

**EVALUATION
REPORT**

**CHANGING LIVES OF GIRLS:
EVALUATION OF THE
AFRICAN GIRLS' EDUCATION
INITIATIVE**

**EVALUATION OFFICE
DECEMBER 2004**

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Changing Lives of Girls: Evaluation of the African Girls' Education Initiative

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UNICEF

3 UN Plaza, NY, NY 10017

December 2004

The Evaluation Office commissioned the evaluation in collaboration with the Education Section at UNICEF New York. An independent team of consultants was assembled, which was led by David Chapman, Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota, who is the principal author of the main report. A number of international and national consultants were teamed together in six countries to complete case studies. They included N'gra-zan Christophe Coulibaly, Botsalano Coyne, Holly Emert, Aliou Diallo, Karen Hickson, Saba Issayas, Rabina Kyeyune, Janne Lexow, Karen Lokkesmoe, and Juliana Osei. Lucien Back of the Evaluation Office at UNICEF New York provided guidance and oversight of the evaluation process.

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PREFACE

The present evaluation covers the African Girls' Education Initiative, better known as the AGEI. This initiative represents a decade of hard work by innumerable UNICEF staff and partners at local, national, regional and global levels, who have believed in the merit of investing in girls' education in view of the medium and long-term effects associated with improving a country's social, economic, and political development. In particular, this evaluation covers AGEI experiences through UNICEF supported Country Programmes of Cooperation in 34 countries, which have counted on support and commitment from a myriad of partners in government, civil society, schools, communities, families and children.

The AGEI has been recognized as the centrepiece of UNICEF's efforts to promote girls' education. Its use of a multi-country approach with inter-linkages at country, regional and global levels allowed for fruitful exchange and transfer of experience. It contributed to identifying and defining girls' education as a top UNICEF organizational priority that is prominent in the UNICEF Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2002-2005, and charted the path for UNICEF to take the lead among UN partners in establishing the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI).

It is helpful for the reader to understand that the AGEI benefited from and contributed to the evolution of the UNICEF mission throughout the 1990s to support fundamental rights of all children enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Focusing on the right of girls to get an education within the Education for All framework per Jomtien and later Dakar was the premise upon which AGEI I and AGEI 2 were built. It was fully justified due to gender disparities prevalent in the majority of African countries' education systems. Thus, the evaluation examines the effectiveness of the AGEI in closing gender gaps in education systems, finding innovative ways for including excluded children, particularly girls, in education, and improving the quality, equity and equality in educational systems and services for all children.

The Evaluation Office commissioned the evaluation in collaboration with the Education Section at UNICEF New York. An independent team of consultants was assembled, which was led by David Chapman, Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota, who is the principal author of the main report. A number of international and national consultants were teamed together in six countries to complete case studies. They included N'gra-zan Christophe Coulibaly, Botsalano Coyne, Holly Emert, Aliou Diallo, Karen Hickson, Saba Issayas, Rabina Kyeyune, Janne Lexow, Karen Lokkesmoe, and Juliana Osei. Lucien Back of the Evaluation Office at UNICEF New York provided guidance and oversight of the evaluation process.

Special thanks are due to all partners in many countries and also to UNICEF staff who gave their time and effort to the AGEI over the years, and to the evaluation process. Their views and perspectives, and the information and documentation that were provided were invaluable to the evaluation. The time provided by the hundreds of partners interviewed during field visits and meetings provided critical insight on the AGEI making it possible to better understand and assess innovations, successes and challenges.

It is hoped that the findings and lessons learned presented in this evaluation, which have been honed through a formative process between 2003 and 2004, will be of value to countries and regions working on improving girls' education, and contribute to strengthening the UNGEI. It aims to illuminate capacity gaps in designing, implementing and evaluating girls' education programming, and provide room for reflection on the importance of incorporating girls' education as a key action in any and all development efforts.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABEK	Alternative Basic Education in Karamoja (Uganda)
AGEI	African Girls' Education Initiative
BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy (Uganda)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CO	Country Office
COPE	Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EPO	Education Programme Officer
ESARO	East and Southern Regional Office
FAWE	Forum for Women Educationalists
FRESH	Focusing Resources for Effective School Health
GEM	Girls' Education Movement
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	Headquarters
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement (CK)
MTSP	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REA	Regional Education Advisors
SIP	Sector Investment Programme
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
SMC	School Management Committee
SWAP	Sector-wide approach to programming or planning
TAC	Technical Assistance Committee
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science, Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WFP	World Food Programme
YTRs	Yearly Technical Reports

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) has been the centrepiece of UNICEF's effort to promote girls' education. Started in 1994 with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), it was continued in 1996 with funding from Norway. The initiative was grounded in the premise that by targeting girls, the programme would reach a major proportion of the population of children that has been denied access to education. Over the course of the program, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided US\$ 45,097,576 to support AGEI activities in a total of 34 countries, two Regional Offices and UNICEF Headquarters. Specifically, during AGEI-1 (1996-2000), Norway provided \$22,722,072 that was used to support work in 18 countries. During AGEI-2 (2001- April 2004), Norway provided another \$22,375,504, used to support continued work in the original 18 countries and initiate new work in an additional 16 countries.

This external evaluation was intended to assess the effectiveness of AGEI activities on increasing girls' access, persistence, achievement, and overall treatment in school and the extent that AGEI fostered and promoted changes in national and organizational policy in ways that support the education of girls. The evaluation was intended to yield information useful in (a) designing and implementing girls' education programmes in other countries and regions, (b) strengthening the capacity of UNICEF and its partners in the design and delivery of girls' education programmes; and (c) contributing to the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The evaluation examined six dimensions of the AGEI: (a) relevance; (b) role, design and focus; (c) effectiveness, (d) efficiency, (e) sustainability, and (f) adequacy of programme support. Evaluation data were collected through: (a) a comprehensive review of project documents, (b) six country studies illustrating different types of context and outcomes and more or less successful experiences (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Uganda), and (c) interviews with key UNICEF personnel involved in the design and implementation of AGEI. To the extent possible, information was validated and cross-checked with other sources.

The documents reviewed included funding proposals, yearly technical reports (YTRs), country level evaluations, and regional and global consolidated reports. Special attention was given to examining change between beginning and end of each AGEI phase. The annual consolidated reports and the regional reports were found to be particularly helpful. The YTRs and evaluations were of somewhat more limited usefulness, due to uneven quality, missing data and, frequently a lack of analysis and reflection.

Findings and conclusions

Relevance: This evaluation found that AGEI was a *relevant* programme. Girls lag behind boys in school access, retention, and learning achievement across much of Africa, disparities that are recognized by governments and the larger international community as serious constraints on the social, political, and economic development of the continent. AGEI activities were directly aimed at reducing these constraints and improving gender equity.

AGEI was essentially based on a *gender equity approach*, which aimed at reducing gender discrimination and promoting social/economic self reliance of women through policies and programmes that increased access to basic education and training of girls. AGEI did not reach the level of a *gender equality (empowerment)* approach, which extends beyond access as well as quality issues surrounding basic education. While the focus on equity was appropriate for

AGEI, given the social context at the time AGEI was launched, efforts being supported through projects such as those associated with the UNGEI would benefit from broadening the focus to give more attention to issues of equality.

Another aspect of relevance was that AGEI played a tremendous role in shaping UNICEF's education agenda since the late 1990s. It contributed to the definition of UNICEF's organizational priority of girls' education and to clarifying the division of tasks with UNESCO. A notable step in the process has been UNICEF's role as lead agency in the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI).

Role, focus and design: The evaluation found that the AGEI played a useful **role** in raising the prominence of girls' education as a gender equity issue in many countries. It contributed to sparking a sustained discussion about the importance of girls' education and the best ways to encourage greater female school access, persistence, achievement across many countries. Governments in several AGEI countries had finalized (or were close to finalizing) national policies aimed at encouraging the educational access and achievement of girls. While these policies were the result of governments' own commitment and the encouragement of the wider international community, UNICEF was often singled out by government and development partners as a particularly strong voice in encouraging government action.

While there was wide agreement across governments and development partners about the main factors constraining girls' participation in schooling, there was considerably less agreement about what interventions were most appropriate in addressing these constraints. In practice, a wide variety of relatively discreet activities to promote girls' education were undertaken under AGEI ranging from small scale models (e.g. girls' clubs) to community action and policy development. This wide **focus** seemed appropriate, given the uncertainty about the relative effectiveness of alternative strategies.

AGEI-1 suffered from weak programme **design**. The logic linking particular interventions to their intended consequences was not always clear. Proposals were sometimes over-promised, especially in AGEI-1, offering overly ambitious claims about what they could accomplish. Reports tend to focus on inputs and outputs, on one hand, and on trends in girls' education (e.g. GER and NER), on the other. There was still relatively little attention at the level of outcomes. In some cases, there was an assumed cause-effect relationship between AGEI outputs and positive trends, which was not substantiated by clear evidence.

Government and UNICEF often had not conducted formal evaluation of seemingly effective activities in ways that would have provided objective evidence of their success. They frequently expressed strong beliefs about the effectiveness of particular interventions, but lacked the systematic documentation of those outcomes and attributable impacts. While evaluation of AGEI activities was generally weak, there were some good examples of strong evaluation. These included Breakthrough to Literacy (Uganda) and CHILDSCOPE (Ghana).

Effectiveness: UNICEF country staff and government collaborators give little attention to systematically assessing the outcomes of AGEI activities and strategies. As a result, claims about the relative effectiveness of the interventions implemented through AGEI were limited. It was difficult to determine whether programme objectives were met due to weak design of activities, a lack of valid baseline data, and inadequate performance monitoring and evaluation.

