "fair", emphasizing the need for the Partnership to work on gender equality more broadly, beyond its focus on girls, to dramatically strengthen efforts and engagement in integrated approaches to gender mainstreaming across all of the workings of the Partnership, and to develop a more robust institutional approach for the Secretariat. The GEIA report suggested a number of recommendations for implementation over a 5 year timeframe^{vii}. All of the GEIA recommendations will be implemented as part of the Gender Strategy over the next five years".

6. DEFINITIONS

The terms "gender equality" and "gender-responsive" are used throughout this Policy. While different parties may define these terms somewhat differently, the Global Partnership for Education understands them as the following:

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys, and equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. It encompasses the

narrower concept of gender *equity*, which primarily concerns fairness and justice regarding benefits and needs. Gender equality also refers to the transformational commitment needed to make equal rights and equal power a reality, within the human rights agenda. It entails that the interests, needs, and priorities of females and males be taken into consideration, recognizing the great diversity within these groups. Gender equality benefits women and men, girls and boys, and should be of concern to all.

When an education policy, system, or approach is **gender-responsive**, it means it is informed by an awareness of the effects of gender norms, roles, and relations as they impact education, and that it takes measures to actively reduce those effects that pose barriers to gender equality. It also assesses girls' and boys' specific needs and interests, and works toward equal educational outcomes for girls and boys. This includes equal access to education, participation in the classroom, learning achievement and completion.

7. AIMS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION

The Gender Equality Policy is vital for the realization of the Global Partnership's mission, strategic goals, and objectives.

The aims of the Policy are to:

- i) increase gender equality in access, participation, and learning achievement for all girls and boys*
- ii) improve gender equality in education systems*
- iii) strengthen gender equality in education sector legal frameworks, policy and planning processes*
- iv) ensure robust execution of commitment to gender equality across the Global Partnership*

The Gender Equality Policy is intended to work within the core architecture and operations of the Global Partnership for Education, including its Strategic Plans. The aims of the Policy align with the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 as the figure below illustrates.

Figure 2: Alignment of Policy Aims with GPE Strategic Plan 2016-2020 Goals and Objectives



8. DELIVERING EFFECTIVELY ON THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

The achievement of gender equality is an essential guiding principle for the Global Partnership, and one of eight principles emphasized in the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020.

The Global Partnership understands the achievement of gender equality in education to include six key components:

- i) Mainstreaming and targeted approaches
- ii) Attention to multiple inequalities to reach the most disadvantaged girls and boys
- iii) Responsiveness to varying country contexts
- iv) Strong evidence and country level data
- v) Allocation of sufficient human and financial resources
- vi) Appropriate competencies and capacity

These six key components, described in more detail below, will focus our efforts and ensure progress towards the achievement of the Gender Equality Policy aims.

i) Mainstreaming and targeted approaches

The Global Partnership will adopt a twin-tracked strategy of mainstreaming and targeted approaches to ensure a comprehensive and powerful institutional commitment to gender equality across the Partnership.

Mainstreaming refers to the integration of gender-responsiveness into all core operations of the Global Partnership. This applies to all aspects of our country-level work, as well as to our gender-responsiveness as an organization. Gender equality must be seen as an integral part of all GPE policies, programs and projects.

Targeted approaches are an important complement to mainstreaming approaches to advancing gender equality. They involve starting with a gender analysis,^{viii} which includes the collection of baseline data, analysis of risks, and development of mitigation strategies. Targeted approaches identify specific areas of marked inequality (for specific populations in a specific country, for example, or for a specific aspect of educational inequality worldwide), analyze the underlying factors contributing to this inequality, and design and implement interventions that target those factors.

ii) Attention to multiple inequalities to reach the most disadvantaged girls and boys

The Global Partnership recognizes gender equality as an important piece of a larger picture of equality and inclusiveness in educational opportunities for all, ensuring our efforts are effective in reaching the most disadvantaged girls and boys.

