

Gender Transformative Education Research Report

~ Achieving gender equality in and through education ~



Contents

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Glossary of terms and definitions

Active Bystander: a bystander who takes action. A person who does not just stand by when sexual violence or sexual harassment occurs or is likely to occur, but acts to prevent violence or to protect victims.

Agency: developing knowledge, confidence and critical thinking. Agency includes the ability to speak up, identify risks, defend oneself and mobilize and influence others and society around them to achieve gender equality and inclusion.

Agent of Change: change agent, a person who brings about change.

Ally: a term derived from the English word 'alliance.' It refers to people who understand and support minorities, including LGBTQ+, and the way they think. When used in this report, it is mainly used in the context of boys/men who understand and support girls/women.

Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGD): the following six areas of activities on which the Plan focuses (for more information, see the section on AoGD on page 11).

Champions of Change (CoC): a program developed by Plan International with the main objective of engagement for gender equality. It has training modules for girls and boys respectively and is currently being implemented in over 40 countries as an initiative to promote gender equality with youth men and women as agents of change. Facilitator's manuals can be downloaded from the following links:

https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/0-GCOC_INTRO_Module_FA.pdf

Early Childhood Development (ECD): healthy growth and development of infants and toddlers; ECD centers are equivalent to nursery schools and kindergartens in Japan.

Early Childhood Education (ECE): pre-primary education

Empowerment: strengthening the ability of people, especially girls, women and others considered vulnerable in society, to take charge of their own lives, as well as their relationships with others who affect them and their social and political environment, and strategies to achieve this. This action is also sometimes described verbally as 'empowering'.

Engagement: promoting deeper relationships with stakeholders and others

Gender: gender is a socio-culturally shaped sex. It represents ideas, norms and expectations based on the roles, relationships and values of men and women, which differ in society and culture. It is essential to take a gender perspective in order to analyze relationships and power relations between men and women, and to analyze social barriers and opportunities. In addition, gender is not a dichotomous category of 'female' and 'male', but a variety of gender identities, including non-binary (*see below) (the concept of gender is already sometimes interpreted to include the already diverse LGBTQ+ people)

Gender Based Violence (GBV): Refers to all forms of violence suffered because of gender, "because you're a woman" or "because you're a man". It occurs due to social power imbalances between genders and gender norms. Examples include sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, child early and forced marriage, gender discrimination and female genital mutilation (FGM)

Gender Bias: Stereotypical prejudices based on gender differences, such as 'you are good at housework because you are a woman' or 'you have the aptitude to be a leader because you are a boy'

Gender Equality: All people, regardless of gender, have equal rights in society, have the same status, are respected, and have the power to self-determine and influence outcomes.

Gender Norm: Social attitudes and expectations based on dichotomized sexes, such as 'women/men should be'. These norms form fixed sex roles based on gender, such as 'women do housework and childcare', and assumptions such as 'men are better suited to be leaders than women'. Gender norms are a root cause of gender inequality and influence laws and various social systems.

Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP): a gender responsive teaching methodology. Using gender aware teaching processes and practices, it aims to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to address the respective learning needs of girls and boys. GRP also targets the administrative staffs of schools and supports to build their capacity to create gender responsive learning environments that promote gender equality (Mlama et al., 2005)

Gender stereotype: stereotypes and assumptions that permeate society with regard to gender.

Gender Transformative Education (GTE): this study defines it as "an approach that aims to explicitly transform harmful gender norms through education, specifically addressing the underlying causes in society in its activities, helping the target group to critically question existing gender norms and change attitudes and practices towards gender equality"

Inclusion: the process of improving the conditions for individuals and groups to participate in society and realize their rights. The realization of inclusion requires improved access to different opportunities for socially disadvantaged and excluded people and groups, and respect for their individual rights and dignity. This requires tackling the root causes of exclusion and understanding how the various causes of exclusion are intertwined.

Intersectionality: a concept to identify the multiple identities individuals have, such as gender, race and sexuality, and to understand how they interact with each other to create discrimination and oppression

Knowledge, Attitude, Practice (KAP): This research uses the KAP framework to analyze knowledge, attitudes and practices related to gender, identifying knowledge gaps, attitudinal barriers and patterns of practice (Kaliyaperumal, 2004; Nguyen et al., 2019; Wessman, 2006)

LGBTQ+: A collective term for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and people who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (Questioning), as well as people whose identity does not fall into these categories (+). Sexual orientation and gender identity are not distinct, but rather gradations and there is a wide variety of sexualities.

Non-Binary: refers to people who are not classified as either female or male, or who feel they have both, and their gender.

Peer to Peer: initiatives implemented for peers in the same age group.

Positive Masculinity: Refers to alternatives to hegemonic masculinity and promotes more comprehensive, empathetic, caring and egalitarian forms of masculinity (Lomas, 2013)

School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV): acts or threats of sexual, physical and psychological violence that occur in and around schools, are perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and are enforced by unequal power dynamics.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR): refers to all people having correct knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, having their health and rights protected and having the right to make decisions about their bodies, a concept introduced at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo Conference)

STEM: a term coined from the first letters of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Youth: according to the UN definition, children and young people aged 15-24

Whole Child Approach: a method for nurturing children in a balanced and integrated manner, both mentally and physically, based on recognition of their individuality. It aims to improve not only cognitive skills, such as academic performance, but also non-cognitive skills such as emotional control and mental maturity. Also encourages the acquisition of life skills and communication skills, including maintaining mental and physical health.

About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognize the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination and girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organization, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 85 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 80 countries. We won't stop until we are all equal.

Objectives of this research report

The purpose of this research report is to inform Japanese educators, policy makers and individuals and organizations interested in gender equality about Gender Transformative Education (GTE) initiatives. Plan International works with international organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) to promote GTE globally. GTE is an initiative to challenge gender inequalities across society through education, and we want as many people as possible to understand its importance.

The report presents specific case studies related to GTE. It also analyzes the factors that promote and hinder GTE. This will help the reader to understand the challenges and success factors faced in GTE practice and to use them in their own educational activities and program formation.

From education, we hope that this report will help you shape future programs and implement educational activities to promote gender equality in society as a whole, starting with education. Hopefully, many people will read this report and work together with us on GTE.



Executive Summary

In recent years, the issue of gender inequality has been increasingly attracting attention. In Japan, for example, the number of female leaders in political and economic arena is small and the gender gap index continues to record the worst among the seven industrialized countries (G7), ranking 118th out of 146 countries (World Economic Forum, 2024). This gender gap is partly due to gender stereotypes of 'because I'm a girl' and 'because I'm a boy', and these stereotyped values are said to be reinforced at school (Plan International Japan, 2022). GTE is seen as an important approach to challenging gender inequalities across society by leveraging the power of education to its fullest extent.

The research selected and analyzed 12 case studies from academic articles and reports of international organizations on GTE published between 2010 and 2023. The 'social-ecological systems theory' (hereafter 'analytical approach') of the American developmental psychologist Bronfenbrenner (1979) was used to identify the drivers and barriers of GTE and to discuss the case studies.

The analysis showed that all 12 cases demonstrated positive changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding gender of the beneficiaries and their surroundings. Nine of these cases were mainly at school level, two at individual level, one at community level and two at national level. By region, Africa had the largest number of cases, with cases included from Asia, Europe and North America.

Key factors leading to successful GTE include motivation and individual empowerment through familiar role models; development of age- and theme-appropriate gender education materials and teacher training; peer learning and internal change through children's club activities; working with parents to deliver consistent messages; improving the willingness and initiative of community members to participate and build support structures; and changing social norms through policy and legislation. On the other hand, gender stereotypes, cultural resistance and economic constraints were identified as barriers to progress on gender equality. Gender-related challenges are complex and cannot be solved by a single approach. For example, a case study in Ghana, interaction with role models increased the girls' career choices, but the culture of unequal domestic burdens and early marriage within the family remained. Thus, various cultural, economic and structural factors are intricately intertwined to form gender-related challenges.

Achieving gender equality requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach with a deep understanding of the local cultural and social context. While GTE is an effective approach to promoting gender equality, a sustainable transformation will require an even more multifaceted and comprehensive approach. Education, policy and community partnerships are essential to realizing gender equality, and will require sustained efforts and innovative strategies.

01 Introduction

Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, calls on the international community to work towards gender equality. However, despite international efforts to promote gender equality, the COVID-19 pandemic is said to exacerbate gender inequality which had already existed, increasing child marriage and GBV (UNFPA, 2021). Discrimination based not only on gender and cultural norms, but also on intersectionality¹ with race, ethnicity and other attributes exacerbates the problem, further marginalizing women and girls.

Education is a powerful means of promoting gender equality, and GTE is about maximizing the potential of education to transform harmful attitudes and practices in and through education system and to promote broader social and political change towards gender equality (Donville, 2020). Plan International believes that GTE can provide powerful strategies to address these multiple challenges.

GTE is a new attempt, with a growing number of initiatives but comprehensive evaluation is rarely undertaken (Peretz et al., 2020). Education policy should be driven by evidence based on a balance between practice in education and educational theory (Elliott, 2001). In practice, however, the gap between practice and theory is a challenge to the effective application of GTE.

Therefore, this research conducts an analysis of case studies with the aim of identifying key drivers and barriers in implementing GTE and gaining insights from good practices for applying GTE in different contexts through taking into account the socio-cultural and economic context. From a combination of practice and theory, it aims to contribute to a more robust and theoretically and practically grounded framework for GTE and evidence-based education policy.

02 What is Gender Transformative Education (GTE)?

GTE refers to “an approach that aims to explicitly change harmful gender norms through education, concretely addressing the root causes of society through its activities, helping the target group to critically question existing gender norms and change their attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality”.

In recent years, GTE has gained international attention as an innovative approach to transform unequal gender norms and promote gender equality through education (Plan International et al., 2021, UNICEF, 2022). According to such previous literature, programs using the GTE approach have been effective in changing attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality. However, GTE is a new concept and its definition has yet to be established (Peretz et al., 2020). The term 'Gender Transformative Education' was also used in many of the case studies collected for this research, without any particular clear intention.

Through comprehensive data collection and analysis, this research aims to define GTE on the basis of empirical evidence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), reflect the aims and characteristics of GTE and contribute to the design of feasible education programs.

¹ The concept identifies the multiple identities that individuals have, including gender, race and sexuality, and understands how they interact with each other to create discrimination and oppression. (See Glossary and definitions)

The results of this research identified three characteristics of GTE (Peretz et al., 2020; Donville, 2020; Keating & Baker, 2023).

- **Explicit aim to change harmful gender norms [project objective]**

e.g. From the initial stage of project design, there is a clear set of objectives to raise awareness of gender equality, eliminating gender stereotype such as 'because I'm a girl' or 'because I'm a boy'.

