

*Leave No
Girl Behind*



Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning

A pathway to gender
equality in education

September 2019

“We recognise 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.”

Incheon Declaration for Education 2030



Education transforms lives. It is the surest investment to break down social and economic differences between people, unravel inequalities based on gender and accelerate progress towards the entire vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet, despite the world’s commitment to ensure every child completes 12 years of quality education, in low-income countries only 4% of the poorest finish upper secondary school, falling to 2% amongst marginalised girls.¹

Sustainable Development Goal 4, inclusive and equitable quality education for all, is about much more than education access. It calls for education policies to look beyond gender parity in school enrolment in order to put **gender equality** at the heart of education through gender-sensitive plans and policies. Gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESPE) is an essential measure for advancing gender equality in and through education. But what do we have to gain from this? And what steps can we take to achieve it?

1. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2019) *Meeting Commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?* Montreal: UIS

How does gender equality in education benefit countries?

For education to fulfil its potential as an essential pathway to a gender-just world, both girls and boys must equally benefit from it. Countries that prioritise gender equality in education are rewarded with tremendous dividends fostering economic and social development, sustainability, public health, and lasting peace and stability. Examples include:

GROWING STRONGER ECONOMIES

- Women with at least some primary education earn 14% to 19% more than those with no education at all. Women with secondary education may expect to earn almost twice as much as those with no education.²
- If every girl received 12 years of free, safe and quality education, women’s lifetime earnings could increase by \$15 trillion to \$30 trillion globally.³
- Ensuring both boys and girls get the education they need builds the range of skills and capacities needed for a country to expand its leadership and entrepreneurial talent.

SAVING LIVES AND IMPROVING HEALTH

- Every \$1 invested to increase the average number of years children go to school by one year, particularly for girls, generates a 10-fold health benefit in low-income countries.⁴
- A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five, 50% more likely to be immunised, and twice as likely to go to school.⁵
- Improvements in female education accounted for 43% of the reduction in child malnutrition occurring between 1970 and 1995.⁶

2. Wodon, Q., C. Montenegro, H. Nguyen, and A. Onagoruwa, (2018) *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*. The Cost of Not Educating Girls Notes Series. Washington, DC: The World Bank

3. *Ibid.*

4. The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (2016) *The Learning Generation – Investing in Education for a Changing World*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Smith, Lisa C., and Lawrence Haddad (2000) *Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries - a cross-country analysis*. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute

PROTECTING RIGHTS, PROMOTING PEACE AND RESILIENCE

- Each additional year of secondary education for girls is associated with an average 6% reduction to the risk of child marriage and pregnancy before the age of 18.⁷
- National armed conflict is less likely to occur in contexts where there is gender parity in average years of schooling.⁸
- For every additional year of schooling a girl receives, her country's resilience to climate disasters can be expected to improve by 3.2 points.⁹



How does gender-responsive education sector planning help nations reap these benefits?

Political momentum for gender equality in education is at an all-time high across the international community. While governments and development partners have made great progress towards reducing gender gaps in access to education, there is more work to be done to reach the most marginalised children and to build gender equality into education plans and systems more broadly.

To advance gender equality in education, education systems need to be gender-responsive by design. As a country's blueprint for education reform, the education sector plan (ESP) presents a critical opportunity to embed gender equality into the DNA of all aspects of education. Gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESPE) is the vehicle for achieving this – identifying gender barriers within education systems and ensuring that strategies and policies are in place to address them through the ESP.

Many national governments have requested technical assistance to advance gender equality in education, and resources on GRESPE are now available to respond to this need.¹⁰ These provisions can help governments to pursue their own development priorities and deliver on their commitments to gender equality in education through better aligned policies and plans, and more sensitive, responsive, and effective systems.

“We are convinced that equal access to quality education is vital to achieve the empowerment and equal opportunity of girls and women, especially in developing contexts and countries struggling with conflict.”

Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, G7 Leaders, August 2019

7. UNESCO (2011) *Education Counts. EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Paris: UNESCO

8. Omoeva, C., Hatch, R. and Moussa, W. (2018) *The Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment and Inequality*. Education Policy and Data Center Paper No. 18-03. Washington DC: FHI 360

9. Kwauku, C. and Braga, A. (2017) *Three platforms for girls' education in climate strategies*. Brooke Shearer Series, number 6. Washington DC: Brookings Institution

10. Global Partnership for Education and UN Girls' Education Initiative (2017) *Guidance for developing gender-responsive education sector plans*. Washington DC: GPE