Central to the realization of gender equality is the inclusion of *all* girls and boys, women and men – which means paying careful attention to the many layered and intersecting factors, from socioeconomic status to location to ethnicity, that shape experience and opportunity. Since people’s lives are not shaped by gender dynamics in isolation, but in combination with many other social factors, the gender equality efforts of the Global Partnership must address that fact.

iii) Responsiveness to varying country contexts

The specific forms that gender inequality takes can vary dramatically between and within countries, as well as over time. For example, which girls or boys are most disadvantaged, which aspects of educational opportunity and achievement show the most disparity, and what systemic and/or environmental factors are the greatest causes of disparity can differ from case to case.^{ix}

Moreover, the Global Partnership's DCP's represent low- and lower-middle-income countries, increasing numbers of whom are contexts affected by fragility and conflict.

This is why the Global Partnership does not pursue a one-size-fits-all approach to advancing gender equality in GPE countries, but rather one that encourages and equips each country to assess the groups, aspects, and causes most associated with educational disadvantage within different regions, and the ways in which this picture is evolving from a gender perspective. The financial and technical support for quality education sector analysis and planning provided by the Global Partnership emphasizes a country-led and participatory approach. This enables local stakeholders to participate in setting relevant and realistic objectives for gender equality within broader education sector development plans and strategies.

iv) Strong evidence and country-level data

Sound evidence and quality data are indispensable for improving education sector planning in the area of gender equality. The contributions of partners across the Global Partnership in strengthening the availability, quality, analysis, and use of data on gender equality in combination with other intersecting factors, will help Developing Country Partners to establish increasingly reliable analyses of who is most disadvantaged, and in what aspect of educational opportunity, regarding marginalized girls and boys in their populace.

Leveraging the expertise of existing partners and forging new partnerships, the Global Partnership will support countries to address the many barriers to gender equality and a quality education for all, through gathering, analyzing, sharing, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge, good practice and effective strategies in different contexts. In doing so, the Partnership will support countries to remove barriers to equitable education for all. This will employ the Partnership's role as a knowledge broker, supporting the sharing and uptake of good practices in advancing gender equality.

v) Allocation of sufficient human and financial resources

Key to the success of any policy is ensuring the feasibility of its implementation. The Global Partnership will demonstrate its institutional commitment to gender equality through the allocation of human and financial resources to fully implement the strategy. This includes dedicated staff and funding to the Secretariat for the activities it will undertake as part of annual action plans to achieve agreed deliverables

A partnership approach will involve engaging Secretariat staff, Board and Committee members, Developing Country Partners, and other Partners in the mainstreaming and capacity-building activities in the Strategy, and harnessing the skills, knowledge, capacity and resources of all.

vi) Appropriate competencies and capacity

The Global Partnership will become better able to deliver on its commitment to advancing gender equality as it continues to build competencies and capacity for this work across the Partnership over the period of the Strategic Plan.

A Secretariat with dedicated staff with expertise in gender equality, within a strong Equity and Inclusion team, is necessary to achieve progress. All staff will be required to attain essential competencies in gender-responsive approaches and apply these to their individual roles and responsibilities. Through surveys, the development of training materials and training opportunities the Secretariat will ensure that all staff i) have a basic knowledge of the importance of gender equality and the relevance of gender gaps in achieving the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan; ii) understand what they can do to advance gender equality in their role; iii) set specific targets in their annual results agreement around promoting gender equality; and iv) identify and pursue opportunities to develop their expertise in gender equality, as appropriate.

The promotion of gender equality will also be advanced by a Board and Committees with gender equality knowledge and gender-responsiveness competencies, ensuring leadership and accountability in this area across the Partnership's activities.

9. PLANNING AND REPORTING

The Gender Equality Policy will be enacted through the Strategy and annual action plans developed by the GPE Secretariat and submitted for recommendation to the Board of Directors as part of the Global Partnership's annual Budget process.