For the sake of convenience, the evaluation clustered activities within a life-cycle approach. Activities in early childhood education emphasized a comprehensive and integrated approach

rather than the narrower focus on *pre-school education*. Relatively successful, albeit isolated, projects were developed in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Liberia, Togo and Uganda.

Girls' enrolment, retention and learning achievement in *formal basic education* were promoted through such activities as feeder or satellite schools, girls' hostels, school feeding programmes, provision of construction materials and supplies for infrastructure, curriculum development, instructional materials development and distribution, girl-to-girl tutoring, and teachers' training. In most initiatives, some degree of community participation was sought for the construction of schools, for the promotion of girls' enrolment, and the management of schools. Virtually all AGEI countries were involved in this type of experience.

Non-formal education and "second chance" schools literacy and vocational training focused on children who had never been to school or who had dropped out of school. Their success seemed to depend on the quality of the teachers, the status given to this form of education, and the opportunities available for students to transition into either formal schooling or employment. AGEI supported non-formal education in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda.

Some activities worked better than others. Strategies that appeared to UNICEF field staff to be more successful included the provision of water and sanitation (e.g., Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda), food rations for girls (e.g., Benin, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Togo), early childhood programmes (e.g., Burkina Faso, Uganda, Togo, Cameroon), girls' education clubs (e.g., Uganda, Ghana), girl-to-girl tutoring (Benin, Guinea), Breakthrough to Literacy (e.g., Uganda), second-chance school options (e.g., Guinea, Uganda) and, in some locations, community school construction (e.g., Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Guinea).

Some AGEI activities were judged by UNICEF field staff to be less successful than had been anticipated. For example, girls' education clubs (e.g., Botswana), construction of hostels (e.g., Eritrea, Botswana), playground construction (e.g., Botswana), and one-shot materials distribution (various). AGEI sometimes encountered unanticipated consequences, both positive and negative. Several countries reported community backlash at special treatment of girls.

Similar interventions and strategies may be relatively successful in one country and less promising in another. Across countries, several factors determine whether or not specific interventions were successful. The most important factors were cultural context and the prevalence of gender stereotypes.

One constraint on effectiveness was that the AGEI at its various levels was principally viewed as a female initiative that resulted in not gaining the full participation, support and involvement of men and boys. A critical gender analytical framework with adequate tools and methods were not developed in any consistent way. While there were several efforts undertaken that addressed gender issues, many of them were implemented on a relatively small scale and were not part of a systematic or systemic approach aiming at the realization of girls' and women's rights in a comprehensive fashion.

Efficiency: Efficiency is understood as the relationship of cost and effectiveness. Determining efficiency requires good data on both costs and outcomes. Few government or UNICEF offices had clear or reliable information on the costs of the activities they believed had been successful. Similarly, few had objective evidence of outcomes of AGEI activities. Lacking objective data on

outcomes or cost, the ability to determine efficiency was limited. The evaluation found UNICEF country and government staff frequently had an inadequate understanding of the difference between costs and expenditure, investment and recurrent costs, and direct and opportunity costs. That said, some of the more effective activities were also the most expensive. Examples include COPE and ABEK in Uganda and CHILDSCOPE in Ghana. This has implications for the chances of sustainability and replicability of experiences as well as their mainstreaming. There was a paradox related to community participation. Poor communities were often expected to contribute their labour and local materials to the building of schools and sometimes also to the payment of salaries of teachers, while affluent communities (e.g. in urban areas) had all school costs covered by government.

Sustainability, replicability and mainstreaming: The likelihood of governments or communities sustaining activities initiated by AGEI beyond external support appeared to be low. In most cases, AGEI adopted a classical project approach providing major external support for investments (mainly infrastructure, training, equipment) against a “soft” commitment from governments and communities to cover recurrent costs and future investments (amortization of investments, operation and maintenance of infrastructure, teachers’ salaries). In practice, many of these commitments are not likely to be honoured, due to a lack of resources and a lack of commitment to girls’ education and women’s empowerment.

Three other findings of note were: firstly, the use of a “demonstration project” approach to promote mainstreaming seldom led to wider adoption or implementation of the activity without continued external funding. Secondly, there was sometimes a lack of linkage between government plans and successful field activities. This was seen in BTL in Uganda and CHILDSCOPE in Ghana. One reason was that neither central government nor communities were able to use evidence of activity success to shape national funding streams in ways that would sustain the activity. Finally, the *replicability and mainstreaming* of activities aimed at girls’ education was influenced by the changing nature of development funding. In the move to sector-wide planning, sector-investment plans, and multi-donor budget support, some government and UNICEF personnel are concerned that it will be harder to maintain specific agendas in support of girls’ education.

Adequacy of programme support: The framework agreements of both AGEI-1 and AGEI-2 were relatively general and overall programme guidance was open allowing for creative proposals from the field. At times, there was ambiguity across levels of UNICEF about who (and what level) was responsible for the design of AGEI activities. Some Education Officers in the field expected Headquarters and Regional Offices to provide more guidance than they actually received regarding effective practices.

Lessons learned

While the AGEI will be completed at end of 2003/beginning of 2004, results of this evaluation offers lessons that may be useful in further programmatic efforts on behalf of girls’ education, such as those supported through the framework of and in partnership with the UNGEI.

Gender equity vs. gender equality: The emphasis on girls’ access, retention and achievement in education is necessary but not sufficient. Future large-scale girls’ education initiatives need to balance improving gender equity in school access, persistence, and achievement with promoting equality in female participation in leadership and decision making roles throughout the education structure.

Influencing the discourse at the policy level: The AGEI demonstrated that the strategic allocation of relatively small amounts of money across a large number of countries to support relatively modest efforts can do much to raise the prominence of target issues and shape policy discussion at the national level. This approach is most valid when combined with systematic efforts to assess the relative success of the various strategies being tested. AGEI was relatively weak in that assessment, a point discussed later.

Nonetheless, AGEI did much to change the shape of policy discourse across sub-Saharan Africa in ways that helped move the issue of girls' education from relatively obscurity ten years ago to one of the top education priorities of many countries (and of UNICEF itself) today. This accomplishment is particularly impressive, given the relatively small amount of funding actually available to each country through AGEI.

Managing for results: In AGEI, few country offices attended to whether the desired consequences of activities actually occurred. Future efforts similar to AGEI would benefit from more attention to outcomes.

Developing realistic estimates of likely outcomes results-based framework: Interventions sometimes appeared to fail not because they were inappropriate, but because they could not achieve inappropriately high goals.

Clarifying criteria of success: Experience in AGEI highlighted the recurring dilemma UNICEF country staff and government counterparts faced in deciding when an activity that is not yielding results should be discontinued or just given more time to demonstrate its worth. AGEI provided information useful to future projects about establishing realistic goals and objectives and establishing clearer criteria for when activities should be continued or terminated.

The efficacy of demonstration projects: A widely used strategy for promoting education reform is to demonstrate the effectiveness of an intervention on a small scale in a way that is highly visible to a wider audience, thereby creating a local demand for wider implementation of the intervention. AGEI showed that the clear demonstration of the effectiveness of an activity is not enough, by itself, to spark adoption on a wider scale. In AGEI when countries used a "demonstration project approach", few, if any, of the interventions composing those demonstrations were adopted and replicated without external donor assistance.

The role of description in replication: Successful replication of effective activity depends on having a clear description of the characteristics of the intervention and its programme of use. YTRs were uneven in this regard, though the majority fell short on description. Experience in AGEI highlighted the need for better project description as part of project monitoring and evaluation.

Over-reporting; under-informing: In future UNICEF projects of this type, country reporting requirements could be reduced significantly even as useable information could be increased, by a rethinking of the reporting mechanisms.

Rethink monitoring and evaluation mechanisms: Monitoring and evaluation of AGEI activities was weak. The strong personal beliefs held by many Government and UNICEF staff about the effectiveness of AGEI activities were not necessarily grounded in objective evidence. Informal evidence suggests that a number of strategies employed in AGEI were effective in promoting girls' access, retention, or achievement. However, in many cases this was based on individual observations, word-of-mouth, and relatively informal evidence. Formal evidence of

the effectiveness of those practices is largely lacking. Few Country Offices had actually undertaken formal evaluation of those components in ways that would have provided objective evidence of their success. This represents an unfortunate loss of information for the field and an important missed opportunity for UNICEF.

Attention to cost and aspects related to efficiency: The lack of cost data in AGEI constrained sustainability and mainstreaming of seemingly effective practices. Future initiatives of this type need to collect more complete cost data, including direct and indirect costs and costs at the individual, community, district, and national level. Sustainability and mainstreaming require that governments understand the financial consequences of the interventions to which they are being asked to commit. Another lesson from AGEI is that effective intervention may be expensive. Where expenditure data were available, they indicate that effective strategies tended to be expensive.

Attention to sustainability, replicability and mainstreaming: Future initiatives similar to AGEI would benefit from a closer linkage between central government actions in support of girls' education and the wide variety of innovative strategies being promoted at the community and school levels. There were examples in AGEI where successful strategies at the community and school level did not have much visibility at the national level or had visibility and, for other reasons, were not adopted by government for wider dissemination.

Complementarity of formal and non-formal basic education: AGEI demonstrated successful "second-chance" strategies for reaching youth who had already dropped out of school and older youth who had missed early opportunities for schooling. At the same time, the AGEI experience highlighted the problem some governments have in knowing how to effectively integrate non-formal and formal structures. Even though COPE was widely recognized as effective, government was reluctant to extend the model using government funds.