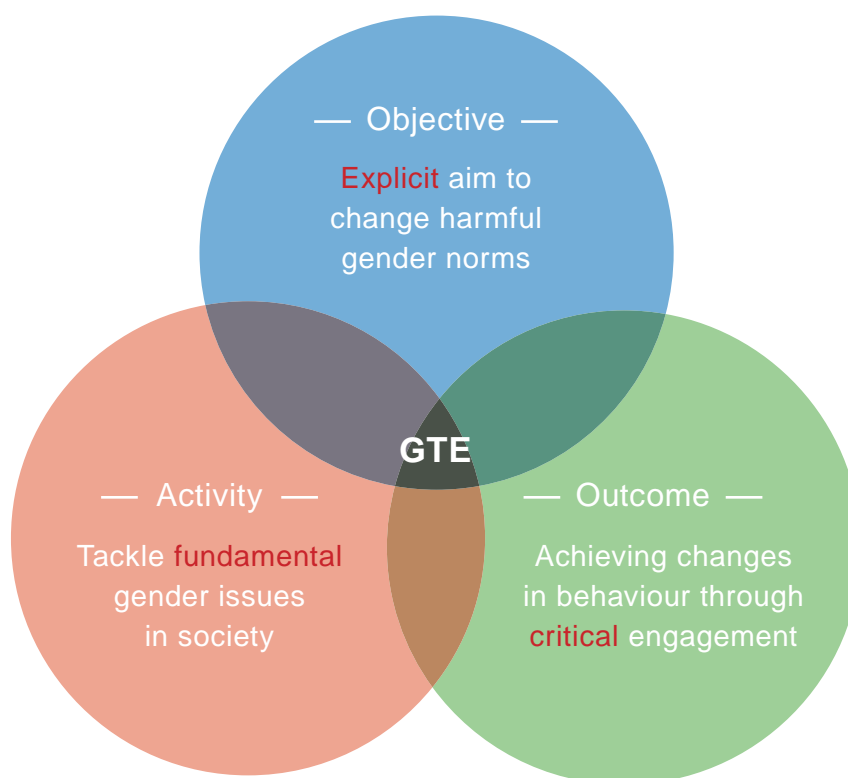
- **Concretely addressing fundamental gender issues in society [project activity]**

e.g. Education programs, workshops and community activities have clear intention to transform attitudes and behaviors related to gender, to engage in fundamental change on issues such as girls' dropping out of school and school enrolment, girls' leadership, child marriage and GBV.

- **Achieving gender-based attitude and behavior change through critical thinking [project outcome]**

e.g. Program participants question existing gender norms, deepen their understanding of gender from new perspectives and change their attitudes and behaviors. Previous gender-based relationships and power relations are transformed, for example, fathers and community members become more supportive of girls' education and boys become allies to understand girls much better.

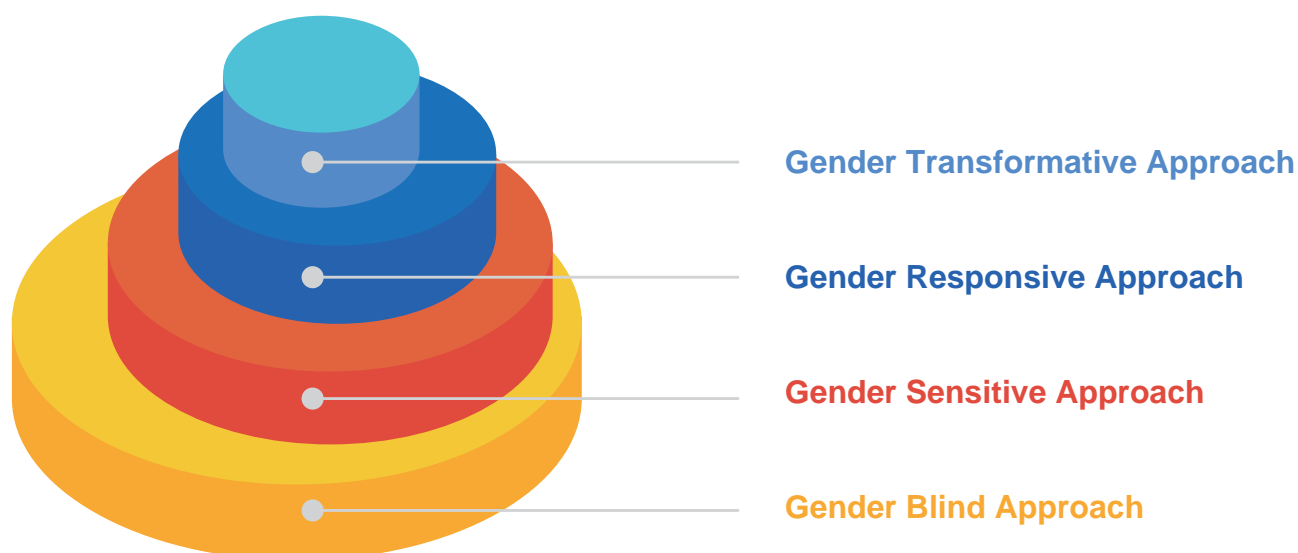
[Figure1] Three characteristics of GTE



GTE can thus be defined as "an approach that aims to explicitly change harmful gender norms through education, concretely addressing the root causes of society through its activities and helping the target population to critically question existing gender norms and change their attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality".

Based on this empirical definition of GTE, 12 case studies are analyzed in this research.

[Box.1] Understanding GTE - approaches to gender issues -



(Source: Plan International et al., 2023)

[Table1] Comparison of different approaches to gender issues


Approach	Features
Gender Blind Approach	No consideration of gender issues and no awareness of gender inequalities
Gender Sensitive Approach	Gender differences and gender inequalities are recognized. But nothing specific is done to change inequalities
Gender Responsive Approach	It addresses different gender needs and aims to reduce gender inequalities but not to change norms
Gender Transformative Approach	To promote critical attitudes and action towards unequal values by transforming unequal gender norms and addressing root causes. Challenging gender norms, gender stereotypes and gender bias *GTE adopts this approach


For example, with regard to child marriage, gender blind and gender sensitive approaches either do not recognize the problem or, if they do, do not take action, so girls continue to interrupt their education and get married. Gender responsive approach will provide girls with SRHR knowledge and contraceptives, but its impact on preventing child marriage is limited because it does not intend to change unequal gender norms that contribute to child marriage. In contrast, the gender transformative approach aims to change unequal gender norms that lead to child marriage.

GTE adopts a gender transformative approach, reviewing gender unequal values through educational programs and encouraging critical attitudes and behaviors towards child marriage.


Expansion of GTE

Plan, together with international organizations such as UNGEI and UNICEF, has published and promoted a booklet to raise awareness of GTE, as well as a guidebook.


 **Plan International, UNGEI & UNICEF (2021)**
GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION Reimagining education for a more just and inclusive world

 **Plan International (2021) Guidance Note: Gender Transformative Education and Programming**

In 2022, UNICEF produced a comprehensive report for education policy makers to implement gender-transformative ECE.

 **UNICEF(2022)TACKLING GENDER INEQUALITY FROM THE EARLY YEARS: Strategies for building a gender-transformative pre-primary education system**

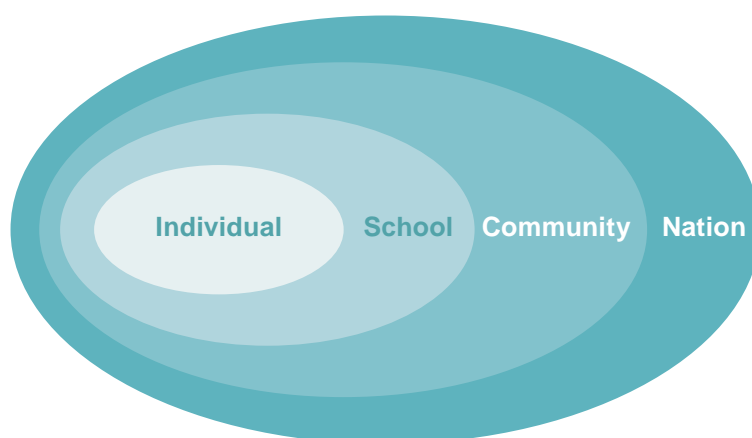
In 2023, an e-learning course for everyone was developed by Plan International, Transformative Education, UNGEI and UNICEF, funded by the Irish Government.

 **[e-learning course]**
Gender Transformative Education E-learning Course: Reimagining Education for a More Just and Inclusive World

03 Methodology

The research used keywords related to the Plan's AoGD (see Box.2) to collect case studies through search engines and selected 12 case studies. Four social systems (social strata), which were individual, school, community and national levels, were then examined using developmental psychologist Bronfenbrenner's analytical approach, and changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices related to gender in each social system were analyzed.

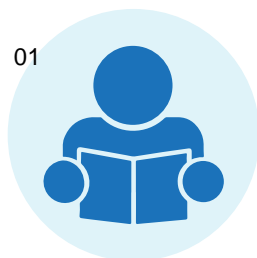
[Figure2] Social system model



In our analysis, we examined which of the 'six elements' (see Box 3) of gender transformative adopted by Plan International was applied and, using the KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) framework, which of the knowledge, attitudes and practices of gender was changed by the outcomes of these cases were assessed.

[Box.2] Area of Global Distinctiveness (AoGD): Plan International's priority areas of activities

AoGD consists of six areas of focus by Plan International. Plan International adopts a gender transformative approach in all its programs to support gender equality, girls' rights and inclusion in these six areas.



IQE: Inclusive Quality Education



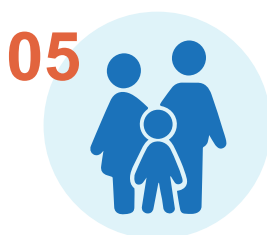
SOYEE: Skills & Opportunity for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship



LEAD



SRHR



ECD: Early Childhood Development



PFV: Prevention from Violence

[Box.3] 6 elements of gender transformative education

The six elements of gender transformative education identified by Plan International are elements that should be incorporated into programs aiming to transform gender norms as much as possible. These elements are key to systematically tackling gender inequalities.

6 elements of gender transformative education

- 1 **Gender norms:** changing gender norms that are the root causes of gender inequality and gender inequality itself
- 2 **Girls' and women's agency:** supporting girls' and women's agency to freely make choices and decisions on matters they consider important and relevant to their lives, and to act towards their own goals
- 3 **Engaging boys and men:** as gender issues arise in the relations with boys and men, we engage not only girls and women but also boys and men with the aim of achieving gender equality
- 4 **Improving the status of girls and women:** improving the condition of girls and women as well as their social status
- 5 **Inclusion/Intersectionality:** articulating the different needs of diverse children and youth from an intersectionality perspective and addressing issues of discrimination and exclusion, as individual experiences differ depending on disability, economic status, ethnicity, race, sexuality, age, education, etc.
- 6 **Law enforcement and creation of enable environment:** creating a gender-equal environment that changes discriminatory and exclusionary laws, institutions and social structures

04 Collection of case studies and selection results

The research conducted an 'AND search' through Google Scholar, a search engine with a large number of academic sources, with the word searches 'Gender Transformative' and 'Education', together with each of the words 'Inclusive', 'Young', 'Reproductive' and so on, which are associated with Plan International's six AoGD. The results of it, we found 854 search results. In order to further refine the search, more search terms were used. A total of 102 search results were then obtained. These can be divided into two categories: one can be assigned to each AoGD (66 cases) and the other covers multiple AoGDs (36 cases).

From the results of those 102 cases, a selection process was undertaken to select good practices. Of these, 46 cases were selected, excluding research reports whose content was intended to just analyze the current situation in order to formulate a new project, projects that only mentioned the term 'Gender Transformative Education' with no clear intention in particular, and projects that were considered to lack sufficient materials and results to be introduced as good practice examples. Next, from the 46 cases, we selected the cases whose outcomes referred to the six elements of GTE as much as possible, and those whose outcomes promoted not only knowledge about gender equality, but also changes in attitudes and practices, and we finally selected 12 good cases. The table below provides a summary of the results.