The Strategy sets out six core output areas to frame and focus resources and efforts for the duration of the GPE Strategic Plan 2016-2020

- i)** Mainstreaming gender equality into GPE operations and frameworks
- ii)** Strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat, Board, and Committees to lead on gender equality
- iii)** Gender-responsive sector analysis, planning, and implementation
- iv)** Coordinating across sectors to advance gender equality in education
- v)** Monitoring and reporting on gender equality results
- vi)** Knowledge production, exchange, and management on gender equality

An Annual Report on the Gender Equality Strategy, prepared by the Secretariat, will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee at each of their February meetings, to align with the Partnership's planning and budgeting cycle, based on a fiscal year that begins in July. The report will include a review of the planned activities and deliverables and an overview of progress on each of the six output areas for the fiscal year to date; analysis of issues, challenges, and opportunities; recommendations; and set out key priorities moving forward.

At the same time, an annual action plan for the coming fiscal year will be prepared by the Secretariat. The annual action plan will present a costed and prioritized set of key activities and deliverables which may include, for example, continuation of ongoing activities or the initial scoping of projects to be implemented in future years. All activities and deliverables will align with the six output areas of the Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2020.

II. GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2016-2020

The GPE Gender Equality Strategy for 2016-2020 outlines the aspiration and intention of how the Gender Equality Policy will be put into practice over the period of the GPE Strategic Plan.

The Strategy draws on the six key components for achieving GPE's gender equality in education aims. This is important to ensure that the main output areas selected to frame and focus resources and efforts for 2016-2020 are closely linked to the aims and key components set out in the Gender Equality Policy. The key components are described fully in the Gender Equality Policy and are summarized below

- i) Mainstreaming and targeted approaches
- ii) Attention to multiple inequalities to reach the most disadvantaged girls and boys
- iii) Responsiveness to varying country contexts
- iv) Strong evidence and country level data
- v) Allocation of sufficient human and financial resources
- vi) Appropriate competencies and capacity

The Strategy is described in four sections – core output areas; roles and responsibilities; planning and reporting and resources required. In describing major outputs, roles and responsibilities across the Partnership, planning and reporting mechanisms, and resources required for implementation, the Strategy sets the direction and focus for implementing the Policy during its first strategic planning cycle and for achieving the aims and objectives of the Policy.

1. CORE OUTPUT AREAS

Six core output areas have been selected to frame and focus resources and efforts for 2016-2020. These align closely with the key components set out in the Gender Equality Policy, for achieving GPE's gender equality in education aims

- i)** Mainstreaming gender equality into GPE operations and frameworks
- ii)** Strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat, Board, and Committees to lead on gender equality
- iii)** Gender-responsive sector analysis, planning, and implementation
- iv)** Coordinating across sectors to advance gender equality in education
- v)** Monitoring and reporting on gender equality results
- vi)** Knowledge production, exchange, and management on gender equality

Given that this is the first strategy for the Gender Equality Policy, there is a particular focus on processes such as mainstreaming, competencies assessment, and internal capacity development that will play a larger role in this initial period and then become a more modest part of ongoing work moving forward.

i) Mainstreaming gender equality into GPE operations and frameworks

The purpose of this output area is to ensure that gender equality considerations are fully integrated into the way the Global Partnership works: its operational model and processes, and the frameworks and other documents used to implement them. This includes the whole range of GPE processes, from country support to grant application and review, to quality assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. Mainstreaming work involves reviewing indicators, guidelines, standards, guidance documents, and other such documents.

Mainstreaming also entails ensuring that gender equality considerations are an integral part of the work of all of the Secretariat, the Board and Committees, and Partners. This could include ensuring that gender equality lens is integrated into Human Resources processes, terms of reference, and results agreements for Secretariat staff, as well as the terms of reference for the Board and Committees. It would also include verifying that gender equality is integrated into the policies of Partners, including grant agents such as the Global Campaign for Education, to ensure that this principle is upheld robustly across the Partnership.

ii) Strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat, Board, and Committees to lead on gender equality

This area of work involves assessing and strengthening the competencies and capacity of the Secretariat, Board, and Committees to lead on gender-responsiveness. Once strengths and needs

have been assessed, capacity development opportunities in this area will be offered to all. In addition, a gender-responsiveness training will be standardized for all incoming staff.