Overall Impact of AGEI

The changes that have occurred in girls' participation, retention, and achievement over the course of the AGEI programme are the result of many factors in addition to AGEI both within and outside the education system. Consequently, increases in girls' access cannot be attributed specifically to AGEI activities. Credit must be shared with national governments and other development partners who have also been promoting girls' education. It can be concluded, however, that AGEI was a significant force in making a widespread and meaningful contribution to improving girls' education across Sub-Saharan Africa using a multi-country approach.

RESUME ANALYTIQUE

L'Initiative pour l'éducation des filles africaines (IEFA) a été la pièce maîtresse de l'activité de promotion de l'éducation des filles de l'UNICEF. Lancée en 1994 grâce à un financement de l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI), elle a été reconduite en 1996 grâce à un financement de la Norvège. On était parti du principe qu'en ciblant les filles, le programme atteindrait une proportion importante de la population des enfants qui se voyait dénier l'accès à l'éducation. Aux fins de ce programme, le Ministère norvégien des affaires étrangères a fourni 45 097 576 dollars pour financer les activités de l'IEFA dans 34 pays, deux bureaux régionaux et au siège de l'UNICEF. Plus précisément, pendant l'IEFA-1 (1996-2000), la Norvège a fourni 22 722 072 dollars au titre du financement des activités dans 18 pays. Pendant l'IEFA-2 (2001-avril 2004), elle a fourni un nouveau financement de 22 375 504 dollars pour financer d'autres activités dans les 18 pays initiaux et lancer des activités dans 16 pays supplémentaires.

La présente évaluation externe a eu pour objectif d'évaluer dans quelle mesure les activités de l'IEFA ont permis d'améliorer la scolarisation, la rétention et le niveau d'instruction des filles et leur traitement général dans les établissements scolaires, et l'impact de l'IEFA s'agissant de favoriser et de promouvoir les changements à apporter à la politique nationale et aux modalités d'organisation pour soutenir l'éducation des filles. On s'est proposé de présenter des informations utiles pour a) élaborer et exécuter des programmes d'éducation des filles dans d'autres pays et régions, b) renforcer les capacités de l'UNICEF et de ses partenaires en matière de conception et d'exécution de programmes d'éducation des filles, et c) contribuer à la réalisation des objectifs de l'Éducation pour tous (EPT) et des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement (OMD).

L'évaluation a examiné six aspects de l'IEFA: a) pertinence; b) rôle, conception et centrage; c) efficacité, d) efficience, e) durabilité, et f) adéquation de l'appui au programme. Les données d'évaluation ont été rassemblées sur la base a) d'un examen exhaustif des documents relatifs aux projets, b) de six études de pays représentant des contextes et des résultats différents ainsi que des expériences plus ou moins concluantes (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Érythrée, Ghana, Guinée, Ouganda), et c) d'entretiens avec des membres du personnel de l'UNICEF ayant directement participé à la conception et à l'exécution de l'IEFA. Dans toute la mesure possible, on a validé et vérifié les informations par recoupement avec d'autres sources.

S'agissant des documents, on a examiné des projets de financement, des rapports techniques annuels (RTA), des évaluations de pays et des rapports de synthèse régionaux et mondiaux. On s'est employé en particulier à examiner les changements constatés entre le début et la fin de chaque phase de l'IEFA. Les rapports de synthèse annuels et les rapports régionaux se sont avérés des plus utiles. Les RTA et les évaluations ont été un peu moins utiles, ce qui tenait à une qualité inégale, à des données incomplètes et, souvent, à un manque d'analyse et de réflexion.

Constatations et conclusions

Pertinence: la présente évaluation a permis de constater que l'IEFA était un programme *pertinent*. Les filles sont en retard sur les garçons pour la scolarisation, la rétention et le niveau d'études dans une bonne partie de l'Afrique, autant de disparités dans lesquelles les gouvernements et l'ensemble de la communauté internationale voient de graves obstacles au développement social, politique et économique du continent. Les activités menées au titre de

l'IEFA visaient directement à diminuer l'impact de ces problèmes et à améliorer l'équité entre les sexes.

Pour l'essentiel, l'IEFA reposait sur *une approche fondée sur l'équité entre les sexes*, qui se proposait de faire reculer la discrimination fondée sur le sexe et de promouvoir l'autosuffisance sociale et économique des femmes dans le cadre de politiques et de programmes de développement de l'accès des filles à l'éducation de base et à la formation. L'IEFA ne s'est pas hissée au niveau d'une *approche fondée sur l'égalité des sexes (autonomisation)*, laquelle ne se cantonne pas dans les questions d'accès et de qualité soulevées par l'éducation de base. Le contexte social existant au moment où l'IEFA a été lancée justifiait de faire de l'équité une priorité, mais les activités actuellement appuyées dans le cadre de projets tels que ceux liés à l'Initiative des Nations Unies en faveur de l'éducation des filles (INUEF) justifieraient d'élargir l'enjeu aux questions d'égalité.

Un autre aspect mérite d'être signalé: l'IEFA a très largement inspiré le programme de travail de l'UNICEF en matière d'éducation à partir de la fin des années 90. Elle a aidé à définir la priorité organisationnelle accordée par l'UNICEF à l'éducation des filles et à préciser la répartition des tâches avec l'UNESCO. Une étape importante de ce processus a été le rôle joué par l'UNICEF en tant qu'organisme chef de file de l'INUEF.

Rôle, centrage et conception: l'évaluation a permis de constater que l'IEFA a utilement contribué à faire occuper dans de nombreux pays une *place* plus importante à l'éducation des filles en tant que question liée à l'équité entre les sexes. L'Initiative a suscité dans un grand nombre de pays un débat de longue durée sur l'importance de l'éducation des filles et sur les meilleurs moyens de promouvoir la scolarisation, la rétention et le niveau d'instruction des filles. Les gouvernements de plusieurs pays appliquant l'IEFA avaient (ou étaient près d'avoir) mis au point des politiques nationales visant à promouvoir la scolarisation et le niveau d'études des filles. Ces politiques étaient le fruit de l'engagement propre des gouvernements et des encouragements de l'ensemble de la communauté internationale, mais les gouvernements et les partenaires pour le développement ont souvent indiqué que l'UNICEF avait su faire valoir avec beaucoup d'éloquence la nécessité de l'intervention des gouvernements.

Les gouvernements et les partenaires pour le développement partagent généralement le même point de vue au sujet des principaux facteurs qui limitent la scolarisation des filles, mais sont loin de s'entendre sur les interventions pouvant permettre de remédier à ces facteurs. Dans la pratique, une très grande variété d'activités relativement indépendantes les unes des autres ont été lancées dans le cadre de l'IEFA pour promouvoir l'éducation des filles, depuis les activités pilotes à petite échelle (les clubs de filles, par exemple) jusqu'à l'action au niveau des communautés locales et la formulation de politiques. Cette largeur de *vues* a semblé appropriée vu les incertitudes qui entourent l'efficacité relative des autres options stratégiques.

L'IEFA-1 s'est ressentie des lacunes au niveau de la *conception* du programme. Le lien logique entre les interventions et les effets attendus n'était pas toujours clairement établi. Les propositions étaient parfois assorties d'engagement trop nombreux, en particulier dans le cas de l'IEFA-1, qui promettait infiniment plus que ce qu'il était possible d'obtenir. Les rapports se sont généralement focalisés sur les apports et les résultats, d'une part, et l'évolution de l'éducation des filles (taux brut et net d'inscription, par exemple), d'autre part. On ne prêtait pas encore toute l'attention voulue au niveau des résultats. Dans certains cas, on présupposait un lien de cause à effet entre les résultats de l'IEFA et les tendances positives, sans que ce lien soit corroboré par des éléments très précis.

Souvent, le gouvernement et l'UNICEF n'avaient pas procédé à une évaluation en bonne et due forme d'activités qui semblaient efficaces d'une façon qui aurait fourni la preuve objective de leur succès. Il leur arrivait souvent d'être parfaitement convaincus de l'efficacité de telle ou telle intervention, mais ne pouvaient pas toujours apporter la preuve de ces résultats et des impacts attribuables aux activités en question. L'évaluation des activités au titre de l'IEFA a généralement laissé à désirer, mais il y a eu quelques bons exemples d'évaluation parfaitement menée. C'est notamment le cas du projet "Alphabétisation" (Ouganda) et de CHILDSCOPE (Ghana).

Efficacité: le personnel de l'UNICEF au niveau des pays et ses collaborateurs au sein des gouvernements ne se sont guère souciés d'évaluer systématiquement les résultats des activités et stratégies de l'IEFA. L'efficacité relative des interventions réalisées dans le cadre de l'IEFA ne pouvait donc pas souvent être affirmée. Il était difficile de déterminer si les objectifs du programme avaient été atteints car les activités étaient mal conçues, les données de référence valides faisaient défaut, et le suivi et l'évaluation des prestations laissaient à désirer.

Pour des raisons de commodité, l'évaluation a groupé les activités selon l'approche du cycle de vie. Les activités d'éducation ciblant le jeune enfant mettaient l'accent sur une approche globale et intégrée, sans privilégier la seule *éducation préscolaire*. Des projets relativement concluants, encore qu'isolés, ont été élaborés dans ce domaine au Burkina Faso, au Cameroun, au Kenya, au Libéria, en Ouganda, au Tchad et au Togo.