Selected 12 GTE cases

[Table2] Summary table of the 12 GTE cases

Implementing agent	Project name	Country	Objective	6 elements of GTE	AoGD	Social system
Plan International Zimbabwe	Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) Program	Zimbabwe	Provide educational opportunities for adolescent girls and women who are out of school due to various reasons, such as origin, religion, ethnic minorities or raising children, and facilitate their transition to formal education, vocational training and also to employment. Overcome gender-based and socio-economic challenges and transform gender unequal norms.	1,2,3 4,5,6	IQE SOYEE	Individual, school, community and national levels
FAWE : Forum for African Women Educationalists	GRP in teacher training college (TTC)	Ethiopia, Malawi	Mainstreaming the GRP into the curriculum of National Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) developed and led by FAWE in both Ethiopia and Malawi.	1,2,3 4,6	IQE	Individual, school, community and national levels
Asante Africa	FGM and child marriage prevention program (Wezesha Vijana)	Kenya	Help girls to continue learning to end practices such as FGM and child marriage. In addition to child marriage, menstruation is also a barrier to girls learning, and this status quo should be changed.	1,2,4	PFV SRHR	Individual, school and community levels
VVOB	GRP4ECE : Gender responsive pedagogy for early childhood education	South Africa	Developed a toolkit that contextualizes the GRP in the context of South African pre-school education. Strengthening the capacity of educators/caregivers to enable children to learn values that are not gender-stereotypical through play.	1,2,3,4	ECD	Individual and school (kindergarten/nursery school) levels

Child to Child Trust (UK)	Pikin to Pikin Tok	Sierra Leone	Provide educational contents, which are particularly important for girls, on hygiene, life skills and GBV prevention through child-centered, gender-responsive radio broadcasts so that children in Ebola-affected areas can continue their learning.	1,2,3 4,5	PFV	Individual, school and community levels
School-to-School (STS) International (USA)	Girls' Education Program (GEP)	Guinea	Support girls' education through the Whole Child Model, which addresses three areas simultaneously - education, health and engagement - as a response to child marriage and early pregnancy.	1,2,3,4	IQE	Individual, school and community levels
The Men 's Story Project	Men' s Story Project (MSP)	USA	Sharing narratives of masculinity held by diverse people (especially men) with the audience to reflect on the harms and social challenges created by toxic masculinities and to encourage behavior change based on positive masculinities.	1,3,5	IQE PFV	Individual, school and community levels
FAWE, Miske Miske Witt and Associates International, UNGEI	SRGBV prevention pilot project	Zimbabwe	Make improvements in the issues on SRGBV through workshops and children's club activities. Review the response to violence comprehensively and establish a reporting system.	1,2,3,4	PFV	Individual, school and community levels
UNGEI, Action Aid	Girls' Clubs and Role Model Outreach	Ghana	To address child marriage and early pregnancy, which hinders girls' education, by increasing girls' agency through interaction with role models and others, so that they can make decisions that are important to them.	1,2,4	LEAD	Individual, school and community levels
AGE Africa	Creating Healthy Approaches to Success (CHATS) Plus	Malawi	To address child marriage and early pregnancy that hinder girls' education by enhancing adolescent girls' leadership and agency and providing them with information on their health, future and livelihood opportunities. It aims to help girls develop agency, knowledge and skills, stay in school and make successful transitions to work or higher education.	1,2,4	LEAD	Individual, school and community levels
Plan International Laos	Gender Equality in Secondary School (GESS)	Laos	Promote gender equality at schools and aim to ensure that more girls receive secondary education in an improved environment. To meet the needs of diverse students and promote inclusion, taking into account intersectionality, such as ethnic minorities and sexual minorities.	1,2,3 4,5	LEAD	Individual, school and community levels
Dublin City University	Gender Equality Matters (GEM) educational program	Ireland	Aiming to prevent gender stereotyping and gender-based bullying/GBV, while building children's confidence through learning about gender at school as a starting point.	1,5	PFV	Individual, school and community levels

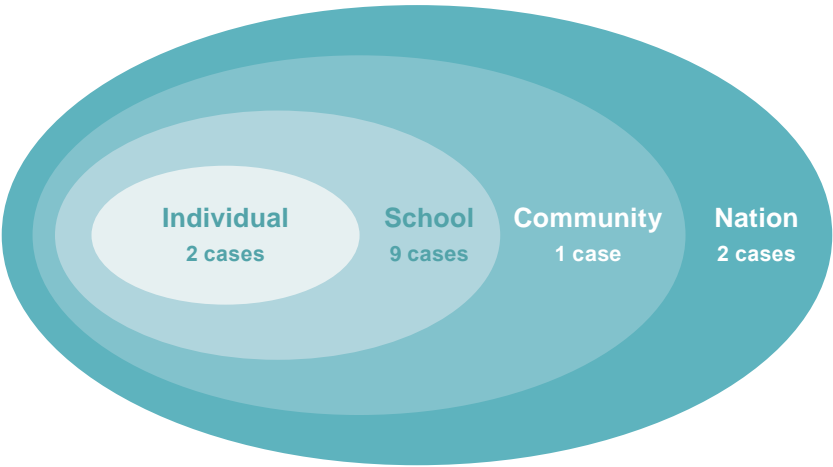
Implementation was most common in African countries, with eight in Africa (Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Malawi, Kenya, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana), one in Asia (Laos), one in Europe (Ireland) and one in North America (USA) The breakdown of AoGDs were, 4 IQE cases, 1 SOYEE case, 1 ECD case, 5 PFV cases, 1 SRHR case and 3 LEAD cases; some cases contained more than one AoGD elements.

Regarding the six elements of GTE, Element 1 (= gender norms): 12 cases; Element 2 (= girls' and women's agency): 10 cases; Element 3 (= engagement of boys and men): 8 cases; Element 4 (= improving the status of girls and women): 10 cases; Element 5 (= inclusion and intersectionality): 5 cases; Element 6 (=Law enforcement and creation of enable environment): 2 cases.

Regarding social systems, there were 2 cases for individual level, 9 for school level, 1 for community level and 2 for national level(though the main social system was school or community levels, respectively).

12 GTE cases in each social system

[Figure3] Distribution of 12 GTE cases in each social system



Individual level (2 cases)

All 12 GTE cases selected for this research are targeted directly or indirectly at the individual level. Men's Story Project (MSP) in USA and the educational programs through utilizing radio ('Pikin to Pikin Tok') implemented by Child to Child Trust in Sierra Leone have all achieved positive outcomes in terms of the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to gender, with a particular focus on impact at the individual level.

MSP in USA facilitates dialogue to transform masculinity and stereotypes by encouraging men from diverse backgrounds to speak publicly about their own experiences of masculinity. MSP education program is introduced into official university programs at partner universities around the world, including the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Minnesota in USA, and McGill University in Canada. The activities fall directly under element 1, 3 and 5 of the six elements of GTE. By rethinking the concept of masculinity, MSP led their audiences to understand that ideas of masculinity are diverse rather than monochrome(knowledge), encouraged them to review their own prejudices and stereotypes (attitudes) and challenge social norms which link masculinity to emotional suppression and violence (practice) (The Men's Story Project, 2024; Peretz et al., 2020) (Table 3).

Meanwhile, Pikin to Pikin Tok in Sierra Leone provides life skills education addressing early childhood development, hygiene and gender through radio broadcasts. While this activity is not gender-specific, it contributes positively to elements 1, 2, 4 and 5 by helping to improve individual skills and sustain children's learning. Children have increased their understanding of sexual and reproductive health and hygiene (knowledge), reviewed their traditional gender roles (attitudes), shared their gender knowledge and skills with peers and supported each other (practices) (Myers et al., 2023; Walker et al., 2016) (Table 4).

[Table3]

Project name	Men 's Story Project (MSP)
Country	USA
Implementing agent	The Men' s Story Project
Objective	Presenters from diverse backgrounds share their own experiences of masculinity with the audience. Through storytelling, the audience gains awareness of stereotyped and harmful masculinities and encourages behavior change based on positive masculinities.
Target group	Mainly men in their 20s to 40s *In some cases also teenagers
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on gender equality and workshops to reflect on experiences related to masculinities (8 weeks, 2.5 hours/ session) • Presenters with diverse values on masculinity and gender share their reflections on their own experiences and how their lives have been affected by stereotyped masculinity with the audience. • Creating storytelling videos
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged the audience through the storytelling to empathize with the presenter's experiences, to be aware of their own unconscious toxic masculinity and to understand positive masculinity. • Presenters heal their experiences of being hurt (or harmed) by toxic masculinity through group dialogue and experiences of acceptance by the audience • Presenters and audience raised awareness as promoters of gender equality
Social system	Individual, school (university) and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,3,5
AoGD	IQE PFV

[Table4]

Project name	Pikin to Pikin Tok
Country	Sierra Leone
Implementing agent	Child to Child Trust (UK)
Objective	Provide educational contents on hygiene, life skills and GBV prevention, which are particularly important for girls, through child-centered and gender-responsive radio broadcasts so that children in Ebola-affected areas can continue their learning.
Target group	Child (4-18 years)
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio-based awareness raising and educational activities (e.g. life skills, GBV prevention, literacy education) • Production of radio programs (e.g. interview activities) and broadcast by children themselves • Production and broadcast of radio programs in local languages as well as English
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasts in English improved children's reading and writing skills. Broadcasts in the local language raised children's interest by using familiar words • Awareness about GBV prevention and life skills was passed on to households and communities. It also improved understanding of the vulnerabilities girls facing
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4,5
AoGD	PFV

[Box.4] Individual-level GTE and the 6 elements

GTE initiatives targeting the individual level are essentially based on elements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (but where initiatives span multiple levels, all relevant social system elements are included)

Element 1: Gender norms; Element 2: Girls' and women's agency; Element 3: Engaging boys and men; Element 4: Improving the status of girls and women; Element 5: Inclusion/Intersectionality

Interview with GTE practitioner (i) (individual level)

[USA] The Men's Story Project (MSP)



Men's Story Project Founder / Director

Dr. Jocelyn Lehre

www.mensstoryproject.org

Tell us about MSP.

The Men's Story Project (MSP) creates public storytelling events where groups of men share bold, personal stories that examine social ideas about masculinity and speak out for health and equality for all people. In each event, the presenters share their stories with live audiences on topics such as fatherhood, romantic relationships, sexual and reproductive health / rights, gender-based violence, and men's mental health. The events are filmed to make videos of the men's stories that can then be shared widely. These storytelling events can be created by groups anywhere in the world; the MSP provides training.

Why did you choose men as your target population?

When we began MSP in 2008, there was little public dialogue in the United States about how societal ideas about masculinity affect the health, well-being, and equality of people of all gender identities. Such conversations about masculinity were not common at all. I think it is really important to hear and share the voices and stories of men themselves on these topics, because they can influence other men and boys and serve as role models.

Why did men join this great challenge?

MSP presenters are people who have a personal story they want to share. They join the project because they want to help make the world a better place with regard to gender equality and the specific issues that they are trying to address in that story. I think that is a form of activism and leadership.

It takes courage to participate in this project. Someone who still has fresh emotional wounds, is still processing to understand his life experiences, or still searching for what the lessons are, is not ready to participate in this project. Therefore, the project management needs to think carefully about whether an applicant is ready to share their story publicly and participate in this project.

To prepare for the public storytelling events, there is a process of eight group workshops that those who are ready to join MSP walk through the workshops, they learn together about how social ideas about gender, and social systems of power and privilege, have impacts on people's lives. In the public storytelling events, they share how they embarked on their journeys of healing or growth, or how they took action to prevent violence or support gender equality. If they sought support for their mental health, for example, what kind of support did they seek? How did they find such a source of support? How did they interact with such a source of support? If there were obstacles in the process, how did they overcome them? What were the changes that brought about? And what do they want for the rest of their lives? What commitments do they have to

themselves and to others in the future? In short, a clear description of the journey around healing, change, and growth will help the audience truly understand.