Existing expertise in gender equality issues at the Secretariat, and on the Board and Committees, will also be inventoried so that the Global Partnership is aware of the human resources it has in this area and make the most of them.

iii) Gender-responsive sector analysis, planning, and implementation

This output area is the main driver of development results for the Action Plan, and engages with the central focus of the Global Partnership. It entails ensuring that a gender equality lens is applied throughout the process of education sector analysis, planning, and implementation. Work on this output area involves building the capacity of Developing Country Partners, Grant Agents, and LEGs, through tools such as the UNGEI-GPE Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning Guidance, and supporting them as they carry out sector work. It is also supported by work in other output areas, such as making sure that Country Leads are equipped with the necessary competencies, and that Quality Assurance Reviews of Program Implementation Grants employ a gender equality lens.

iv) Coordinating across sectors to advance gender equality in education

The Global Partnership recognizes the inherently cross-sectoral nature of many of the barriers to education that girls and boys face. Collaborative interventions with WASH, Health, Nutrition, Child Protection, and other sectors can be powerful avenues for expanding educational opportunity for the most disadvantaged girls and boys and advancing gender equality. This output area will involve coordination support for gender-responsive cross-sectoral programs that are already existing or in the works, as well as exploring the potential for effective future interventions, together with our Partners, organizations in other sectors, and other sectors' Ministries. In doing this, efficient use of scarce resources can be made in a smart and evidence-based way, to leverage improved educational outcomes and reduced disparity.

v) Monitoring and reporting on gender equality results

Monitoring and reporting is, as always, critical to ensuring the effectiveness of the Global Partnership's work. We will monitor and report on the gender equality development results outlined as the aims of the Gender Equality Policy through existing GPE mechanisms. These include the work of the Monitoring and Evaluation team at the Secretariat, and the monitoring and reporting done by Grant Agents and Ministries of Education. The Partnership will also draw

on and utilize data collected and/or published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the Global Education Monitoring Report, the World Bank, and other partners to monitor progress.

Gender equality institutional results concern the extent to which the Global Partnership is effectively embracing and advancing gender equality as an organization. In addition, this work encompasses monitoring progress in implanting the Strategy and ensuring that the annual action plan is carried out effectively. It also involves formulating the new annual Action Plan for the next fiscal year, for presentation to the Strategy and Policy Committee in February. Finally, this work includes creating the Annual Report on the Gender Equality Strategy, which will present both institutional results and development results for gender equality.

vi) Knowledge production, exchange, and management on gender equality

The purpose of this output area is to curate and share useful knowledge regarding gender equality, across the Partnership, and to facilitate cross-national knowledge and good practice exchange. The Secretariat, in collaboration with Partners, will analyze and share evidence on factors contributing to different types of disadvantage related to gender equality, and on what works to address these factors in different contexts. The facilitation of cross-national exchange of this type of evidence and lessons learned will help countries to learn from one another on context-specific issues. We will support Developing Country Partners to strengthen the availability, quality, analysis, and use of data on gender equality in combination with other intersecting factors, through core grant making as well as through targeted initiatives. These activities will align with the Partnership’s knowledge and good practice exchange activities, and ensure that gender equality considerations are mainstreamed into all such activities.

The main parties responsible for leading on the activities of each output area are outlined in the table below, along with the reporting mechanism for each.