L'inscription, la rétention et le niveau d'instruction des filles dans *les écoles de type classique* ont été encouragés par le truchement, notamment, d'écoles satellites, de foyers pour jeunes femmes, de programmes d'alimentation scolaire, de la fourniture de matériaux de construction et autres éléments d'infrastructure, de l'élaboration de programmes d'études, de la conception et de la distribution d'outils pédagogiques, du tutorat fille à fille et de la formation d'enseignants. Dans la plupart des programmes, on a cherché à faire participer dans une certaine mesure la collectivité locale à la construction des écoles, à la promotion de l'inscription des filles et à la gestion des établissements scolaires. La quasi-totalité des pays participant à l'IEFA ont été associés à ce type d'expérience.

L'éducation non formelle et l'alphabétisation et la formation professionnelle dispensées dans les écoles "de la seconde chance" ont ciblé les enfants qui n'étaient jamais allés à l'école ou avaient abandonné leurs études. Le succès de ces activités a semblé lié à la qualité des enseignants, au statut conféré à ce type d'éducation et aux possibilités offertes aux élèves souhaitant soit passer à un enseignement de type classique, soit prendre un emploi. L'IEFA a appuyé l'éducation non formelle au Burkina Faso, en Guinée, en Mauritanie, au Niger, au Nigéria, en Ouganda et au Soudan.

Certaines activités ont donné satisfaction plus que d'autres. Les stratégies qui ont semblé au personnel de l'UNICEF sur le terrain donner de meilleurs résultats ont notamment été l'approvisionnement en eau et l'assainissement (comme dans les pays suivants: Bénin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comores, Éthiopie, Gambie, Guinée-Bissau, Kenya, Mauritanie, Mali, Niger, Nigéria, Ouganda, Somalie, Tanzanie), les rations alimentaires destinées aux filles (comme dans les pays suivants: Bénin, Burkina Faso, Érythrée, Gambie, Guinée, Guinée-Bissau, Mali, Sénégal, Togo), les programmes destinés aux jeunes enfants (comme dans les pays suivants: Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Ouganda, Togo), les clubs d'éducation des filles (comme au Ghana et en Ouganda), le tutorat fille à fille (Bénin, Guinée), le projet "Alphabétisation" (comme en Ouganda), les options offertes par les écoles de la seconde chance (comme en Guinée et en

Ouganda) et, dans certains endroits, la construction d'écoles de proximité (comme au Burkina Faso, en Érythrée et en Guinée).

Le personnel de l'UNICEF sur le terrain a considéré que certaines activités donnaient de moins bons résultats que prévu. C'est le cas, par exemple, des clubs d'éducation des filles (au Botswana, par exemple), de la construction de foyers (au Botswana et en Érythrée, par exemple), de la construction de terrains de jeu (au Botswana, par exemple) et de la distribution ponctuelle de matériaux (divers pays). L'IEFA a parfois eu des conséquences imprévues, positives ou négatives. Plusieurs pays ont signalé que le traitement des filles avait suscité l'hostilité de leur communauté.

Des interventions et stratégies analogues peuvent être relativement concluantes dans un pays et moins prometteuses dans un autre. Des facteurs différents selon les pays expliquent le succès de telle ou telle intervention. Les facteurs les plus importants ont été le contexte culturel et la prévalence de stéréotypes sexistes.

L'efficacité a notamment été limitée par le fait que l'IEFA était principalement considérée, à ses différents niveaux, comme une initiative féminine, ce qui lui a valu de ne pas obtenir la participation, l'appui et l'engagement des hommes et des garçons. On n'a pas cherché à élaborer un cadre uniforme d'analyse des rapports de genre assorti des outils et méthodes appropriés. Il y a bien eu plusieurs tentatives pour traiter des questions d'inégalité entre sexes, mais elles ont le plus souvent été faites sur une petite échelle et n'ont pas été intégrées à une démarche systématique ou systémique tendant à la réalisation globale des droits des filles et des femmes.

Efficience: l'efficienc e s'entend du lien existant entre le coût et l'efficacité. Pour établir si les ressources ont été utilisées d'une façon optimale, il faut disposer de données fiables tant sur les coûts que sur les résultats. Peu de gouvernements ou de bureaux de l'UNICEF pouvaient présenter des informations précises et fiables sur les coûts des activités dont ils pensaient qu'elles avaient été concluantes. De même, peu disposaient de preuves objectives des résultats des activités de l'IEFA. Sans données objectives sur les résultats ou les coûts, il était difficile de déterminer si les ressources avaient été utilisées d'une manière rationnelle. L'évaluation a constaté qu'il était fréquent que le personnel de l'UNICEF et celui des gouvernements ne fassent pas vraiment la différence entre les coûts et les dépenses, les coûts d'investissement et les coûts de fonctionnement, et les coûts directs et les coûts d'opportunit . Cela dit, quelques-unes des activités les plus efficaces ont également été les plus onéreuses. Citons, par exemple, COPE et ABEK en Ouganda et CHILDSCOPE au Ghana. Cela a des incidences au niveau des chances de durabilit  et de r plicabilit  des exp riences ainsi que de leur g n ralisation. On a relev  un paradoxe   propos de la participation des collectivit s locales: on attendait souvent des collectivit s pauvres qu'elles offrent leur main-d' uvre et les mat riels locaux pour construire des  coles et aussi, parfois, qu'elles assurent le paiement des traitements des enseignants, alors que dans les communaut s ais es (en milieu urbain, par exemple), les d penses scolaires  taient enti rement financ es par l' tat.

Durabilit , r plicabilit  et int gration: il est apparu peu probable que les gouvernements ou les communaut s puissent prolonger les activit s entreprises par l'IEFA au-del  de la p riode o  elles b n ficiaient d'un appui ext rieur. Dans la plupart des cas, l'IEFA a adopt  une approche-projet classique en fournissant un appui ext rieur important au titre des investissements (essentiellement l'infrastructure, la formation et les  quipements) en  change d'un engagement "pr alable" des fonds par les gouvernements et les communaut s s'agissant de financer les co ts de fonctionnement et les investissements futurs (amortissement des

investissements, mise en œuvre et entretien des infrastructures, traitements des enseignants). En pratique, bon nombre des engagements correspondants ont peu de chances d'être tenus, du fait de la pénurie de ressources et d'un manque d'enthousiasme à l'égard de l'éducation des filles et du renforcement des moyens d'action des femmes.

On a fait trois autres constatations importantes: premièrement, l'adoption de l'approche du "projet de démonstration" pour promouvoir l'intégration a rarement débouché sur une extension de l'adoption ou de l'exécution de l'activité considérée sans maintien d'un financement extérieur. Deuxièmement, on a parfois relevé un manque de corrélation entre les plans gouvernementaux et les activités de terrain concluantes. Cela a été le cas du projet "Alphabétisation" en Ouganda et de CHILDSCOPE au Ghana. Cela s'explique notamment par le fait que ni le gouvernement central ni les collectivités locales n'ont été en mesure d'utiliser les preuves de succès de l'activité pour organiser les flux nationaux de financement d'une façon propre à pérenniser l'activité. Enfin, *la reproductibilité et l'intégration* des activités d'éducation des filles ont été influencées par l'évolution de la nature du financement du développement. Dans le cadre de la marche vers la planification à l'échelle d'un secteur, les plans d'investissement sectoriel et le soutien budgétaire multidonateurs, certains fonctionnaires gouvernementaux et de l'UNICEF craignent qu'il devienne plus difficile de maintenir des programmes axés spécifiquement sur l'appui à l'éducation des filles.

Adéquation de l'appui au programme: les accords-cadres de l'IEFA-1 et de l'IEFA-2 étaient relativement généraux et les directives générales étaient assez souples pour permettre aux bureaux extérieurs d'avancer des propositions constructives. Il est arrivé qu'on ne sache pas très bien qui, dans la hiérarchie de l'UNICEF, était responsable, et à quel degré, de la conception des activités de l'IEFA. Certains spécialistes de l'éducation des bureaux extérieurs attendaient du siège et des bureaux régionaux des directives pratiques plus précises que celles qu'ils recevaient effectivement.

Leçons apprises

L'IEFA doit s'achever fin 2003/début 2004, mais les résultats de la présente évaluation comportent des enseignements qui pourront être utiles pour d'autres programmes qui seront éventuellement lancés en faveur de l'éducation des filles, tels que ceux appuyés dans le cadre de l'INUEF et en partenariat avec elle.

Équité entre les sexes ou égalité des sexes: il est nécessaire de mettre l'accent sur la scolarisation, la rétention et le niveau d'instruction des filles, mais cela n'est pas suffisant. Les futurs grands programmes en faveur de l'éducation des filles devront tenir la balance égale entre l'amélioration de l'équité entre les sexes en matière de scolarisation, de rétention et de niveau d'études et la promotion de l'égalité s'agissant de la participation des femmes aux fonctions de direction et de décision dans l'ensemble de la structure de l'enseignement.

Alimenter le débat au niveau des politiques: l'IEFA a montré que l'allocation stratégique de moyens financiers relativement modestes dans un grand nombre de pays pour financer des activités d'une envergure assez réduite peut largement contribuer à placer les questions ciblées au centre de l'attention et à alimenter le débat politique au niveau national. Cette approche est des plus valides lorsqu'elle se double d'une action systématique d'évaluation du succès relatif des différentes stratégies mises à l'essai. Or, l'IEFA n'a pas poussé cette évaluation assez loin. Nous reviendrons plus loin sur ce point.

Néanmoins, l'IEFA a nettement contribué à faire évoluer le discours politique à travers l'Afrique subsaharienne d'une façon qui a aidé à faire sortir la question de l'éducation des filles de la relative obscurité où elle se trouvait cantonnée il y a 10 ans, pour en faire l'une des 10 priorités d'un grand nombre de pays (et de l'UNICEF lui-même) en matière d'éducation aujourd'hui. C'est là un acquis d'autant plus impressionnant que chaque pays concerné a bénéficié d'un financement relativement peu important dans le cadre de cette Initiative.