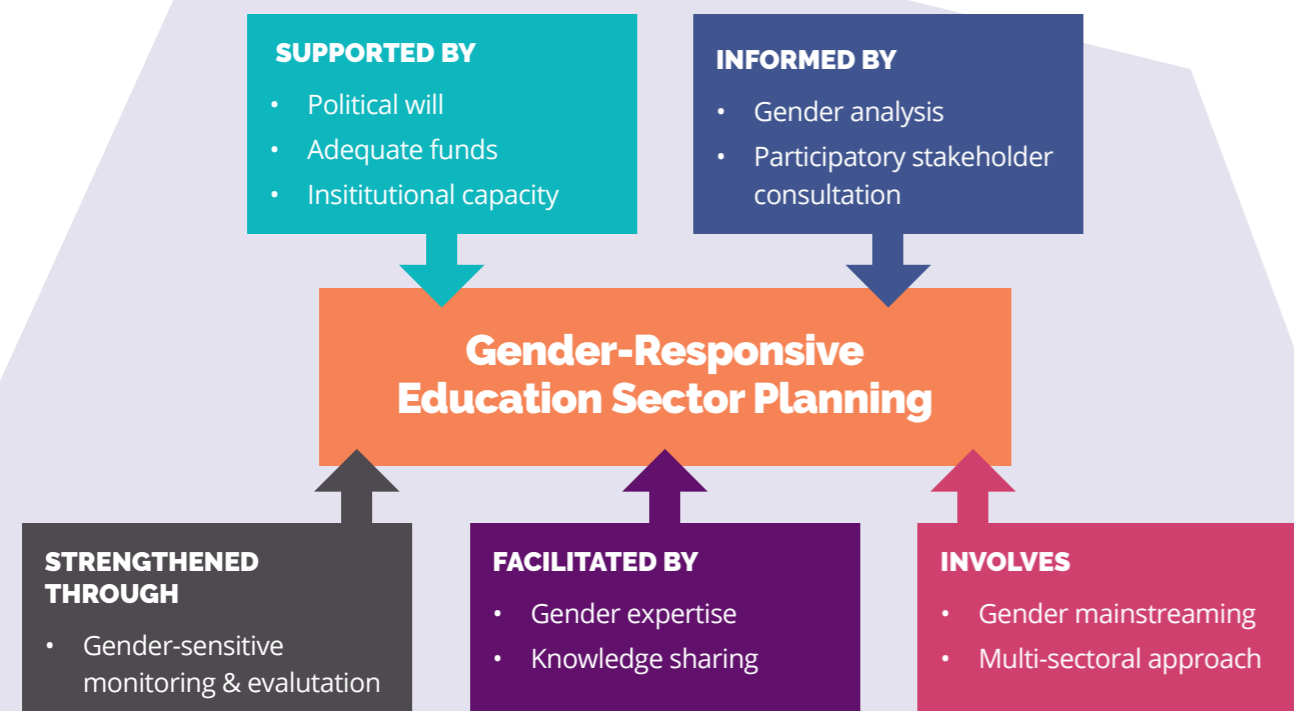
What is gender-responsive education sector planning, and what solutions can it provide?

GRESP is a whole-system approach to advancing gender equality in and through education, including learning and learning environments, teacher education and practice, curriculum and materials development and leadership and administration.

When engaged through collaboration with colleagues within and beyond the Ministry of Education, GRESP can be a powerful tool to build stronger, more gender-responsive

education plans and systems leading to better outcomes. It can help to tackle widespread problems such as school-related gender-based violence and female dropout in conflict-affected settings. It can also enhance the scope, sensitivity, and effectiveness of key elements of the national education system, such as the education management information systems that provide data to inform education plans and policies, and teacher training programmes.

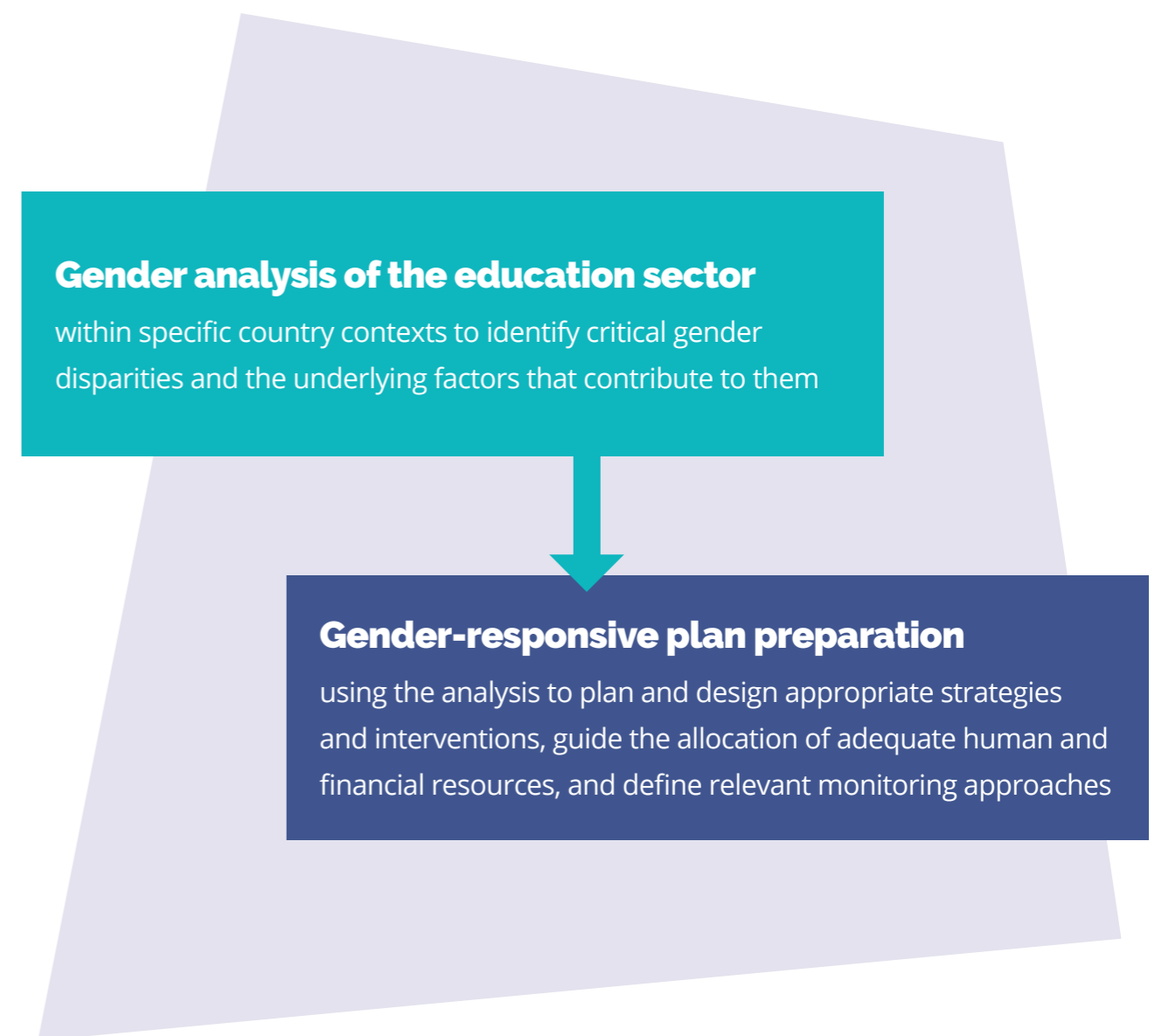
BUILDING BLOCKS OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING



How does gender-responsive education sector planning work?

ENTRY POINTS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING

While GRESP can be useful at any point in the planning cycle, the most effective entry point is before the launch of a new sector analysis, to assist in integrating gender-responsiveness throughout the planning process:



Implementing gender-responsive education sector planning means that:

- Differences in interests, needs, priorities, opportunities and outcomes between girls, boys, women and men are analysed and used to inform development of the sector plan.
- Planning is based on an understanding of the specific education experiences of boys and girls from different socioeconomic groups, geographic locations and levels of ability and other factors so that programmes address their specific needs.
- Context-specific gender issues are taken into consideration at every level in the analysis, planning and budgeting cycle.
- Actors from gender and other sectors participate in stakeholder consultations, representing civil society organisations (CSOs) and local communities as well as government departments.
- Gender equality and girls' education strategies are integrated into education sector plans.
- Adequate financial resources are allocated to gender equality and girls' education strategies.
- Operational plans and budgets reflect gender equality priorities.
- Institutional capacity development addresses gender inequalities within public administration and ensures that the sector has the systems and capacities to deliver on its goals.
- Monitoring and evaluation measure gender equality results and impact.



Resources and next steps for engagement

THE GRESP GUIDANCE TOOL

The UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) produced the [Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans](#) to complement and strengthen existing planning processes. Its 10 modules, centred on stages of the planning cycle, include background information and a series of practical exercises on how to conduct gender-sensitive quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation, as well as using the findings to enhance the sector planning processes. The Guidance is available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

THE GRESP WORKSHOP

In addition to the printed Guidance, national and regional GRESP workshops have been convened by UNGEI and GPE in collaboration with UNICEF, UNESCO IIEP, Plan International, FAWA and the African Union. Each workshop is an intense four-day programme designed to enhance delegates' understanding of gender analysis and its role in education planning.

Through an immersion in GRESP, the workshops build the capacity of participants from government, CSOs and development partners to apply the core principles of gender equality in their work and increase their commitment to the mission. GRESP workshops are designed with the practitioner in mind, so that delegates review their own ESPs, carry out a gender analysis of their own education context, and, at the end, create an action plan to guide follow up work that will make the creation and implementation of ESPs more gender-responsive.

“This workshop will make me try to revise the gender strategy... because we have been doing this blindly. But this time we will have the gender lens in all the processes starting from planning, monitoring and even implementation.”

Esther Akumu Achire, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, South Sudan

Good practice to consider in gender-responsive education sector planning

Through GRESP workshops educationists across the world are being equipped to step up efforts to advance gender equality in education. A number of examples of promising practice among participating countries are emerging:

- **Uganda** held a national GRESP workshop which brought together all Ministry of Education and Sports staff and other departmental heads in order to review the current ESP and put forward recommendations to address gender equality issues through the development of a new ESP.
- **Lesotho** has revisited its ESP in order to prioritise the tackling of gender-related issues, collaborating with civil society partners to step up efforts to advance gender equality in education through focused three-year education action plans.
- **Tanzania (Zanzibar)** has developed a new ESP which puts gender at the heart of all its programmes in a push to accelerate systems level change to advance gender equality in education.

To learn more about GRESP and how you can engage with our work to advance gender equality in education contact info@ungei.org



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