Figure 1: Summary of Output Areas for the Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2020

What Output Areas	How Deliverables	Who Leading Parties	Reporting Mechanisms
Mainstreaming gender equality into GPE operations, frameworks, etc.	Gender-responsive indicators, quality assurance, standards, guidance documents, etc.	Secretariat	Gender Equality Strategy Annual Report

Developing the capacity of the Secretariat, Board, and Committees to lead on gender equality	Gender-responsiveness assessments and trainings	Secretariat	Gender Equality Strategy Annual Report
Gender-responsive sector analysis and planning	Gender-responsive education sector analysis and plans, data analysis and use, policy dialogue, implementation	Developing Country Partners	Results Framework, ESP reviews, Funding Model indicators
Coordinating across sectors to advance gender equality in education	Coordination with health, WASH, labor, et al. to address gendered barriers to education	Secretariat	GPE Flagship Report, Gender Equality Strategy Annual Report
Monitoring and reporting on gender equality results	DCP data and analysis, joint sector review reports, grant reporting, Results Framework data; Annual Report on Strategy implementation	Developing Country Partners, Secretariat	Results Framework, UIS data
Knowledge production, exchange, and management on gender equality	Knowledge products developed, curation and dissemination, facilitation of exchange	Secretariat	Gender Equality Strategy Annual Report

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation of the Gender Equality Policy through the 2016-2020 Strategy and annual action plans will require leadership, commitment, and participation across the Global Partnership and at all levels. In general, roles and responsibilities will be as follows:

i) Secretariat

Gender and Equity/Inclusion Staff: The responsibility for planning, monitoring, and reporting on the activities in the Strategy will lie chiefly with the members of the Equity and Inclusion team at the Secretariat, and in particular with a full-time gender equality specialist. These staff will also provide leadership and guidance on mainstreaming gender equality into the Global Partnership’s operations, and supporting the rollout of the Gender-Responsive ESP

Guidance and other tools for countries' use. They will collaborate with partners to explore and help coordinate cross-sectoral interventions to address gendered barriers to education, and will track gender equality development results being reported. They will provide an assessment of existing competencies in advancing gender equality and related equity topics among the Secretariat, Board, and Committees, and will develop and offer training to enhance capacity where needed. They will also circulate knowledge products on gender equality, analyze and share evidence on what works, and facilitate knowledge exchange among countries on this topic. Each February, they will present the Annual Report for the current fiscal year and a proposed Annual Action Plan and budget for the next fiscal year, to the Strategy and Policy Committee.

Other Teams: As gender-responsiveness is mainstreamed across all of the Global Partnership's operations, and competencies are strengthened across the Secretariat, nearly all staff will participate in implementation. For example, the Country Support team will support countries in gender-responsive sector work, the Quality Assurance team will review the Program Implementation Grants for gender-responsiveness, and the Monitoring and Evaluation team will collect data on indicators related to gender equality development results. In addition, Human Resources will provide key support in mainstreaming gender equality competencies into recruitment, training, and development, results agreements, and so forth.

ii) Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will provide oversight and strategic leadership in advancing gender equality in and through education through the work of the Global Partnership. Based on the recommendation from the SPC, they will own the responsibility of receiving and approving future Strategies, as well as ensuring resourcing and accountability for their implementation. The Board will also participate in the assessment and expansion of gender-responsiveness competencies, implemented across the Partnership's governance bodies and Secretariat.

iii) Board Committees

The **Strategy and Policy Committee** will request presentations from the Secretariat each February on the progress of the Gender Equality Strategy through an annual report for the current fiscal year. The report will include a review of the planned activities and deliverables and an overview of progress on each of the six output areas for the fiscal year to date; analysis of issues, challenges, and opportunities; recommendations; and key priorities moving forward. The SPC will hold the responsibility for ensuring that the Gender Equality Policy and Strategy are being carried out effectively through the annual Action Plans.