Gestion orientée vers les résultats: dans le cadre de l'IEFA, peu de bureaux de pays se sont intéressés à la question de savoir si les impacts attendus des activités s'étaient effectivement matérialisés. S'agissant des programmes futurs analogues, on aurait intérêt à se soucier davantage des résultats.

Élaborer des estimations réalistes des résultats probables dans un cadre axé sur les résultats: il est arrivé que des interventions semblent échouer non parce qu'elles étaient inappropriées, mais parce que la barre était placée trop haut.

Préciser les critères du succès: l'expérience de l'IEFA a mis en exergue le problème auquel n'ont cessé de se heurter le personnel de pays de l'UNICEF et leurs homologues nationaux s'agissant de se demander si le moment était venu de mettre fin à une activité qui ne donnait pas de résultats ou s'il convenait de lui donner encore un peu de temps pour prouver sa valeur. L'IEFA a fourni des informations utiles pour les futurs projets en ce qui concerne la définition d'objectifs réalistes et de critères plus précis concernant le maintien ou l'arrêt d'activités.

L'efficacité des projets de démonstration: une stratégie de promotion de la réforme de l'éducation très utilisée consiste à faire la démonstration de l'efficacité d'une intervention sur une petite échelle d'une façon qui la fasse remarquer par un public beaucoup plus large et qui, ce faisant, crée une demande locale pour une extension de l'intervention. L'IEFA a montré qu'en elle-même, la claire démonstration de l'efficacité d'une activité ne suffit pas à la faire adopter sur une plus grande échelle. Lorsque les pays ont mis en œuvre une "approche fondée sur les projets de démonstration" dans le cadre de l'IEFA, il n'y a pratiquement pas eu d'intervention qui soit adoptée et reproduite sans l'aide des donateurs extérieurs.

Le rôle des descriptions aux fins de la généralisation: pour être concluante, la réplique d'une activité efficace suppose une description précise des caractéristiques de l'intervention et de son plan d'utilisation. Les RTA ont été inégaux à cet égard, bien que la majorité d'entre eux n'aient pas fourni une telle description. L'expérience de l'IEFA a souligné qu'il importait, dans le cadre du contrôle et de l'évaluation, de prévoir une meilleure description du projet.

Exigences excessives en matière d'établissement de rapports; communication insuffisante d'informations: dans les futurs projets de ce type de l'UNICEF, on pourrait sensiblement réduire les exigences en matière d'établissement de rapports nationaux tout en étoffant les informations utilisables, en revoyant l'ensemble de la question des modalités d'établissement de rapports.

Remise à plat des mécanismes de contrôle et d'évaluation: le contrôle et l'évaluation des activités de l'IEFA ont laissé à désirer. Les fortes convictions personnelles de plus d'un fonctionnaire national et de l'UNICEF quant à l'efficacité des activités d'IEFA ne s'appuyaient pas nécessairement sur des preuves objectives. Des éléments officieux donnent à penser qu'un certain nombre de stratégies appliquées par l'IEFA ont bien permis de promouvoir la scolarisation, la rétention ou le niveau d'études des filles. Toutefois, ces appréciations étaient fondées sur des observations individuelles, la bouche à oreille et des preuves plus ou moins

officieuses. Les preuves officielles de l'efficacité de ces pratiques font largement défaut. Peu de bureaux de pays avaient effectivement procédé à une évaluation en bonne et due forme de ces éléments d'une façon qui aurait pu fournir des preuves objectives de leur succès. Cela représente une perte regrettable d'information pour les bureaux extérieurs et une importante occasion manquée pour l'UNICEF.

Prise en compte des coûts et des aspects liés à l'efficacité: le manque de données sur les coûts des activités de l'IEFA a limité la durabilité et l'intégration de pratiques qui semblaient efficaces. À l'avenir, les initiatives dans ce domaine doivent réunir davantage de données sur les coûts, y compris sur les coûts directs et indirects et les coûts aux niveaux des particuliers, des communautés locales, des districts et du pays. La durabilité et l'intégration exigent que les gouvernements comprennent les conséquences financières des interventions à l'égard desquelles il leur est demandé de s'engager. L'IEFA a permis de tirer un autre enseignement: une intervention efficace peut être onéreuse. Là où elles étaient disponibles, les données sur les dépenses indiquaient que les stratégies efficaces étaient généralement onéreuses.

Prise en compte de la durabilité, de la reproductibilité et de l'intégration: les initiatives à venir analogues à l'IEFA se trouveraient bien de l'existence d'un lien plus étroit entre les interventions du gouvernement central en faveur de l'éducation des filles et tout l'éventail de stratégies innovantes qui sont encouragées aux niveaux des communautés et des écoles. Il y a eu, dans le cadre de l'IEFA, des exemples de stratégies qui, bien qu'ayant donné de bons résultats aux niveaux des communautés et des écoles, n'étaient guère connues au niveau national ou, si elles l'étaient, n'étaient pas, pour d'autres raisons, retenues par le gouvernement aux fins de généralisation.

Complémentarité de l'éducation formelle de base et de l'éducation de base non formelle: l'IEFA a fait la démonstration de stratégies "de la seconde chance" concluantes pour ce qui est d'atteindre les jeunes qui avaient déjà abandonné leurs études et les jeunes plus âgés qui n'avaient pas pu aller à l'école de bonne heure. Parallèlement, l'expérience de l'IEFA a mis en évidence le problème de certains gouvernements, qui est celui de savoir comment intégrer efficacement les structures non formelles et formelles. Alors que l'efficacité du COPE a été largement reconnue, le gouvernement a répugné à généraliser le modèle en utilisant les deniers de l'État.

Impact général de l'IEFA

Les changements qui se sont produits au niveau de la participation, de la rétention et du niveau d'instruction des filles pendant la durée de l'IEFA sont la résultante d'un grand nombre de facteurs autres que l'IEFA tant au sein qu'en dehors du système éducatif. Le développement de la scolarisation des filles ne peut donc pas être attribué spécifiquement aux activités de l'IEFA. Le mérite en revient également aux gouvernements nationaux et aux autres partenaires pour le développement, qui se sont eux aussi fait les agents de l'éducation des filles. On peut toutefois conclure que l'IEFA, mettant en œuvre une démarche multi-pays, a apporté une contribution positive à l'amélioration de l'éducation des filles, qu'elle a aidé à se répandre dans toute l'Afrique subsaharienne.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

La Iniciativa para la Educación de las Niñas Africanas (AGEI) ha sido el elemento central de las actividades del UNICEF destinadas a promover la educación de las niñas. Iniciada en 1994 con fondos de la Agencia Canadiense de Desarrollo Internacional (ACDI), se continuó en 1998 con fondos de Noruega. La iniciativa se basa en la premisa de que, al seleccionar a las niñas, el programa llegará a una mayor proporción de la población de niños y niñas a quienes se les deniega una educación. Durante el tiempo en que el programa ha estado en marcha, el Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de Noruega proporcionó 45.097.576 de dólares para apoyar las actividades de AGEI en 34 países, dos Oficinas Regionales y en la sede del UNICEF. Concretamente, durante AGEI-1 (1996-2000), Noruega proporcionó 22.722.072 de dólares, que se utilizaron para prestar apoyo a las labores en 18 países. Durante AGEI-2 (2001-abril 2004), Noruega proporcionó otros 22.375.504 de dólares, utilizados para prestar apoyo a las labores que ya se realizaban en los 18 países iniciales y realizar nuevas labores en otros 16 países.

Esta evaluación externa tenía por objetivo evaluar la eficacia de las actividades de la AGEI en el aumento del acceso de las niñas a la escuela, así como su retención y progreso académico, y el grado en que la AGEI fomentó y promovió cambios en la política nacional y de la organización destinados a apoyar la educación de las niñas. La evaluación tenía como propósito obtener información útil para (a) diseñar y poner en práctica programas de educación de las niñas en otros países y regiones, (b) fortalecer la capacidad del UNICEF y sus socios en el diseño y prestación de programas de educación para las niñas; y (c) contribuir a lograr las metas de Educación Para Todos (EFA – Education For All) y los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio.

La evaluación examinó seis dimensiones de la AGEI: (a) pertinencia; (b) función, diseño y enfoque; (c) eficacia, (d) eficiencia, (e) sostenibilidad, y (f) la idoneidad del apoyo a los programas. Los datos de la evaluación se recopilaron por medio de: (a) un amplio análisis de los documentos del proyecto, (b) seis estudios de país donde se ilustraban diferentes tipos de contextos y efectos, y experiencias más o menos satisfactorias (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Uganda), y (c) entrevistas con personal clave del UNICEF que participó en el diseño y la puesta en práctica de la AGEI. Siempre que fue posible, la información se convalidó y contrastó con otras fuentes.

Los documentos analizados incluyeron propuestas de financiación, informes técnicos anuales, evaluaciones a nivel de país, e informes consolidados regionales e internacionales. Se prestó una atención especial al examen de los cambios que se produjeron entre el comienzo y el final de cada fase de la AGEI. Los informes consolidados anuales y los informes regionales fueron de especial utilidad. Los informes técnicos anuales y las evaluaciones tuvieron una utilidad más limitada, debido a su calidad desigual, la falta de datos y, con frecuencia, una falta de análisis y reflexión.