Many men experience the pain and embarrassment of being forced by society to behave in accordance with stereotypes of what it means to be “masculine,” regardless of their feelings and true inclinations. We support and celebrate these men on their journey of change toward healing, challenging stereotypes, and expressing their authentic selves. In doing so, the presenter gains courage. For years MSP has valued the experience of having presenters join the group. It is essentially 8 weeks where they learn together and build a community of mutual support. In doing so, the shyness is reduced. By the time they share their story in a public event, they may still be nervous, but they have already shared and learned so much, and they know that it is important to share their story.

What are you trying to keep in mind when implementing this project?

People who participate in the project as presenters may agree with gender equality and agree with eliminating homophobia, but they may still be prejudiced about other issues. For example, they may be negative about transgender equality. The workshops are an opportunity for the presenters themselves to find that their own prejudices and stereotypes were being challenged. They were more aware of their own prejudices and stereotypes, and re-evaluated them. The reason why they are doing so is that they put themselves in this intensive project, where they were in a learning community, on an equal footing, with a very diverse group of men.

MSP groups include people with identities and backgrounds very different from each other. One of the best ways to reduce prejudice is to create groups of diverse people, who are on equal footing with each other, and who then work collaboratively together toward outcomes that are of interest to all.

How do you encourage MSP participants to relate to women?

At MSP, we sometimes invite men to talk about what steps they took to improve their romantic relationships or how they decided to take parental leave or share equally in the housework. For example, how they responded to being challenged at work for taking parental leave, how they learned how to communicate more effectively and compassionately with their spouses, and when they felt doubtful or failed at something, how have they learned to share their feelings, and how have they developed a more intimate relationship with their partner? By sharing such stories, other men can learn as well.

Why focus on adult men instead of younger generation?

MSP is just one project. It would be nice to have other projects for different age groups; most MSP participants are in their 20s to 40s. The young men will one day become fathers and partners. I believe

that men of all ages can influence and learn from each other. So finding a group of men with whom they can talk openly about their issues, sharing their experiences, realizing that they are not alone, being affirmed in their experiences, and overcoming the challenges by being supported and seeing examples of journeys of change. I think all of that is so important.



Presenters are with diverse background
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Do you have plans to develop modules for much younger generations?

Our youngest presenter to date was 12 years old; he was an influencer on YouTube and a transgender boy. He got permission from his parents to participate in MSP. I think this project requires a certain amount of mental maturity and resilience because of the potential for backlash due to the very personal experiences that will be made public. So, while we have not yet done MSP in high schools, I believe it is possible to adapt it and would be happy to work with future partner organizations on ways to adopt such a project in high schools.

Notice the Male Privilege through "Productive Discomfort"

A key to MSP is the term "productive discomfort". For men, it can be uncomfortable to really reflect on the forms of privilege they have, the various forms of oppression they have perpetrated, or the harm they have caused. Knowing that they have unknowingly adopted oppressive attitudes, and being willing to do the work of self-reflection and social analysis, may be uncomfortable, but it is purposeful. That purpose is growth to become a more positive contributor to society, and to have more beautiful and meaningful relationships with others.



Presenters at front of the audience ©The Men's Story Project

School level (9 cases)

9 cases focused on the school level as the main focus. These included FGM and Child Marriage Prevention Program by Asante Africa in Kenya (Wezesha Vijana), Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education (GRP4ECE) by VVOB in South Africa, Girls' Education Program (GEP) by School-to-School in Guinea; SRGBV prevention pilot project by UNGEI and FAWE in Zimbabwe (SRGBV Prevention Project); Girls' Clubs and Role Model Outreach (GC&RMO) project by UNGEI and Action Aid in Ghana; Creating Healthy Approaches to Success project by AGE Africa (CHATS Plus) in Malawi; Gender Equality in Secondary School (GESS) by Plan International Lao; Gender Equality Matters educational program by Dublin City University (GEM) in Ireland; and GRP in teacher training college in Malawi and Ethiopia (TTC) by FAWE. In all of these cases, improvements in the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to gender were observed.

Wezesha Vijana in Kenya supports girls to gain academic competency and knowledge and skills on topics that are not usually discussed in Kenya, such as menstrual hygiene and sexual and reproductive health, through participatory workshops. The activities had a direct impact on element 1, 2, 4 of the six elements of GTE, with dialogue with mothers and peer support through school children's clubs increasing girls' understanding of sexual and reproductive health and GBV (knowledge) and improving their self-esteem and sense of well-being (attitudes). Mothers also became more active in supporting education for girls (practice) and the number of girls missing school due to household chores was significantly lower compared to girls who did not participate in the project (Asante Africa. 2017; 2018; Wamukuru and Orton, 2016) (Table 5).

[Table5]

Project name	Wezesha Vijana
Country	Kenya
Implementing agent	Asante Africa
Objective	Support girls to continue learning to end practices such as FGM and child marriage. In addition to child marriage, menstruation is also a barrier to girls learning, and this status quo should be changed.
Target group	Girls, their mothers and fathers, boys
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting workshops on SRHR by girls' clubs • Construction of girls' toilets in schools • Awareness-raising training for mothers on girls' education
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls' awareness of their own SRHR has increased their confidence and improved their school attendance • Improved understanding and transformed attitudes of parents and community members towards girls' education through training for parents • Boys' knowledge and attitudes transformed (e.g. attitudes towards girls' SRHR and girls' ownership of assets improved)
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,4
AoGD	PFV SRHR

GRP4ECE in South Africa has introduced a teaching method to help pre-school children learn about gender equality through play and provides a program to help teachers and school staffs implement this teaching method. This activity directly contributes to elements 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the 6 elements. Through workshops using a diverse toolkit developed in the context of South Africa's historical background and situation, and follow-up in WhatsApp groups, teachers and school staffs understood the risks of their behavior unintentionally reinforcing gender norms in the classrooms (knowledge), reviewed traditional gender values and became more supportive of male participation in pre-school education (attitude). They also actively encouraged children to play freely based on their choice of play types and toys without gender stereotypes (practice) (Ismail, 2022; VVOB, 2020) (Table 6).

[Table6]

Project name	GRP4ECE : Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education
Country	South Africa
Implementing agent	VVOB
Objective	Developed a toolkit that contextualizes GRP into South African pre-school education. Strengthen the capacity of educators/caregivers to teach in a play-based manner.
Target group	Teachers, (Ministry of Basic Education as stakeholder)
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the GRP4ECE toolkit for teachers and school managers in South Africa • Training workshops: 3-day workshops and ongoing support via WhatsApp and through Professional Learning Community (PLC) • Follow-up visits: biannual site visits for monitoring and coaching • Orientation for instructors
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' attitudes that boys should not behave like girls have changed. They have adopted a more balanced view of the appropriate roles of men and women • Understanding of education for gender equality from teaching materials and encouraging toy selection and play that is not gender stereotypical
Social system	Individual, school (ECD center: kindergarten, nursery school)
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4
AoGD	ECD

GEP in Guinea is to remove barriers to girls' education by providing integrated support from three areas: education, health and social participation. The activities directly affect element 1, 2 and 4 of the six elements of GTE. Through training, remedial classes and workshops delivered to a wide range of audiences, including school principals, teachers, students, parents and community members, girls' academic achievements and their knowledge of health and hygiene has improved (knowledge) and their self-esteem has increased (attitudes). The status of girls was also improved by strengthening girls' leadership at school and by promoting equitable household burden at home. Thus, GEP improved girls' current situation (practice) (Lynd et al., 2016) (Table 7).

[Table7]

Project name	GEP: Girls' Education Program
Country	Guinea
Implementing agent	School-to-School (STS) International (America)
Objective	Support girls' education through the Whole Child Model, which addresses three areas simultaneously - education, health and engagement - as a response to child marriage and teenage pregnancy.
Target group	Children and teachers
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for school teachers and managers on gender, subjects (reading, mathematics), health (e.g. HIV/AIDS), hygiene (e.g. handwashing), food safety • Providing food as an incentive for girls to continue learning • Providing after-school remedial classes for girls • Giving girls leadership experience • Use of role models for girls (e.g. teachers, doctors, principals)
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of teachers • Scholarship schemes motivated families to send girls to school • Girls in the program who received scholarships had better grades • Boys became allies of girls, for example, planning after-school remedial classes for girls • Leadership experience has boosted confidence

Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4
AoGD	IQE

The SRGBV² Prevention Project in Zimbabwe aims to prevent GBV occurring in and around schools and supports schools, communities, local administration and local gender activists to work together to create safe and gender-responsive school environments. This activity falls directly under elements 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the six elements of GTE. Through the work of the new school development committees (similar to PTAs) and children's clubs, there is a better understanding of gender norm and the harmful effects of gender norms and GBV among teachers and school staffs, children, parents and community members (knowledge) and improved attitudes towards gender equality (attitudes). Schools have also worked with local administrations to review existing policies and structures to strengthen their response systems to GBV and ensure reporting of violence properly (practice) (UNGEI & Miske Witt & Associates, 2021; UNGEI & UNICEF, 2021) (Table 8).

[Table8]

Project name	SRGBV prevention pilot project
Country	Zimbabwe
Implementing agent	FAWE, Miske Witt and Associates International, UNGEI
Objective	Identify and address views, attitudes and behaviors related to GBV. Based on findings from implementation, SRGBV measures are incorporated into education sector plans.
Target group	Teachers, School staffs, pupils and students
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify SRGBV and provide training for teachers to teach in a gender-responsive manner • Empower students and young women to recognize violence and raise their voices • Raise awareness of the law and policy on GBV in Zimbabwe • Establish or strengthen school codes of conduct with gender-responsive contents that address to acts of violence and gender-based discrimination
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness among education stakeholders of gender norms and violence, and schools have established more functional reporting systems and codes of conduct • Leadership and engagement, particularly by girls, has been strengthened, encouraging improvements in school management and GBV prevention efforts
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4
AoGD	PFV

The GC&RMO in Ghana aims to develop girls' ability to complete school without dropping out and to become active members of society through the use of girls' clubs and local role models (successful people around girls). This activity directly contributes to element 1, 2, and 4 of the six elements of GTE. Girls' clubs established in schools have provided support for literacy and numeracy and life skills development, and through interaction with local role models, girls have developed a deeper understanding of the value of education and gender stereotypes (knowledge). Girls developed a greater sense of self-efficacy and felt to possibly take any career choices beyond traditional gender roles (attitude). In addition, girls' educational support within the family and school involvement increased and then gender equality was promoted in

2 School-Related Gender-Based Violence. (see glossary of terms and definitions)

educational opportunities and the sharing of household chores was observed (practice) (action aid, 2017; Koku et al., 2016) (Table 9).

[Table9]

Project name	Girls' Clubs and Role Model Outreach
Country	Ghana
Implementing agent	UNGEI, Action Aid
Objective	To combat child marriage and teenage pregnancy, which inhibits girls' education, by increasing girls' agency and enabling them to make important decisions to them.
Target group	Girls (secondary school students aged 12-18), their parents and caregivers
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging girls, especially those with difficult access to go to school • Formation and re-formation of girls' clubs • Dialogue between role models and girls • Shaping girls' non-cognitive skills
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most girls have increased self-awareness, set future goals and thought towards achieving them • Girls' attendance at school improved and their motivation to continue learning increased • Girls have become more assertive than before • Confidence increased from interacting with role models • Reduced cases of teenage pregnancies resulting in fewer girls dropping out of school
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,4
AoGD	LEAD

CHATS Plus in Malawi supports girls to become agents of change in their own lives through after-school club activities. The activities directly impact element 1, 2 and 4 of the six elements of GTE. Through the academic learning and life skills curriculum delivered in club activities after school, girls increased their knowledge of gender equality and sexual and reproductive health (knowledge), gained confidence from group facilitation and presentation experiences and improved their leadership skills (attitudes).