The other Board Committees will also support the Policy and Strategy through the gender-responsive execution of their respective Terms of Reference. For example, the **Country Grants and Performance Committee** will ensure attention to gender equality considerations in their input to grant applications and their tracking and responding to grant portfolio performance. The **Governance, Ethics, Risk and Finance Committee** will likewise ensure that the Partnership delivers on its commitment to the Policy and Strategy through its reviews of the Partnership's governance and leadership, as well as through its discussions of allocation and prioritization frameworks for GPE resources. The **Coordinating Committee** may also support the execution of this commitment if time-sensitive decisions relevant to the Strategy should be delegated to it by the Board, or if relevant discussions of it should arise in the course of its communications with the Chief Executive Officer.

iv) Developing Country Partners

The ongoing work of Developing Country Partners (DCPs) is at the heart of the Global Partnership's focus, both overall and with reference to the Gender Equality Strategy. They will strengthen gender equality in education sector plans and systems to meet national education goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. The wider Partnership will seek to support DCPs as they engage in gender-responsive sector analysis, planning, and implementation, in collaboration with local education groups and the Secretariat. They will be supported through opportunities for knowledge exchange on advancing gender equality, and for exploring cross-sectoral interventions, in coordination with the Secretariat and other Partners. And the monitoring and reporting efforts of DCPs as part of their core processes will make an important contribution to capturing gender equality development results across the Partnership.

v) Grant Agents, Coordinating Agencies, and Other Local Education Group Members

Grant Agents, Coordinating Agencies, and other local education group (LEG) members will provide crucial support to DCPs across all of the responsibilities described above. They will promote and support gender-responsiveness in education sector policy and reform processes, from sector analysis to plan development and appraisal, program development and implementation, and monitoring and reporting. In particular, Coordinating Agencies play a key role in ensuring that the policy dialogue process is itself gender-responsive and inclusive, while also agreeing on gender-responsive strategies and robust gender-responsive targets and indicators. Grant Agents will help to monitor, evaluate, and report on gender equality development results through their roles in assessing results for the variable tranche of GPE funding, and ensuring the reporting of progress to the rest of the LEG and to the Secretariat.

vi) Other Partners

The Global Partnership values the contribution of donors, international organizations, and civil society organizations, private sector partners, foundations, and youth advocates, and acknowledges the key roles that they can play in implementing and supporting the Strategy. For example, UNGEI and other Partners contribute to the production and exchange of knowledge on advancing gender equality, and the potential for cross-sectoral interventions to support it. Data published by UNESCO, the World Bank, and other Partners lead the monitoring and reporting of global gender equality development results, and the publications of Partners serve as an important source of evidence and recommendations. Several civil society organizations and coalitions have been advocating for and support to gender-responsive education sector policy, planning, budgeting, and monitoring. For example, in Lao PDR, Plan International partnered with the Ministry of Education on a gender review of their education sector plan. Donors, private sector partners, foundations, and youth advocates also play important roles in contributing political, financial, and technical support for gender equality in education, as well as capacity development.

3. PLANNING AND REPORTING ON PROGRESS

Progress on the Strategy and annual action plan will be monitored and reported on either through the Global Partnership's core monitoring and reporting mechanisms, or through the Annual Report on the Gender Equality Strategy, depending on the output type, as Figure 2 outlines. The Secretariat and the Strategy and Policy Committee will have annual discussions on progress to date and on plans for the year to come, allowing the Strategy to evolve and respond to changes in the global development context.

4. RESOURCES REQUIRED

Successful implementation of the Gender Equality Policy through the 2016-2020 Strategy and its annual Action Plans will require high-level commitment across the Global Partnership. It will also require adequate resourcing. This includes sufficient human resources within the Secretariat to undertake the extensive roles and responsibilities in II.2.i) above, together with funds to contract short term expert consultancy support as and when needed. Recommendation 1b of the Gender Equality Institutional Assessment proposes the establishment of a full-time specialist position in the Secretariat^x. This will be considered as part of the planned study that will review and make recommendations to the Board at its December 2016 meeting, on the resources, capacity and staffing needed to deliver GPE2020. A substantial amount of staff time from the existing Equity and Inclusion Cluster, and an appropriate amount of staff time from across the Secretariat for participation in capacity assessment

and training, will be needed. In addition, sufficient funding must be allocated to support the trainings, workshops, publications, and other planned outputs.