Hallazgos y conclusiones

Pertinencia: Esta evaluación llegó a la conclusión de que la AGEI fue un programa pertinente. Las niñas se encuentran a la zaga con respecto a los niños en el acceso a la escuela, la retención y el progreso académico en la mayor parte de África, una disparidad que los gobiernos y la comunidad internacional más amplia reconocen como una grave restricción para el desarrollo social, político y económico del continente. Las actividades de la AGEI tenían como objetivo reducir estas restricciones y mejorar la equidad en materia de género.

La AGEI estaba esencialmente basada en un enfoque de equidad en materia de género, que trataba de reducir la discriminación de género y promover la autosuficiencia social y económica de la mujer por medio de políticas y programas que aumentaran el acceso a la educación básica y la capacitación de las niñas. La AGEI no llegó a adoptar un enfoque basado en la igualdad de género (habilitación), que va más allá del acceso e incluye temas de calidad que afectan a la educación básica. Aunque este hincapié en la equidad era apropiado para la AGEI, debido al contexto social de la época en que se inició la AGEI, otras actividades que reciben apoyo de proyectos como los que están relacionados con la UNGEI se beneficiarían considerablemente si ampliaran su radio de acción para prestar más atención a las cuestiones relacionadas con la igualdad.

Otro aspecto de importancia fue que la AGEI desempeñó una función muy importante en la configuración del programa educativo del UNICEF desde finales de los años 1990. Contribuyó a definir la educación de las niñas como una prioridad organizativa del UNICEF y a clarificar la división de tareas con la UNESCO. Un avance notable en el proceso fue que el UNICEF asumiera la función de organismo coordinador de la Iniciativa de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación de las Niñas (UNGEI).

Función, diseño y enfoque: La evaluación concluyó que la AGEI desempeñó una *función* útil al aumentar la importancia de la educación de las niñas como una cuestión de equidad en materia de género en muchos países. Contribuyó a suscitar un debate sostenido en muchos países sobre la importancia de la educación de las niñas y las mejores maneras para alentar un mayor acceso de las niñas a la escuela, su retención y su progreso académico. Los gobiernos de varios países que participaban en la AGEI habían concluido (o estaban a punto de concluir) políticas nacionales destinadas a alentar el acceso educativo y el rendimiento de las niñas. Aunque estas políticas eran el resultado del propio compromiso de los gobiernos y del aliento de una comunidad internacional más amplia, tanto los gobiernos como los aliados en materia de desarrollo consideraron siempre al UNICEF como una voz especialmente firme a la hora de alentar la toma de medidas por parte de los gobiernos.

Aunque el acuerdo sobre los principales factores que restringen la participación de las niñas en la escuela era amplio entre los gobiernos y los aliados en materia de desarrollo, el acuerdo sobre las intervenciones más apropiadas para abordar estas restricciones era bastante más reducido. En la práctica, en el marco de la AGEI se llevó a cabo una amplia variedad de actividades relativamente discretas para promover la educación de las niñas, que oscilaron desde modelos de escala reducida (por ejemplo, clubes de niñas) a acciones comunitarias y desarrollo de políticas. Este *enfoque* amplio parecía apropiado, dada la incertidumbre sobre la eficacia de estrategias alternativas.

AGEI-1 sufrió las consecuencias de un deficiente *diseño* de programa. La lógica que vinculaba intervenciones particulares con las consecuencias previstas no siempre fue muy clara. Las propuestas a veces prometían demasiado, especialmente en AGEI-1, al ofrecer argumentos excesivamente ambiciosos sobre lo que podía lograrse. Los informes tienden a centrarse en insumos y efectos, por una parte, y en las tendencias de la educación de las niñas (por ejemplo, GER y NER), por otra. También se prestó relativamente poca atención a la esfera de los efectos. En algunos casos, se asumía una relación de causa y efecto entre los productos de AGEI y las tendencias positivas, algo que no estaba respaldado por pruebas claras.

El gobierno y el UNICEF no siempre llevaron a cabo evaluaciones oficiales de actividades aparentemente eficaces de manera que hubieran proporcionado pruebas objetivas de su éxito. Con frecuencia, expresaron creencias firmes sobre la eficacia de determinadas intervenciones,

pero carecían de la documentación sistemática de estos efectos y las consecuencias que les atribuían. Aunque la evaluación de las actividades de la AGEI fue por lo general deficiente, hay algunos buenos ejemplos de evaluaciones sólidas. Entre estas últimos es preciso incluir Breakthrough to Literacy (Uganda) y CHILDSCOPE (Ghana).

Eficacia: El personal nacional del UNICEF y los colaboradores gubernamentales prestaron muy poca atención a la evaluación sistemática de los efectos de las actividades y estrategias de la AGEI. Como resultado, las afirmaciones sobre la eficacia relativa de las intervenciones que se llevaron a cabo por medio de la AGEI fueron limitadas. Debido a un diseño deficiente de las actividades, una falta de datos básicos válidos y un seguimiento y evaluación inadecuados resultó difícil establecer si los objetivos del programa se cumplieron.

Por una cuestión de conveniencia, la evaluación agrupó las actividades dentro del enfoque del ciclo de vida. Las actividades en *la educación de la primera infancia* hicieron hincapié en un enfoque amplio e integrado, en lugar de dedicarse a un enfoque más reducido como la educación preescolar. En Burkina Faso, Camerún, Chad, Kenia, Liberia, Togo y Uganda se llevaron a cabo proyectos con relativo éxito, aunque aislados.

La matriculación, retención y el progreso de las niñas en el marco de *la educación básica formal* se promovió por medio de actividades como escuelas preparatorias o satélites, albergues para niñas, programas de alimentación en la escuela, provisión de materiales de construcción y suministros para infraestructura, desarrollo del plan de estudios, desarrollo y distribución de materiales pedagógicos, instrucción de niña a niña y capacitación de maestros. En la mayoría de las iniciativas, se procuró contar con cierto grado de participación de la comunidad para la construcción de las escuelas, la promoción de la matriculación de las niñas y la gestión de las escuelas. Virtualmente todos los países de la AGEI participaron en este tipo de experiencias.

La educación no formal, las escuelas que ofrecían una “segunda oportunidad” y las escuelas de formación profesional se centraron en los niños y las niñas que nunca habían ido a la escuela o que la habían abandonado. Su éxito parecía depender de la calidad de los maestros, la valoración social de esta forma de educación y las oportunidades disponibles para que los estudiantes pudieran realizar una transición hacia una escolarización académica o un puesto de trabajo. La AGEI prestó apoyo a la educación no académica en Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Níger, Nigeria, Sudán y Uganda.

Algunas actividades dieron mejores resultados que otras. Las estrategias que parecieron tener más éxito para el personal del UNICEF sobre el terreno incluyeron el abastecimiento de agua y saneamiento (por ejemplo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoras, Etiopía, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenia, Mauritania, Malí, Níger, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda), raciones de alimentos para niñas (por ejemplo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Malí, Senegal, Togo), programas para la primera infancia (por ejemplo, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Togo, Camerún), clubes para la educación de niñas (por ejemplo, Uganda, Ghana), instrucción de niña a niña (Benin, Guinea), Breakthrough to Literacy (por ejemplo, Uganda), opciones de escuelas que ofrecen una segunda oportunidad (por ejemplo, Guinea, Uganda) y, en algunos lugares, construcción de escuelas comunitarias (por ejemplo, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Guinea).

El personal del UNICEF sobre el terreno consideró que algunas actividades de la AGEI habían tenido menos éxito de lo que ellos habían anticipado. Por ejemplo, los clubes para la educación de las niñas (por ejemplo, Botswana), la construcción de albergues (por ejemplo, Eritrea,

Botswana), la construcción de zonas de recreo (por ejemplo, Botswana), y la distribución de un solo envío de materiales escolares (varios países). La AGEI se encontró a veces con consecuencias no anticipadas, tanto positivas como negativas. En varios países se registró una reacción de la comunidad contra un tratamiento especial de las niñas.

Intervenciones y estrategias similares pueden ser relativamente exitosas en un país y menos prometedoras en otro. Entre varios países, hay distintos factores que determinan si una intervención específica tuvo éxito o no. Los factores más importantes fueron el contexto cultural y la incidencia de estereotipos de género.

Una restricción a la eficacia fue que la AGEI, en sus diferentes niveles, fue considerada principalmente como una iniciativa femenina que no generó la participación, el apoyo y la implicación de los hombres y los muchachos. No se puso en marcha de una manera uniforme un marco analítico crítico sobre las cuestiones de género con instrumentos y métodos adecuados. Aunque se llevaron a cabo varias acciones para abordar las cuestiones de género, muchas de ellas se pusieron en práctica a una la escala relativamente reducida y no formaron parte de un enfoque sistemático o sistémico destinado a la realización de los derechos de las niñas y las mujeres de una manera integral.

Eficiencia: La eficiencia es la relación que hay entre los costos y la eficacia. Para determinar la eficiencia es necesario disponer de buenos datos tanto de los costos como de los efectos. Pocos gobiernos u oficinas del UNICEF disponían de información clara o fidedigna sobre los costos de las actividades que creían que habían dado buenos resultados. Igualmente, pocos tenían pruebas objetivas de los efectos de las actividades de la AGEI. Al carecer de datos objetivos sobre efectos o costos, la capacidad para establecer la eficiencia era limitada. La evaluación concluyó que el personal de país del UNICEF y los funcionarios del gobierno carecían de una comprensión adecuada de la diferencia entre costos y gastos, inversiones y gastos periódicos, y costos directos y de oportunidad. Dicho esto, algunas de las actividades más eficaces fueron también las más caras. Entre otros ejemplos hay que mencionar COPE y ABEK en Uganda y CHILDSCOPE en Ghana. Esto presenta implicaciones para las posibilidades de sostenibilidad y replicabilidad de las experiencias, así como de su integración. Con respecto a la participación de la comunidad se dio una curiosa paradoja. A menudo se esperaba que las comunidades pobres contribuyeran con su trabajo y materiales locales en la construcción de escuelas y a veces también en el pago de salarios a los maestros, mientras que el gobierno cubría todos los costos de las comunidades más acomodadas (por ejemplo en las zonas urbanas).