They were also able to assert themselves against child marriage and subordinate relationships to men, and to act in their own interests in decision-making (practice). In addition, they improved their STEM grades, gained knowledge of a wide range of career choices and expanded their post-graduation pathways (practice) (Allyn et al., 2016; Dining for Women, 2017) (Table 10).

[Table10]

Project name	Creating Healthy Approaches to Success (CHATS) Plus
Country	Malawi
Implementing agent	AGE Africa
Objective	To tackle child marriage and teenage pregnancies, which hinder girls' education, adolescent girls' leadership and agency are enhanced and they are provided with information on their health, future and livelihood opportunities. It aims to help girls develop agency, knowledge and skills, stay in school and make successful transitions to employment and higher education.
Target group	Over 4,000 adolescent girls in 41 schools

Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of clubs, using after-school hours • Discussions between participants on various topics • Entrepreneurship training • Leadership and assertiveness workshops • Sessions with local role models • Educational support for math, science, etc.
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls showed improved academic performance in math, science etc. • Girls empowered and their leadership encouraged • Improved understanding of sexual and reproductive health and contributed to delayed marriage and pregnancy among girls
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,4
AoGD	LEAD

GESS in Laos provides gender equality training and workshops at schools to help girls access a safe and equal education. This activity affects directly element 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the six elements of GTE. Through training for teachers, children and PTAs and the activities of the newly established children's clubs, understanding of gender equality has increased (knowledge), attitudes towards equal education have improved (attitudes) and girls' leadership has been strengthened (practices). In addition, not only among children but also among teachers, the existing gender roles, such as cleaning for only female teachers and performing administrative tasks for only male teachers, was eliminated (practice) (Nagashima, 2021; Plan International Japan, 2017) (Table 11).

[Table11]

Project name	Gender Equality in Secondary School (GESS)
Country	Laos
Implementing agent	Plan International Laos
Objective	Promote gender equality in schools, enabling more girls to receive secondary education in an improved environment. Respond to the needs of diverse students and promote inclusion, taking into account intersectionality, such as ethnic minorities and sexual minorities.
Target group	Girls at secondary schools, caregivers and teachers
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender training (teachers, children's club leaders, representatives of parents and caregivers) • Awareness-raising activities by children's club leaders to other students and their parents and caregivers • Training on establishing a GBV consultation and reporting office • Construction and maintenance training for school dormitories
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a change in teachers' and students' attitudes towards gender • Actions towards gender equality were taken in all targeted schools (e.g. Increased proportion of female students as class chairpersons) • Increased awareness of GBV, especially among boys
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4,5
AoGD	LEAD

GEM in Ireland aims to increase children's confidence and coping skills by tackling GBV and bullying. This activity directly impacts on element 1 and 5 of the six elements of GTE. By using materials and training modules developed for teachers, children and caregivers have helped children understand gender equality and gender-based bullying (knowledge) and children have the confidence to intervene, whether as a victim or bystander (attitudes). They also improved their ability to discuss gender stereotypes in everyday life and to use their gender knowledge in real life (practice). Furthermore, through the Home-School Link³ initiative, school-caregiver cooperation was strengthened and there were more opportunities for children and caregivers to discuss learned gender issues at home (practice) (Keating & Baker, 2023) (Table 12).

[Table 12]

Project name	Gender Equality Matters educational program (GEM)
Country	Ireland
Implementing agent	Dublin City University
Objective	With schools as a starting point, the project aims to prevent gender stereotyping, gender-based bullying and GBV, while building children's confidence through learning about gender.
Target group	Children (10-13 years) attending primary school
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of teaching materials for children (1. Rights and equality; 2. Gender stereotypes; 3. Gender stereotypes in the media; 4. Gender-based bullying/violence; 5. Recognizing differences) • Development of teaching materials for teachers and school staffs • Development of educational materials for parents and caregivers • Development of teaching materials for face-to-face and online use
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's understanding of gender equality and GBV promoted • This has given them the confidence to act as active bystanders when they encounter gender based bullying/GBV • Community engagement has increased as a result of the implementation of this initiative at whole school • This facilitated discussions about gender equality and also gender-based bullying/GBV at home
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,5
AoGD	PFV

TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia primarily target the school level, but their impact extends to the national level. In this case study, they provide training on gender-responsive teaching methods to teachers, school administrators (principals and other managers) and education policy makers, helping to create a gender equitable school environment. This program was adopted as the curriculum of the National College for Teacher Training. Through the program, teachers understand their words, attitudes and behaviors may impose gender-based roles and expectations on children (knowledge), while avoiding negative gender-related language and behavior (attitudes), incorporating gender knowledge into classroom practice (practice) such as facilitating collaborative works by groups of children regardless of their gender (Wanjama & Njuguna, 2016) (Table 13).

³ A tool for teachers to inform caregivers about what their children are learning about and their progress. Like classroom newsletters

[Table13]

Project name	GRP in teacher training college (TTC)
Country	Ethiopia, Malawi
Implementing agent	Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
Objective	Mainstreaming Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) into the TTC curriculum in both Ethiopia and Malawi, developed primarily by FAWE.
Target group	Learners taking teacher training courses, in-service teachers
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting gender-responsive needs researches and policy analysis • Training on GRP (knowledge, attitudes and practical teaching methods on gender-responsive learning) • Training to promote learner-centered learning • Implementing GRP training for school management teams (principals and other managers)
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRP introduced into teacher training programs in both Ethiopia and Malawi • To ensure quality, Ministry of Education officers follow up on this • Transformation of teachers' attitudes (teaching equally to girls and boys) • Improving girls' self-confidence and self-esteem • Improved learning environment has improved access to learning, especially for girls • Understanding the needs of girls and women has improved the situation of school management (e.g. Installation of girls' toilets, participation of female teachers in decision-making)
Social system	Individual, school, community and national levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4,6
AoGD	IQE

[Box.5] School-level GTE and the 6 elements

GTE initiatives targeting the school level are principally based on elements 2, 4, 5 and 6. (However, where initiatives cover multiple levels, all relevant social system elements are included)

Element 2: Girls' and women's agency; Element 4: Improving the status of girls and women;
Element 5: Inclusion/Intersectionality; Element 6: Law enforcement and creation of enable environment

Interview with GTE practitioner (ii) (school level)

[South Africa] Gender-responsive pedagogy for early childhood education (GRP4ECE)



VVOB
Global Strategic Education Advisor
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What is the background to GRP4ECE in South Africa?

The GRP4ECE toolkit was developed by VVOB in partnership with the Ministries of Education in both Rwanda and Zambia and FAWE⁴. In 2019, the GRP4ECE project was launched in South Africa and the toolkit was modified to the South African context. As you know, South Africa has a history of apartheid. It also has a progressive constitution and is more receptive to gender-related matters and in particular to the LGBTQ+ community, compared to other African countries. In that sense, we needed to create a different version of GRP4ECE for South Africa.

Why is GRP4ECE gender transformative?

There are two main reasons. First, it is specific to working with young children: children aged 2-6 are at a point in their development when gender values become an important element for them. Children begin to understand that there are differences between boys and girls, men and women, and that society has different expectations and values for each of those. GRP4ECE can intervene at that time when infants begin to form their ideas about gender.

The second reason is that GRP4ECE is a gender-responsive pedagogy. This is not just about having gender-neutral toys for boys and girls, or ensuring that initiatives are free from gender bias, etc. GRP4ECE allows teachers to reflect on existing gender stereotypes and gender-based power imbalances in a critical way with young children. It is also about actively reflecting on and discussing gender issues with children and encouraging their understanding of what is different between boys and girls, why it is different, when it is different and how it is different. Therefore, it is a much more proactive approach than simply being gender-aware or gender-neutral.



Young children playing in an ECD center ©VVOB

What are the outcomes of GRP4ECE in South Africa?

The program we implemented was a pilot focusing on only a few hundred teachers, and not on a very large scale. However, the program had a survey research component, from which we saw significant results in terms of changes in teachers' and children's attitudes, ideas and behaviors towards gender.

⁴ Forum for African Women Educationalists

As the program in South Africa started around the same time when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, its implementation was very challenging at the time. Many activities had to be carried out online. This is not ideal for a behavior change program like GRP4ECE. It is much easier to implement face-to-face, but we still achieved good results. We were able to create a very effective follow-up mechanism online as well as face-to-face. I believe that is one of the achievements of the program. The online format has made the model much more sustainable and easier to scale up than the traditional face-to-face activities that we had been doing.

Moreover, with the considerable interest and support received from the South African Government, Department of Basic Education (DBE) utilized part of the GRP4ECE toolkit with its own funds for approximately 4,000 additional teachers since our pilot program ended. This is a major achievement.

What is it like working with the South African government and other stakeholders?

VVOB has always worked with and through the Government. Our mission is also to support the DBE in, for example, strengthening the capacity of teachers and those responsible for running schools. Also, in adapting the toolkit to South African contexts, ensuring that GRP4ECE fits in with the government's priorities and the education curriculum and policy framework. The successful collaboration with the DBE stems from the fact that several officers from the DBE who became very strong advocates. They were very supportive of the program and played a major role in building support mechanisms within DBE and with other education stakeholders.

Besides involving the government, we also involved a number of stakeholders. For example, we gained cooperation not only from strong supporters such as LGBTQ+ organizations, but also from groups that might resist the program, such as religious organizations. This probably made it easier for the Ministry of Education to move forward with this program.

What triggers teachers to change their attitudes and performance in GRP4ECE?

In South Africa, we adopted a considerably more inclusive approach than the original GRP4ECE: the GRP4ECE deals with gender, but it also deals with other forms of discrimination. In South Africa, with its history of apartheid, our work on GRP4ECE was helpful in changing behaviors of teachers because it raised their interest in how to be inclusive in general, not just in terms of gender. While the KAP research showed significant changes in certain questions, the in-depth questions on basic ideas about gender differences showed little change. There is still room for improvement in this respect.

What we did at the beginning of the program was to take time to get them to think about how their gender relates to their own values, situation, relationship with their family, situation at work or school, etc. In doing so, they can link gender discrimination to their own experiences. Also, the toolkit has lots of practical materials, with very specific tools and concrete advice for teachers on how they can actually change their teaching methods. This can therefore be put into practice in the classroom immediately.

Do you think GRP4ECE can be effectively applied in developed countries?

We have also implemented in other African countries and in Vietnam. In Belgium, where VVOB International headquarters is located, there are several organizations⁵ that have developed Belgian toolkits using our GRP4ECE toolkit. I believe that the GRP4ECE is a common approach worldwide.

⁵ For example, the Belgian NPO RoSa has adopted the following teaching materials.
Toolkit Gender in de kleuterklas | RoSa vzw

Interview with GTE practitioner (iii) (school level)

[Malawi] Creating Healthy Approaches to Success project (CHATS Plus)



AGE Africa Deputy Country Director
Dumisani Nkhonjera

What are they expected to acquire through the clubs?

The first is to develop the girls' agency. We want the girls to develop the ability to be assertive and good leadership skills. For example, one of those abilities to say 'no' to someone telling a girl that she should get married as soon as possible.

All of these elements are necessary to transform not only the girl's own life, but also the community. It is also important to know about the institutions. If they don't want to get married right away, or if they want to continue going to school, they also need to know that there are government systems in place to support their decision. We hope that once girls are able to make their own decisions about what is best for them, they will practice in their communities in the same way.

What is most important for making the CHATS Plus project gender transformative?

I think it is the role model. Role models, for example doctors and nurses, are people who are in similar circumstances to them, but have achieved better outcomes in their communities. By inviting the role models in and listening to them, the girls know what is expected to themselves. We also make sure that they realize that there are men who support them towards a better life for girls. We are particularly raising awareness by involving community leaders to encourage people at the community to understand and support girls.

What was the biggest change?