The human and financial resources needed to implement the Strategy should come from core funding, in alignment with the institutional commitment that the Global Partnership is demonstrating to advancing gender equality. However, arrangements may be explored for Partners who wish to contribute additional resources to supplement the central work of the Gender Equality Policy and Strategy. Such arrangements should respond to demonstrated need, align with the organizational priorities of the Board, and be preceded by consultation with the Secretariat and Board or Board Committees.

Finally, given that this Strategy is initiating the Gender Equality Policy of the Global Partnership, the time and attention of representatives of Developing Country Partners, Grant Agents, Coordinating Agencies, other LEG members, members of the Board of Directors and Board committees, and other partners will be particularly needed to instigate efforts and maintain momentum as gender-responsiveness is mainstreamed into existing GPE processes and guidelines.

ⁱ Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2015). *The knowledge capital of nations: Education and the economics of growth*. MIT Press.

ⁱⁱ Elborgh-Woytek et al., (2013). *Women, work, and the economy: Macroeconomic gains from gender equity*. International Monetary Fund.

ⁱⁱⁱ Unterhalter, E. (2007). *Gender, schooling and global social justice*. Psychology Press.

^{iv} The Declaration recognizes the importance of access to quality education for all people, especially the most vulnerable, in order to “help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.” In other words, education is key to ensuring the feasibility of the full realization of gender equality in all aspects of societies and, consequently, maximally successful and sustainable development for all countries. For the Declaration also recognizes that “the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.”

^v In addition to 4.5 on gender equality in education, Targets 4.1 and 4.2, respectively, mandate the completion of “free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” and access to quality early childhood development, care, and education for “all boys and girls.” In addition, 4.a underscores the need for gender-sensitive facilities, and 4.7 recognizes the importance of education for sustainable development, including gender equality.

^{vi} Education plays a central role in the application and/or achievement of each of the nine targets regarding Gender Equality. Education is a vehicle for many of these, from the elimination of child marriage to women’s access to economic resources and financial services, to ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. For others, education has critical areas of application and cross-over, such as the elimination of school-related gender-based violence, and the strengthening of education policies and legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of girls.

^{vii} Recommendations from the DFATD Gender Equality Institutional Assessment (now GAC)
DFATD encourages the GPE to consider the following:

Recommendation 1: The GPE should consider developing a Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan that includes the following components:

a) Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of various players in relation to the GPE’s work on gender equality (specifically who leads on the various components of a robust gender mainstreaming response and who will provide technical reviews of grant assessments and Education Sector Plans), including the Equity and Inclusion Cluster, UNGEI, the Technical Working Group on Girls’ Education, senior management, Secretariat Staff, the Board and the wider Partnership;