Sostenibilidad, replicabilidad e integración: La posibilidad de que los gobiernos o las comunidades sostengan las actividades iniciadas por la AGEI sin ayuda externa parece ser muy reducida. En la mayoría de los casos, la AGEI adoptó un clásico enfoque de proyecto por el que proporcionaba mayor apoyo externo para las inversiones (sobre todo infraestructura, capacitación y equipos) siempre que hubiera un compromiso “blando” de los gobiernos y las comunidades para cubrir los gastos periódicos y las inversiones futuras (amortización de inversiones, operación y mantenimiento de las infraestructuras, salarios de los maestros). En la práctica, no será posible cumplir con muchos de estos compromisos debido a la falta de recursos y la falta de un compromiso hacia la educación de las niñas y la habilitación de la mujer.

Otros tres hallazgos importantes fueron: en primer lugar, la utilización de un enfoque de “proyecto experimental” para promover la integración pocas veces condujo a una adopción o puesta en práctica a mayor escala de la actividad sin que mediara financiación externa. En

segundo lugar, a veces se produjo una falta de vinculación entre los planes del gobierno y las actividades de campo que habían dado resultados. Tal fue el caso de BTL en Uganda y CHILDSCOPE en Ghana. Una de las razones fue que ni el gobierno central ni las comunidades pudieron utilizar las evidencias que reflejaban el éxito de las actividades para establecer flujos nacionales de financiación que pudieran sostener la actividad. Finalmente, la naturaleza cambiante de la financiación para el desarrollo influyó en las actividades de *replicabilidad e integración* destinadas a la educación de las niñas. En la transición hacia la planificación intersectorial, los planes de inversión sectoriales y el apoyo a los presupuestos de múltiples donantes, algunos gobiernos y empleados del UNICEF están preocupados ante la posibilidad de que resulte más difícil mantener programas específicos de apoyo a la educación de las niñas.

Idoneidad del apoyo al programa: Los acuerdos marco tanto de la AGEI-1 como de la AGEI-2 fueron relativamente generales y la orientación programática en su conjunto estaba abierta a las propuestas creativas desde el terreno. A veces se produjeron casos de ambigüedad entre varios niveles del UNICEF sobre quién (y a qué nivel) era responsable del diseño de las actividades de la AGEI. Algunos oficiales de educación sobre el terreno esperaban que la sede y las Oficinas Regionales ofrecieran una mayor dirección que la que en realidad recibieron con respecto a las prácticas efectivas.

Lecciones aprendidas

Aunque la AGEI concluyó a finales de 2003/comienzos de 2004, los resultados de esta evaluación ofrecen lecciones que podrían ser útiles en futuras actividades programáticas en favor de la educación de las niñas, como las que reciben apoyo por medio del marco y en alianza con la UNGEI.

Equidad de género frente a igualdad de género: El hincapié en el acceso de las niñas a la educación, la retención y el progreso académico, es necesario pero no suficiente. Las iniciativas para la educación de las niñas a gran escala en el futuro tienen que equilibrar una mejora en la equidad de género en el acceso, la persistencia y el progreso académico, con la promoción de la igualdad de la mujer en la participación en tareas de liderazgo y las funciones de toma de decisiones a través de la estructura educativa.

Influir en el discurso a nivel de políticas: La AGEI demostró que la asignación estratégica de cantidades relativamente reducidas de dinero entre un amplio número de países para prestar apoyo a actividades relativamente modestas puede aumentar en gran medida la prominencia de determinados temas seleccionados y configurar el debate de políticas en el plano nacional. Este enfoque resulta incluso más válido cuando se combina con actividades sistemáticas para evaluar el éxito relativo de las diversas estrategias puestas a prueba. La AGEI fue relativamente deficiente en esta evaluación, un punto que se analizará más adelante.

Sin embargo, la AGEI logró cambiar en gran medida la forma del discurso sobre políticas en África subsahariana, contribuyendo a hacer avanzar el tema de la educación de las niñas desde una oscuridad relativa hace diez años hasta convertirse hoy en día en una de las principales prioridades en materia de educación de muchos países (y del propio UNICEF). Este logro es especialmente admirable, dada la cantidad relativamente reducida de fondos que estaban realmente disponibles para cada país por medio de la AGEI.

Gestión de resultados: En el marco de la AGEI, pocas oficinas de país prestaron atención a si las consecuencias intencionales de las actividades llegaron a ocurrir realmente. Futuras

actividades similares a la AGEI se beneficiarían si se prestara una mayor atención a los efectos.

Formular estimaciones realistas de posibles efectos en un marco basado en los resultados: a veces las intervenciones parecían fracasar no debido a que fuesen inapropiadas, sino porque no podían lograr metas inapropiadamente altas.

Clarificar criterios del éxito: La experiencia de la AGEI subrayó el dilema recurrente que confronta el personal de país del UNICEF y sus homólogos del gobierno cuando se trata de decidir si una actividad que no ha dado resultados debería concluirse o se le debería dar más tiempo para demostrar su valor. La AGEI ofreció información útil para futuros proyectos sobre la necesidad de establecer metas y objetivos realistas y definir criterios más claros sobre si las actividades deben mantenerse o es preciso ponerles fin.

La eficacia de los proyectos experimentales: Una estrategia que se emplea ampliamente para promover la reforma educativa es demostrar la eficacia de una intervención a una escala reducida de manera que resulte visible para un público más amplio, creando por tanto una demanda local para una puesta en práctica a mayor escala de la intervención. La AGEI reveló que la demostración clara de la eficacia de una actividad no es suficiente, por sí sola, para fomentar su adopción a una escala más amplia. En la AGEI, cuando los países utilizaron un “enfoque basado en un proyecto experimental”, pocas, si alguna, de las intervenciones enmarcadas en estos proyectos experimentales se adoptaron y reprodujeron sin asistencia externa de donantes.

La función de la descripción en la repetición: Una repetición con éxito de actividades eficaces depende de ofrecer una descripción clara de las características de la intervención y su programa de utilización. Los informes técnicos anuales fueron muy irregulares a este respecto, aunque la mayoría carecía de una adecuada descripción. Las experiencias en la AGEI subrayaron la necesidad de disponer de una mejor descripción del proyecto como parte de la supervisión y evaluación del proyecto.

Exceso de información; falta de información: En futuros proyectos de este tipo del UNICEF, los requisitos para la presentación de informes de país podrían reducirse de manera significativa incluso aunque se aumente la información útil, mediante un replanteo de los mecanismos de presentación de informes.

Replantear los mecanismos de seguimiento y evaluación: El seguimiento y la evaluación de las actividades de la AGEI fueron deficientes. Las firmes creencias personales de muchos empleados del gobierno y del UNICEF sobre la eficacia de las actividades de la AGEI no estaban necesariamente basadas en evidencias objetivas. Las evidencias informales sugieren que un número de las estrategias que se emplearon en la AGEI fueron eficaces en la promoción del acceso, la retención o el progreso académico de las niñas. Sin embargo, en muchos casos, esto estaba basado en observaciones individuales, el boca a boca, y evidencias relativamente informales. Por lo general, no había evidencias formales sobre la eficacia de estas prácticas. Pocas oficinas de los países habían llevado a cabo realmente una evaluación oficial de estos componentes de manera que proporcionara pruebas objetivas de su éxito. Esto representa una lamentable pérdida de información para el terreno y una importante oportunidad desaprovechada para el UNICEF.

Atención al costo y aspectos relacionados con la eficiencia: La falta de datos sobre costos en la AGEI obstaculizó la sostenibilidad y la integración de prácticas aparentemente eficaces.

Iniciativas de este tipo en el futuro tienen que recopilar datos más completos sobre costos, que incluyan costos directos e indirectos y costos a nivel del individuo, la comunidad, el distrito y la nación. La sostenibilidad y la integración requieren que los gobiernos comprendan las consecuencias financieras de las intervenciones con las que se les pide que se comprometan. Otra lección que se deriva de la AGEI es que una intervención eficaz puede resultar cara. Cuando hay datos disponibles sobre gastos, éstos indican que las estrategias eficaces suelen ser caras.

Atención a la sostenibilidad, replicabilidad e integración: Futuras iniciativas similares a la AGEI se beneficiarían de establecer un vínculo más estrecho entre las medidas de los gobiernos centrales en apoyo a la educación de las niñas y la amplia variedad de estrategias y normativas que se promueven a nivel de comunidad y escuela. En la AGEI se dieron varios ejemplos en que estrategias con éxito en los niveles comunitarios y de escuela no dispusieron de mucha visibilidad en el plano nacional o, aunque tuvieron visibilidad, el gobierno no las adoptó para una distribución más amplia por otras razones.

Complementariedad de la educación básica formal y no formal: La AGEI demostró que las estrategias que ofrecen una “segunda oportunidad” pueden tener éxito para llegar a los jóvenes que han abandonado la escuela o jóvenes de mayor edad que no aprovecharon oportunidades anteriores para acudir a la escuela. Al mismo tiempo, la experiencia de la AGEI subrayó el problema que tienen algunos gobiernos para saber cómo integrar de manera eficaz las estructuras formales y las no formales. Incluso aunque se reconoce ampliamente que COPE fue eficaz, el gobierno se mostró reacio a ampliar el modelo utilizando fondos gubernamentales.