Before starting the project, most of the girls could not stand up and speak in front of people. However, after just a few sessions in the project, they gained confidence and started to speak up. According to the teachers, there is completely difference between girls who have participated in the project and those who have not in a way of speaking up. The accumulation of activities builds confidence. Before the project started, most of the girls felt that they just would be around the village now and in the future, with nowhere else to go and nothing else to do. However, after this session, the girls started thinking about going to university. They started making plans for their future. This has also been quantitatively confirmed by the pre- and post- survey.

The project certainly helped to promote girls' agency. What does it lead to so?

Firstly, the ones leading the club are the girls themselves. They are acting as role models for the other girls. When other girls see their friends organizing meetings, leading them and presenting in front of them, they feel

that even she is doing it, we might be able to do it too. Then they start to believe that they can do it too. And over time, all the girls become able to act in the same way. The second is, as mentioned above, to make use of role models. By using role models a lot, girls get a concrete image or goal of what they can become and start to make efforts to achieve it.

The first topic addressed in the project's training manual is 'Knowing yourself'. Thus, the girls know who they are and what they are capable of and know what they can become. In other words, think about what they want to be. This builds their own leadership. Although the training manual also covers topics such as SRHR, human rights, gender policy and understanding the legal framework, 'self-awareness' and 'leadership' are considered to be particularly important. Both of them open the girls' minds and make the girls understand that they can do whatever they want and explore.

The project has boosted the girls' confidence. Do community members accept such changes?

As a result of the project, community residents see things in a bigger perspective. This is because they know that girls are helping their families and communities while gaining current information. Hence, I understand that the changes that are happening to the girls are good not only for the girls themselves, but also for the entire community. Sure, there will be people here and there who are against these things, but if more community residents support the girls, they would eventually understand and accept the changes happened are not just for girls, but for the community as a whole.

What we need to do is to empower girls and equip them with the ability to set goals and solve problems. With those abilities, they can participate in decision-making processes that require patience and decisiveness within their communities, as well as for their own sake. Finally, leadership in this case, refers to the ability to support others. How clearly can the girls explain issues that affect not only themselves but also their community? It is important for us to ensure that the girls understand this. Leadership is about providing answers to improve the whole community.



Activities at a girls' club ©AGE Africa Malawi

Community level (1 case)

Of the 12 GTE cases, one case, Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education Program (SAGE), was primarily targeted at the community level. SAGE targets adolescent girls who are out of school due to several reasons, improving their learning outcomes through accelerated learning programs, etc., and providing community-based support for transition to formal education, vocational training and self-employment. Regarding GTE, life skills sessions which focuses on SRHR and girls' rights are provided. The activities in this case study fall under all six elements of GTE. Girls increased their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, including scientific contraceptive methods (knowledge), and negotiated the division of household chores through conversations with male club members (practice). Male club members also increased intergenerational dialogue and developed positive attitudes towards girls' education and women's economic participation (attitude) (UKaid, 2023). (Table 14).

[Table14]

Project name	Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education(SAGE) Program
Country	Zimbabwe
Implementing agent	Plan International Zimbabwe
Objective	Provide educational opportunities for adolescent girls and women who are out of school due to various reasons, such as origin, religion, ethnic minorities or raising children, and facilitate their transition to formal education, vocational training and also to employment. Overcome gender-based socio-economic challenges and transform gender inequality norms.
Target group	Adolescent girls aged 10-19 years with difficulties
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing education: accelerated learning for girls who have not been to school is offered to improve their basic academic skills. Training for teachers will also be provided to. • Vocational training: girls receive community-based vocational training • Activities using the CoC models (implemented for girls and boys respectively) • Strengthening safeguarding on all activities • Conducting graduation ceremonies to mark the completion of studies with community residents' participation
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of girls' basic academic skills • Girls' self-efficacy increased and girls were empowered to make self-decisions • Knowledge and attitudes towards SRHR have been transformed • Increased awareness of girls' education, gender equality and GBV among community residents and also boys • Knowledge of and attitudes towards girls with disabilities have transformed • Increased awareness of safeguarding has made girls safer
Social system	Individual, school, community and national levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4,5,6
AoGD	IQE、SOYEE

[Box.6]Community-level GTE and the 6 elements

GTE initiatives targeting the community level are principally based on the elements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. (However, where initiatives span multiple levels, all relevant social system elements are included)

Element 1: Gender norms; Element 2: Girls' and women's agency; Element 3: Engaging boys and men; Element 4: Improving the status of girls and women; Element 5: Inclusion/Intersectionality; Element 6: Law enforcement and creation of enable environment

Interview with GTE practitioner (iv) (community level)

[Zimbabwe] Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education Program (SAGE)



Plan International Zimbabwe SAGE program manager **Obert Chigodora**

What did you need most to turn SAGE into GTE?

A factor that made the program transformative was the initial gender assessment conducted. This allowed us to identify the specific needs of 7 sub-groups⁶ of girls. The program engaged with over 13,000 girls, each of whom had different needs.

For example, we found that some married girls were unable to attend school due to constraints on their mobility, despite their competency. We adjusted the program's implementation measures to address these specific needs.

The learning materials we have developed enhanced girls' agency so that they can actually overcome their challenges. Those learning materials integrate everything learned from the gender assessment.

Which of the 6 elements of GTE did you focus on in the implementation?

Some of the targeted girls had never been to school and had very low literacy and numeracy skills. Some of the girls were below grade 5 regarding competency. Thus, our focus was to help these girls gain confidence at the end of the program. Girls from communities under religious practices that keep girls out of school created a group on the social networking application, WhatsApp, to raise awareness among the girls in the group and to share knowledge, especially about safeguarding and how to report GBV. This helped to increase the girls' agency and as a result they became more confident.

Through the program, young mothers are now able to help their own children with their homework. This is another important factor in boosting their confidence. The program also provided vocational training. Vocational training has enabled some girls to become employed and others to become self-employed. In the community, girls and young women were not considered valuable. However, their position has changed. In other words, the perception of them as 'girls who don't know anything' in the community has changed.

Of course, working with men and boys is one of the key elements of the gender transformative education intended in our programs. In communities where men and boys are in social leadership positions, they sometimes perpetuate unequal gender norms. Therefore, we have intentionally adapted the CoC to men and boys as part of our program, and in the CoC manual, we have included initiatives where the boys are allies of the girls and wives share some of their household chores with husbands, so that wives can make time to be involved in this program.

⁶ Seven groups of girls: married girls, young mothers, Apostolic girls, girls with disabilities, girls from ethnic minorities, girls who had never attended school, girls who were working.

What impact has SAGE had on the perceptions of gender among policymakers at local and national levels?

One of the key actions we took was the development of teaching materials. As part of the team that developed the teaching materials, we had officers from different departments of the Ministry of Education. This allowed us to include perspectives on for example gender and disability. in the development of the teaching materials. This differs from the way in which Plan International and its partners developed the materials on their own and sought approval from the Ministry of Education. Developing specific teaching materials together with the Ministry of Education is important. Therefore, there was already a sense of ownership within the Ministry of Education for the program.

Another important aspect, also, was that we organized an event for key stakeholders to share their learning from the program. We invited the girls, and they were given the opportunity to present about their experiences themselves. This played a major role in making Ministry of Education officers aware of the need for a gender-transformative perspective in the initiative.

Besides, joint quarterly program site visits were conducted to engage stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education. These visits enabled stakeholders to see whether the program actually conformed to education policy, such as access to quality education. Through this, they understood that the program was beneficial, and engagement and dialogue among stakeholders got promoted.

Do you have any tips for promoting GTE?

We felt that the CoC modules were adult-focused rather than child-focused, with adult facilitators in front of girls and boys to facilitate discussions around SRHR, for example. It would be difficult to make this initiative sustainable and more beneficial so that we decided to try peer-to-peer learning.

We received feedback from the girls about their experiences as peer leaders we used the feedback to consult with them. In a peer-to-peer learning environment, girls are more likely to talk about their experiences because they are less likely to be judged or treated critically. The role of peer leaders also encourages the targeted girls to participate, and also helps the girls to interact with each other. Introducing peer leaders is a good steppingstone. This could result in improved literacy and numeracy skills.



Girls receiving training on safeguarding
©Plan International



Young mothers with children who advance their learning
©Plan International

National level (2 cases)

While none of the 12 cases primarily targeted the national level, there were two cases where modules and teaching materials developed for the activities were eventually adopted into national-level curricula and guidelines: TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia, and SAGE in Zimbabwe. Firstly TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia primarily targeted the school level, but its impact has also reached the national level, with a program on gender-responsive teaching methods for teacher development being adopted as the curriculum of the National College for Teacher Training (Wanjama & Njuguna, 2016) (for details, see school level above). In addition, Zimbabwe's SAGE, which primarily targeted the community level, has introduced an accelerated learning program developed for the activity as a national curriculum (UKaid, 2023) (for details, see community level above). Secondly, as a pilot, GRP4ECE in South Africa is developing a practical toolkit on gender-responsive teaching methods for ECE in collaboration with DBE (Ismail, 2022; VVOB, 2020) (for details of case study, see 'School level' , page 18).

[Box.6] School-level GTE and the 6 elements

GTE initiatives targeting the state level are principally based on the element 5 and 6.

(However, where initiatives cover multiple levels, all relevant social system elements are included

Element 5: Inclusion/Intersectionality; Element 6: Law enforcement and creation of enable environment

05 Discussion: analysis of drivers and barriers

Here, 12 GTE cases are analyzed based on social-ecological systems theory to identify the 'drivers' of gender-transformative, and to examine how effective GTE practices can be. Gender inequality is deeply rooted at multiple levels, i.e. individual, school and family, community and national levels (society at large) (Yotebieng, 2021). Appropriate interventions at these levels are needed to address the root causes of gender inequality (Rogers et al., 2023). Hence, this research examined the activities and outcomes of each of the 12 cases at four levels of the social system: individual, school, community and nation. Six elements of GTE were assessed for activities, while outcomes were assessed using the KAP framework.

Drivers emerged as: at the individual level, enhancing motivation by role models and empowering individuals by strengthening their sense of ownership; at the school level, development of age- and theme-appropriate gender education materials and teacher training, peer learning and internal change through children's club activities, and delivery of consistent messages through cooperation with schools, parents and caregivers; at the community level, increased willingness to participate and agency and establishment of support systems; and at national level, transformation of social norms through policies and laws and regulations. On the other hand, barriers could include gender stereotypes, culture-based resistance and economic constraints.

Drivers of the change in knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding gender

[Individual level] Empowerment of individuals by enhancing motivation by role models and strengthening the sense of ownership of the subject matter

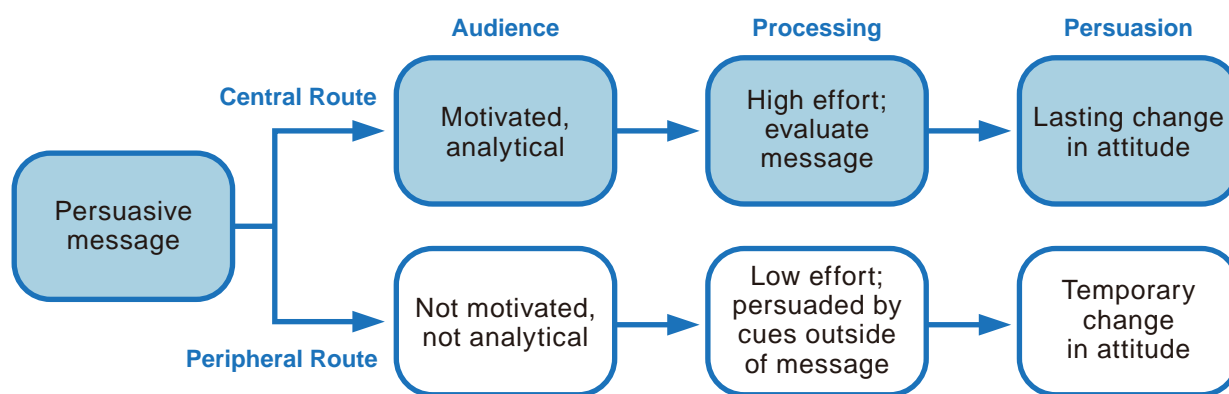
The individual level is the starting point for behavior transformation. In GTE initiatives targeting this individual level, motivating individuals has a significant impact on the transformation of gender norms (Yotebieng, 2021). In particular, the experiences provided by local, familiar and successful people as role models evoke a deep sense of empathy in individuals and bring strong motivation and engagement to overcome challenges (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) [Figure 4].