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- b) Establishing a full-time specialist position, with clear terms of reference, located within the Equity and Inclusion Cluster to provide technical support and coordination for the implementation of the Policy and/or Action Plan and engage leaders in promoting gender equality;
 - c) Developing a gender marker system for tracking the percentage of projects that include a gender analysis, gender-sensitive indicators, sex-disaggregated data and gender equality results (either by implementing their own system or finding a way to collect and harmonize the systems used by their supervising and managing entities);
 - d) Revising key templates, to ensure tracking of and attention to the gender equality marker (gender analysis, sex-disaggregated indicators and gender equality results). This includes, but is not limited to, quality assurance templates and project appraised documents used by both the Secretariat and GPE partners;
 - e) Developing guidance on what will constitute a gender equality result (as opposed to solely targeting girls' as beneficiaries);
 - f) Assessing tools, operational guidelines or policies currently in place or in development and identifying any additional gaps in operational guidance related to the GPE's work (including minimum standards for gender analysis);
 - g) Developing a communications and/or dissemination plan for the tools related to gender equality already in development, including but not limited to the tool for developing gender-sensitive Education Sector Plans.
 - h) Developing minimum standards related to gender equality for GPE partners, followed by an assessment of the extent to which GPE Partners are meeting those standards⁴;
 - i) Developing a template for GPE partner reports;
 - j) Developing guidance on how gender equality considerations could be integrated into education sector plans and joint sector reviews;
 - k) Conducting a gender equality staff capacity needs assessment followed by a plan to meet these capacity needs;⁵
 - l) Assessing the extent to which gender equality issues and gender equality expertise is included in the GPE committee structure, with a particular focus on the Country Grants and Performance Committee, and local education groups (LEGS), followed by a plan to fill any identified gaps;
 - m) Developing guidance for how to strengthen the inclusion of women's organizations throughout the work of the GPE;
 - n) Providing guidance on how to include gender equality issues and outcomes in all GPE evaluations;
 - o) Ensuring human resources and budget allocations match the requirements set out within the plan;
 - p) Developing a strategy for documenting and analyzing lessons learned related to applying gender analysis and gender equality results within the GPE's focal areas;
 - q) Designing and implementing an accountability structure that places responsibility for implementation of the Policy and/or Action Plan on the Management Team and on the Board;
 - r) Establishing clear reporting requirements for the Policy and/or Action Plan (i.e. presenting annually to the Board) including the establishment of result statements, indicators, baselines and targets, complete with reporting responsibilities and timelines; and,
 - s) Ensuring conceptual clarity to avoid unclear jargon.

Recommendation 2: The GPE should include a specific gender equality outcome in each focal area (i.e. development results) within their 2016-2020 Strategic Plan results framework through consultations with Implementing Partners and civil society organizations. The Strategic Plan should also explore opportunities to integrate all targets related to the intersection of gender equality and education included in "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

Recommendation 3: The GPE should create guidance to further clarify its approach to equity, including its approaches to each sub-issue with that umbrella approach (i.e. gender equality, diversity, disability, socio-economic status, etc.).

Recommendation 4: The GPE should create a communication product to clarify how gender equality considerations have been integrated into the new funding model.

Recommendation 5: The GPE should explore opportunities to provide increased financial support to gender equality issues within the delivery of its mandate. Additionally, the GPE may wish to consider including designated earmarking within its existing grants and increased funding to UNGEI.

Recommendation 6: The GPE should distinguish between institutional results and indicators (i.e. the number of projects that include a gender analysis) and development results and indicators (i.e. number of education sector plans that developed with the GPE's support that are gender-sensitive) in its plans, performance frameworks and reporting.

Recommendation 7: The GPE should have a knowledge management role on gender equality issues given the breadth of countries they are working in and the potential to learn lessons across agencies, sectors and countries (including but not limited to the GPE Data Hub and the GPE Exchange).

viii Gender-based analysis is an approach that the Global Partnership will use to examine its policies, programs, and initiatives to consider the different impacts on girls and boys and develop context-appropriate strategies with a view to ensuring equal educational outcomes. Gender-based analysis involves raising questions such as:

- How can we ensure girls make the transition from primary to lower secondary education?
- What is the best way to work with the government in a particular context to strengthen girls' education?
- How can we address the learning needs of out-of-school boys engaged in child labor?

What impact will the balance of female and male teachers have on girls and boys educational outcomes?

^{ix} The Global Education Monitoring Report 2015 Gender Summary provides gender-based analysis of girls' and boys' access to, participation in, and completion of education in developing countries. It identifies specific approaches to strengthen gender equality in education, allowing countries to consider a range of options which may represent good investments based on the findings of their gender analysis.

^x Recommendation 1b of the Gender Equality Institutional Assessment is "Establishing a full-time specialist position, with clear terms of reference, located within the Equity and Inclusion Cluster to provide technical support and coordination for the implementation of the Policy and/or Action Plan and engage leaders in promoting gender equality."