Regarding MSP in USA and Pikin to Pikin Tok in Sierra Leone, familiar role models encourage participants in the projects to overcome gender stereotypes. In MSP, male presenters from diverse backgrounds, sharing the painful experiences by their ‘masculinity’ as perpetrators or victims of personal violence, became a kind of role models and audiences were moved by them. This empathy becomes the driving force and gives audiences an opportunity for deep reflection and awareness of their internalized ‘masculinity’. In Pikin to Pikin Tok in Sierra Leone, radio program's facilitators, local guest speakers and radio drama characters took on non-gender stereotypical roles as role models, helping children to realize their potential in life and to see themselves as the main actor in their own lives, and to developed the ability to make decisions.

In addition, through post-presentation discussions between presenters and audiences in MSP in America and through children's participation in the production of radio programs in Pikin to Pikin Tok in Sierra Leone, audiences and children became aware of their ownership and involvement in working towards gender issues and, increased confidence to challenge gender stereotypes. Attitudes and behaviors changed based on such strong motivation and active involvement last much longer than weak motivation that is context-driven (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

Therefore, GTE's efforts at the individual level, starting from the empowerment of individuals, strongly motivated by role models and active engagement with the issues, can transform the unequal gender norms by promoting a transformation from inside of individual's awareness, in terms of knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding gender.

[Figure 4] Sustained effects of being motivated by role models and engagement ⁷



(Source: Petty and Cacioppo, 1986)

[School level] Development of age- and theme-appropriate gender education materials and teacher training

The school level is considered the most immediate social system that directly influences individual behavior transformation in social-ecological systems theory. Teachers are key to promoting gender equality at schools (Gunderson et al., 2012). Teachers' gender stereotypes and teaching practices have a significant impact on children's gender values (Heyder et al., 2020). In addition, teachers have a wide range of influences as they encounter hundreds of students throughout their professional lives. Teacher training for gender equality education is therefore crucial (Kollmayer et al., 2020).

Of the 9 case studies that mainly target school level, 6 have provided teacher training for GTE, including GRP4ECE in South Africa, GEP in Guinea, the SRGBV prevention project in Zimbabwe, GESS in Laos, GEM in Ireland, and TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia. GRP4ECE in South Africa, GEM in Ireland and TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia have developed dedicated teaching materials (Table 15).

⁷ ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL OF ATTITUDE CHANGE (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986)

<https://jackwestin.com/resources/mcat-content/theories-of-attitude-and-behavior-change/elaboration-likelihood-model>

[Table 15] List of teaching materials developed in teacher training programs

Project	Country	Main target	Teaching materials
GRP4ECE	South Africa	Teachers for ECE, school leaders, Professional Learning Community (PLCs)	Training materials and online courses on 5 themes: learning environment, teaching materials, learning activities, interaction and language use, and communication outside the classroom
GEM	Ireland	Teachers at primary schools, caregivers	Instructional materials on 5 themes: rights and equality, gender stereotypes, gender stereotypes and media, gender-based bullying and GBV, acceptance of diversity (including LGBTI+ glossary, list of national support services), MOOC courses (available to anyone online)
TTC	Malawi, Ethiopia	Primary and secondary school teachers, school administrators	Comprehensive training materials, including school management, learner-centered pedagogy, sexual and reproductive health, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of programs and online courses

The contents of the teacher training required for GTE vary widely. They vary according to the program objectives, the age of children the teachers are responsible for and the cultural background of the target area, lack of teaching materials has often been observed (UNESCO, 2022). In GRP4ECE in South Africa, GEM in Ireland and TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia in Table 15, a variety of teacher training package, including online courses, have been developed by university task teams of experts and joint team of international institutions. In GRP4ECE in South Africa and TTC in Malawi and Ethiopia, training using such fit-for-purpose materials has increased teachers' confidence and teaching skills, and in GEM in Ireland, involving parents and caregivers, changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices on gender are occurring.

[School level] Peer learning and internal change through children's club activities

In the school environment, the influence of peers is significant and children develop their skills to solve gender-related problem through dialogue and cooperation with their peers. This enables them to develop new perspectives on gender equality and overcome gender stereotypes with confidence and courage (Piaget, 1932). Children's clubs are an important platform for supporting such peer learning. Of the 9 cases that mainly targeted the school level, 5 cases⁸ had established children's clubs for the promotion of gender equality (Table 16).

[Table 16] Internal change through children's club activities and peer learning

Project (name of club)	Country	Target	Main activities	Internal change (drive for transformation)
Wezesha Vijana (Wezesha club)	Kenya	Girls	Menstrual hygiene management and peer support for resolution of sexual and reproductive challenges	Improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and sense of well-being
SRGBV prevention project (Student club)	Zimbabwe	Girls and boys	Peer support for GBV prevention	Fostering mutual support networks
GC&RMO (Girls' club)	Ghana	Girls	Peer learning on SRHR, girls' rights and responsibilities, etc.	Recognition of personal growth, improved self-esteem, improved relationships with peers and teachers
CHATS Plus (Girls' club)	Malawi	Girls	Group facilitation and speeches on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and gender rights	Increased resistance to negative peer pressure, enhanced leadership and assertiveness, increased recognition as a main actor of life

⁸ Specifically, the 5 cases were Wezesha Vijana in Kenya, SRGBV Prevention Project in Zimbabwe, GC&RMO in Ghana, CHATS Plus in Malawi, GESS in Lao PDR

GESS (Students' club)	Laos	Girls and boys	Child-centered schools and communities' awareness-raising activities on gender equality	Recognition of equal leadership
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These examples show that interaction with peers and learning from each other in children's club activities resulted in inner development as well as skills. For example, the SRGBV prevention project in Zimbabwe increased the girls' self-esteem and confidence. And in CHATS Plus in Malawi, girls had more opportunities to be assertive and improved their ability to make decisions about matters concerning their own lives. This development has been successful in helping girls to recognize themselves as the main actors in their lives. Wezesha Vijana in Kenya shows, peer learning in children's clubs ultimately increases their sense of wellbeing. Thus, peer learning initiatives in children's clubs are a driving force for girls' inner development and for changes in attitudes and practices related to gender at school level.

[School level] Delivering consistent messages in partnership between schools and caregivers

School-level initiatives should be comprehensive and include support from parents and caregivers (Alinsunurin, 2020). Schools and caregivers working together and having common values and messages will ensure that children have clear guidelines on gender without confusion. This reinforces what is learned at school at home and ensures that children's perceptions are consistent (Epstein, 2001). All of the nine case studies, which were mainly targeted at school level, emphasized outreach to caregivers. In TTC in Ethiopia and Malawi, GEP in Guinea and GC&RMO in Ghana, gender stereotyping of caregivers has been reduced and equitable division of household chores between girls and boys has taken place.

In Wezesha Vijana, Kenya, dialogue between mothers and daughters were encouraged and led to the increased awareness of SRHR. In the SRGBV prevention project in Zimbabwe and GESS in Laos, messages were delivered through PTAs. GEM in Ireland has the system of home school letters between teachers and parents and caregivers. Those letters indicate what the children learn at schools and promote to discuss about it between children and caregivers at home. This initiative encouraged collaboration with caregivers (Figure 5). In this way, cooperation with caregivers is essential and home-school partnerships are important mechanisms to promote children's attitudes and behavior change regarding gender.

[Figure 5] Sharing lessons with caregivers in GEM in Ireland (Home School Link)

GEM Gender Equality Matters

Home School Link 2

HOME SCHOOL LINK

In Lesson 2 the pupils have been discussing stereotypes. The following questions may be explored with them to reinforce their learning.

What, if any, was your experience of stereotyping as a child?

What, if any, is your experience of stereotyping now as an adult?

Have things changed since you were a child? How?

My Reflection...

'I was surprised when I told my mum about some jobs, like firefighter and asked her if she would rather choose boy or girl to do it. Because I thought my mum would choose a boy, but she actually chose a girl, or a boy instead of a girl.' (Boy)



[Community level] Increased willingness to participate and agency, and building support systems

According to social-ecological systems theory, communities are social systems that influence behavior change in a wide range of relationships and networks beyond schools and families. The key to engaging its wide range of stakeholders is to ensure that community residents understand the benefits of the program and are motivated to participate (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). This will facilitate their acceptance of the new values and activities offered by the program (Rogers, 1962). In SAGE in Zimbabwe, continuous dialogue with community leaders and religious leaders has helped to gain acceptance for activities that transform traditional values and stereotypes about gender, while taking account of local culture and customs.

When it comes to GTE at community level, it is also important to actively involve community members in the planning and decision-making process. This increases members' sense of responsibility and ownership, which naturally leads to behavioral changes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In SAGE, community educators are selected to provide comprehensive and gender-responsive teaching to girls, in addition to community leaders and religious leaders. By tailoring the program based on feedback from stakeholders, SAGE not only responds to the needs of girls and communities, but also increases stakeholder ownership. Moreover, it should promote collaboration within and outside the community to create a more comprehensive support network. This can strengthen the sustainability of the program (Berkman & Glass, 2000). In SAGE, a support structure based on strong partnerships with community leaders, religious leaders and government representatives was formed, and the transformation of knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding gender among a wide range of stakeholders, not just girls, was promoted. And community-level efforts can deliver support to target population who are difficult to reach through individual, school, or national-level interventions. Such outreach activities can be effective in empowering some groups in particularly vulnerable, such as out-of-school girls, as in the case of SAGE in Zimbabwe.

Thus, GTE efforts at the community level are facilitated by increased willingness to participate, strengthened ownership and the formation of strong partnerships. These factors support sustainable behavior change and are essential for achieving gender equality.

[National level] Transformation of social norms through policy and legislation

In social-ecological systems theory, the national level is the largest social system and is shaped by government policies, laws, cultural norms, economic systems and social ideologies. When new values and standards of behavior are introduced at the national level, they spread throughout society as national policies. This transforms the expectations of society as a whole and triggers individuals to re-evaluate the behavior of others and the social expectations (Bicchieri, 2006). Hence, educational policies towards gender equality at the national level are expected to affect all social systems and encourage behavioral change regarding gender in society as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, none of the 12 GTE cases in this research targeted the national level as the main objective, however, in two cases, the programs and teaching materials developed for the activities have been introduced into the national curriculum.

Further research is needed on the impact of such curricula after their adoption at the national level. However, these cases suggest that the introduction of national-level education policies and curricula may be a powerful means of promoting behavioral change about gender across society. Effective implementation of national-level measures is expected to be a major step towards achieving sustainable gender equality.

Barriers to the change in knowledge, attitudes and practices related to gender

The 12 GTE cases selected by this research are good examples that showed positive outcomes in all of the gender-related KAP. However, some challenges were also observed in 9 cases. The most common were due to gender stereotypes in 6 cases, gender norms and culture in 2 cases and others in 3 cases. No major characteristics were found regarding differences by social system, 6 elements and KAP.

Gender stereotype

Traditional gender stereotypes are a major barrier to progress on gender equality. Even when new gender values are introduced, existing stereotypes and the bias based on often unconsciously prevent changes in attitudes and practices (Heilman, 1983). For example, in SAGE in Zimbabwe, domestic chores prevented many girls from attending remedial classes and limited their learning opportunities. In Pikin to Pikin Tok in Sierra Leone, many girls were also unable to participate in radio recordings due to domestic chores, and in GESS in Laos, the stereotype that women are better suited to childcare remains persistent in the community.

These examples show that traditional gender stereotypes continue to limit the education and social participation of some girls, even after the project has ended. In Guinea's GEP, most girls were unable to imagine any occupation other than those in the community as an option for themselves, and it was difficult to change their perceptions of their roles and expectations towards them in the society based on their gender. In GRP4ECE in South Africa, the stereotype that a person's gender is determined at birth remained strong and hindered understanding of gender among some teachers.

Gender-based unequal power relations are also a major barrier to gender equality efforts, particularly often emerge as the form of violence and domination. Such gender power relations are unconsciously reinforced as socially accepted behavior, making it difficult to change attitudes and practices (Heilman, 1983). In the SRGBV prevention project in Zimbabwe, GBV was legitimized in schools and at home, and attitudes of many boys accepting violence against girls remained the norm.

Resistance based on culture and social norm

Traditional culture and social norms can be a major barrier to progress on gender equality. In Ghana's GC&RMOs, the culture of child marriage persisted in the community and a small number of caregivers did not change their indifferent attitudes towards the education of girls. In addition, changes in traditional gender norms can be seen as a major challenge to existing culture and society, and may provoke emotional resistance and backlash (Lewin, 1947). In TTCs in Ethiopia and Malawi, teachers who valued traditional gender values did not accept training in gender equality education, which sometimes hindered the implementation of the program.

Other barriers

In CHATS Plus in Malawi, there were only limited changes in the way girls accessed sexual and reproductive health services. In SAGE in Zimbabwe, economic constraints remain a major barrier. In Malawi Ethiopia and TTC in Malawi, high teacher turnover rates made it difficult to provide stable gender equality education. These economic and structural factors are also major barriers to progress on gender equality.

Transformative approaches from the perspectives of drivers and barriers

It is assumed that approaches such as dialogue, role models, positive masculinity and children's clubs are effective in overcoming the above challenges.

Dialogue is an important means of promoting the sharing and understanding of new values (Bandura, 1976). Whereas SAGE in Zimbabwe, Pikin to Pikin Tok in Sierra Leone and GC&RMO in Ghana had limited girls' participation in schools and activities due to the burden of household chores, Wezesha Vijana in Kenya showed that through mother-daughter dialogue, caregivers' attitudes about the value of girls' education improved and girls who participated in the program were far less likely to miss activities due to household chores than girls who did not participate.

Role models also have the effect of breaking down stereotypes by concretely demonstrating new values and behaviors (Bandura, 1976). While the GEP in Guinea could not do much to change the stereotype of girls in their choice of jobs, the GC&RM in Ghana was able to significantly broaden their perspectives on future careers by exposing them to a variety of career opportunities through interaction with role models.

Furthermore, positive masculinities play a significant role in advancing gender equality (Connell, 2005). While GBV remained in Zimbabwe's SRGBV prevention project due to unequal power relations, particularly from boys, MSP in USA challenged toxic masculinities and turned to a more multifaceted positive masculinity through narratives on gender and masculinity by a diverse range of men.

And children's clubs are an effective venue for fostering a sense of gender equality. As children learn self-expression and leadership, their sense of self-efficacy increases, and they develop a sense of challenging stereotypes (Bandura, 1976). While the culture of child marriage persisted in GC&RMOs in Ghana, in CHATS Plus in Malawi, through leadership training in girls' clubs and workshops aimed at encouraging self-assertion, girls' self-efficacy increased and the girls got vocal at school and in community activities, and the project successfully delayed their pregnancy and marriage well above the national average.

06 Conclusions and recommendations

Gender related challenges are deep-rooted and complex and will not be immediately solved by GTE initiatives alone. Even those with positive results, such as the 12 GTE cases covered in this research, remain to face their own challenges. For example, in the GC&RMOs in Ghana, the role model approach enabled girls to broaden their career choices, but within the family, there remained an unequal burden of household chores imposed by caregivers and culture of child marriage.

These various cultural, economic, and structural factors intersect and are intricately intertwined to form gender-related challenges. Achieving gender equality requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that combines a deep understanding of the local cultural and social context with a variety of strategies, such as introducing role models, promoting dialogues and promoting positive masculinities. Based on the insights gained from this research, the following are recommended to promote GTE in each social system.

Individual level

The individual level is the starting point for behavior change. Therefore, GTE needs to have content that encourages individuals to take a gender equality perspective. **Dialogue processes, interaction with familiar role models (successful people) and clubs composed of people of the same age group are considered essential elements. This allows girls/young women to gain agency and be empowered.** The toolkits and curricula developed as GTE should incorporate these elements as much as possible for relevance.

In GTE, it is necessary not only to work towards the acquisition and empowerment of girls' and women's agency, but also to collaborate with men to attain positive masculinity. **The attainment of positive masculinity is essential for men** to be allies to support and supportive of women and girls and to prevent GBV, which is a barrier to gender equality.

School level

Teachers are important actors in promoting GTE. **It is necessary to develop contextualized teaching materials and train teachers towards gender equality** so that teachers can promote gender equality in schools and other educational settings.

Also, **children's clubs/clubs composed of people of the same age group activities (peer-learning) based on dialogue and presentation activities after school, can be effective in building self-efficacy and confidence, especially among girls and young women.** Combining this activity with contextualized learning (e.g. subject-based learning, learning about SRHR, etc.) can produce greater results.

Cooperation with caregivers/PTAs is also essential. **It is necessary for teachers and caregivers to share the same understanding of gender equality and to approach children from both the school/educational field and at home.**

Community level

At the community level, **it is important to motivate residents to engage in the program from the designing stage of GTE by demonstrating the tangible benefits of implementing GTE** (e.g., improved academic/life skills for girls). In addition, provide opportunities to present the outcomes from GTE at community meetings to gain residents' understanding, thereby encouraging residents to review traditional gender norms and encourage them to become ally of girls/young women.

Commitment to GTE at community level has the potential to be inclusive of those who have not been able to access formal education for some reasons.

National level

Education policies towards gender equality at national level are expected to affect all social systems and encourage behavioral change towards gender equality throughout society. Hence, **it would be important of learning from good practices and mainstreaming the tools and programs of good practices into national level education policies and curricula.** And those policy and curricula have the potential to promote gender equality, starting with education.

Addressing other barriers

Other barriers to GTE implementation include high teacher turnover rates, economic constraints for girls and their families and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services for girls. **These associated economic and structural barriers need to be addressed in conjunction with the implementation of GTE.**

Appendix Interview with Plan International Belgium representative for tips on GTE practices

Plan International Belgium has been working with educational institutions and volunteers to promote GTE practices at schools, funded in part by the Belgian Government. This is an ongoing initiative.

Project name	Initiatives on GTE
Country	Belgium
Implementing agent	Plan International Belgium
Objective	Develop teacher training modules on gender equality. Develop the capacity of teachers with the help of volunteers and others. Trained teachers facilitate students' learning about gender through school classes.
Target group	Teachers, students (12-18 years), university students and volunteers
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of GTE training modules • GTE training delivered by education coordinators to university students/students in a cascading manner, with the cooperation of schools and volunteers • Awareness-raising activities on sexual consent (outreach) • Advocacy on GBV prevention
Main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of GTE training modules • Implementing training at schools with volunteers • Submission of recommendations on creating safe communities free of GBV (for local authorities)
Social system	Individual, school and community levels
6 elements of GTE	1,2,3,4,5,6
AoGD	IQE, SRHR, PFV



Training for youths ©Plan International



Plan International Belgium
Education coordinator

Mieke Verwaest

Tell us about GTE program you are working on.

The project targets teachers, students, college students and volunteers. Our primary target is youth. Because we believe in youths' agency. Youths are agents of change and they want to change.

We work with schools to conduct sessions to raise awareness about gender, gender inequality and many related topics. We also inform and sensitize them about sexual harassment, gender-based violence, active bystanders and sexual consent. We also have educative volunteers who attend ToT sessions and then go to the schools for further sessions to young people in secondary schools.

We are working with volunteers to reach as many youths as possible. Plan International has a lot of experiences in training on gender equality. Plus, we have a Champions of Change (CoC) module that Plan has developed. Our module is in a slightly different format from the original CoC, but it also aims to raise awareness, to take actions for social change and for policy change so that young people can take the initiative to change their environment and their situation.

Tell us about the training sessions.

We have two types of training: short term and long term. For example, at a music festival over the summer, we worked with volunteers to educate youths on the topics of active bystanders and sexual consent through short-term trainings. The long-term training consists of at least six sessions, each lasting a couple of hours. The goal is to make people aware of more structural gender inequalities. We introduce action models and develop action plans to create social change. Together with the young people we develop recommendations to change the situation and submit them to the local administrative authorities.

Is training divided by gender?

We do not separate the young people by gender. Girls and boys learn and work together. We think it is important that both gender perspectives are included. When we talk about gender equality, boys may feel marginalized by the focus on girls and the lack of discussion about boys. This is why we need to work on positive masculinity. We want to make boys and men allies in our efforts toward gender equality. We believe it is important to talk about and work with boys as well as girls. Of course, although girls are more often victims of gender issues, we need to emphasize that we need boys as allies to make the changes happen and that eventually everyone will benefit from this. Gender equality is also good for boys.

What lessons have you learned from your efforts so far?

First that there still is a lot of work to be done to change gender norms, both in our society as worldwide, to get there it is important to also talk about positive masculinity. It is important to get boys to become allies for gender equality and to show the benefits from gender equality for boys. It is necessary to talk about intersectionality. In addition, it is essential to talk about privilege, gender norms and discrimination and to talk about gender diversity as well as girls' rights. I feel that the anti-gender equality movement is getting stronger day by day in European countries including Belgium, but we must be aware of the things I just mentioned.

Please tell us how you help youths talk about themselves.

It is necessary to create a safe space. Otherwise, they will not be able to talk. I recently had a workshop with students who have origin from other countries, and I felt that the space was not a safe place for them. If students with such backgrounds have difficulty to speak up, good interactions will never occur. Then they are not willing to share their real experiences. The first thing we are trying to do is to share those experiences, but it takes time to do that.

The best thing to do is to work with the target group of youths and work with them on many things well before we start the actual training sessions. In that way, we make them feel comfortable with us. Then we start discussing difficult topics such as gender and gender equality. If it is still difficult, we have an icebreaker. We only talk about personal things, and we try to talk about everything in "I-form" (self-talk), including intercultural matters. We create a safe space in a variety of ways.

Young people may not always be aware of their own vulnerabilities. In that case, we start by talking about privilege. We begin by asking, "When was the last time you felt like you didn't have a privilege that other people had?" instead of "When was the last time you felt discriminated against?" Privilege can be of all kinds. For example, if someone says, "I am the youngest of five children, and my family never listened to me," we ask him "How did you feel about not having that privilege?" We don't suddenly ask "When did you feel discriminated against?"

But by asking "When was the last time you didn't have a privilege that other people have?" is the first step toward recognizing the feeling of being unappreciated based on something over which you have no influence. This method can be applied to small things, larger things, or more or less important things. Through these narratives, youths can recognize a sense of privilege.



Raising awareness on sexual consent at musical festival ©Plan International

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