Impacto general de la AGEI

Los cambios que se han producido en la participación, retención y rendimiento académico de las niñas durante el transcurso del programa de la AGEI son el resultado de muchos factores, tanto dentro como fuera del sistema educativo. Por consecuencia, el aumento en el acceso de las niñas no se puede atribuir únicamente a las actividades de la AGEI. Es preciso distribuir el mérito entre los gobiernos nacionales y otros aliados del desarrollo que también han promovido la educación de las niñas. Es posible concluir, sin embargo, que la AGEI ejerció una función de importancia considerable al hacer una contribución amplia y significativa para mejorar la educación de las niñas en África subsahariana utilizando un enfoque multinacional.

1. INTRODUCTION

Importance of Girls' Education: The focus on girls' education is grounded in both a human rights perspective and strong empirical evidence of its importance in national development. Indeed, girls' education is widely regarded as one of the most effective strategies to promote economic and social development across the developing world. The positive impacts of educating girls on family health, nutrition, family size, family financial management, women's participation in civic and community activities, their participation in entrepreneurial activities, the likelihood their own children will attend school, and, in some countries, even land use (where women do much of the agricultural work) are well documented in the research literature.

At present, however, significant disparities exist in girls and boys access to and achievement in education. While many countries have made meaningful progress over the last decade, gender equity and gender equality have not yet been achieved. Particular concern in this regard has been focused on sub-Saharan Africa, where girls' enrolment, persistence, and achievement in education still lag behind boys in many countries of the region. It was for this reason that UNICEF's major initiative to promote girls' education focused on Africa.

2. UNICEF'S INVOLVEMENT IN PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION

Education for All Goals (EFA) formulated in Jomtien (1990), Dakar (2000), and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (2000) emphasize the importance of girls' education to achieve gender equality as part of policies related to poverty alleviation and human development. Promoting girls' education has been identified by UNICEF as one of its top organizational priorities. Since the mid-1990s, UNICEF has increasingly championed girls' education not only as a means of achieving equity goals set for education, but also as a means of leveraging overall progress in EFA. Girls' education is one of the five main priorities of the UNICEF Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2002-2005.

The centrepiece in UNICEF's effort to promote girls' education has been its African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI). Started in 1994 with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), it was continued in 1996 with funding from Norway. The AGEI was guided by the principles put forward in *Girls' Education: A Framework for Action* (UNICEF, 1997), which emphasize the pursuit of equitable quality education for all. The initiative was grounded in the premise that by targeting girls, the programme would reach a major proportion of the population of children that has been denied access to education.

The centrality of girls' education within UNICEF was further established in its Medium Term Strategic Plan, which identified girls' education as the top organizational priority. The centrality of girls' education among national governments was reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action developed at the 2000 World Education Forum.

This initiative represented a relatively new approach for UNICEF. UNICEF programming is highly decentralized and Country Offices (COs) have considerable autonomy to work with their government counterparts to design programmes relevant for their country. The AGEI represented one of the first education initiatives in UNICEF designed as a cross-cutting, multi-country effort.

We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of.....

→ Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equity in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Dakar Framework for Action, World Education Forum (2000).

3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation of the AGEI was commissioned by the Evaluation Office of UNICEF Headquarters. The evaluation is formative in nature and is intended to inform strategy development at the global, regional and country levels. The aim of the study is to generate information and analysis that will be useful in (a) designing and implementing girls' education programmes in other countries and regions, (b) strengthening the capacity of UNICEF and its partners in the design and delivery of girls' education programmes; and (c) contributing to the achievement of EFA goals and MDG. Results of this evaluation are expected to be of particular relevance to UNICEF, Governments, and other partners involved in strengthening and/or operationalizing the new United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI).

While the evaluation was intended to assess the impact of the AGEI activities on increasing girls' access, persistence, achievement, and overall treatment in school, it was also intended to assess the extent to which the AGEI fostered and promoted changes in national and organizational policy in ways that support the education of girls.

Additionally, this evaluation is intended to contribute to the larger evaluation of UNICEF's implementation of its Mid-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) priority on Girls' Education. The evaluation was undertaken with the expectation that it would contribute to (a) strategy development of UNICEF's support to girls' education, (b) a more programmatic approach to basic education generally, and, more particularly, (c) refinement of the acceleration strategy for girls' education. In this respect, the evaluation is intended to help define UNICEF's particular contribution to the achievement of EFA goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in partnership with governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, other UN organizations, and international financial institutions.

The objectives of the evaluation of the African Girls' Education Initiative are the assessment and analysis of the following aspects:

- **Relevance** of AGEI as a strategy (a) to overcome the gender gap and to promote gender equality; (b) to promote access, quality and learning achievement for both girls and boys; and (c) to contribute to poverty alleviation and human development as embodied in EFA goals and MDG.
- **Role, design and focus** of the AGEI activities in promoting girls' education, e.g. the quality of the formulation of objectives, their alignment to overall goals and the existence of mechanisms to adapt to changing environments. The evaluation will also take a closer look at AGEI as a multi-country programme as opposed to a conventional arrangement with separate country projects.

- **Effectiveness** of AGEI activities in general and UNICEF support in particular, i.e. the degree to which stated objectives were achieved in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact at national and regional levels and there is evidence of outputs and outcomes that can be related to UNICEF support
- **Efficiency** of AGEI activities, i.e. the degree to which the least costly approaches were used to achieve the objectives, or, if the relevant information is incomplete or absent, the degree to which attempts were made to give adequate attention to factors required for a cost-benefit analysis.
- **Sustainability** of project and programme outcomes and their replicability in other country settings, i.e. mainstreaming of AGEI approaches in UNICEF supported country programmes as well as national policies and strategies (e.g. SIP, SWAP) and / or other major programmes benefiting from external support (e.g. from International Financial Institutions, bilateral donor agencies etc.) as well as in the regional context (e.g. through FAWE).
- **Adequacy of programme support** for AGEI activities within and across participating countries (i.e. the role and composition of the AGEI Steering Committee, the role of Technical Assistance Teams (TAT), support provided by UNICEF Headquarter, Regional and Country Office management, etc.). Of particular interest will be the extent to which design and implementation of AGEI-2 has benefited from lessons learned under AGEI-1 and more particularly from the Mid-Term Review of AGEI-1.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) in **Annex A** provided key evaluation questions as illustrative, rather than proscriptive or exclusive areas of enquiry. As encouraged by the TOR, the external evaluation team employed a flexible approach in formulating the questions they used to cover the evaluation objectives.

4. AUDIENCE

This evaluation is particularly targeted to three main audiences: (a) the Education Section of UNICEF HQ, faced with decisions about sustaining work started under the AGEI that will strengthen and build efforts in relation to the UNGEI; (b) participating Government officials and UNICEF country education officers who want to more clearly understand what interventions tend to be effective and how those interventions can be implemented; and (c) government and donor agency personnel in countries that are considering initiating or extending a programmatic emphasis in girls' education and who want to know what policies and practices have been effective in other locations. The results also may be of interest to non-governmental partners, who play a particularly important role in non-formal education.

5. METHODOLOGY

This evaluation of AGEI employed a multi-method model that drew on three sources of data: (a) a comprehensive review of project documents, (b) site visits to six participating countries, and (c) interviews with key UNICEF personnel involved in the design and implementation of AGEI.

Document review: In the document review, evaluators examined AGEI-1 and AGEI-2 funding proposals, yearly technical reports, country level evaluation, and regional and global consolidated reports. Special attention was given to examining change between the beginning and end of each phase. The consolidated reports and regional reports were found to be

particularly helpful. The YTRs and evaluations were somewhat less useful, due to uneven quality, missing data and, frequently, a lack of analysis and reflection. A list of documents reviewed for this study is provided in **Annex C**. A summary of initial goals and planned activities identified by each participating country at the beginning of each phase of the project, and a summary of accomplishments at the end of each phase are summarized in **Annex F** (included in the CD-ROM and accessible via the UNICEF evaluation website).

Country site visits: Site visits were conducted in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, and Uganda as a way of illustrating the operation of AGEI in different contexts and providing more specific documentation of outcomes and more and less successful experiences. To the extent possible, information was validated and cross-checked with other sources of information.

These countries were selected jointly by the evaluation team and UNICEF staff to reflect geographical representation (East and West Africa), language (francophone and Anglophone) and length of time in AGEI (phase 1 and 2; phase 2 only). Within each of these countries, the evaluation team interviewed government officials in positions to have information about girls' education activities, staff of UNICEF, staff of other international and local development assistance organizations (World Bank, WFP, USAID, Care), and personnel associated with organizations specifically devoted to working with girls' education (e.g., FAWE). The team also visited schools and AGEI activity sites where they interviewed teachers, school administrators, parents, community members, local government officials, and students. A series of protocols, presented in Annex D, were developed to guide the interview process. Data collected during the country site visits were used to prepare country case studies which are presented in **Annex E**.

Interviews with UNICEF personnel: In addition to interviews in the six site visit countries, the evaluation team interviewed personnel at ESARO, WACRO, and UNICEF headquarters. These included personnel who had been a part of those organizations at the time AGEI was designed and initially launched but who subsequently moved to other organizations. A list of people interviewed is presented in **Annex B**.

Limitations of the study: This study depended heavily on the data provided by COs in project proposals and yearly technical reports (YTRs). These documents differed in the timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of the data and on the level of analysis and reflection provided by CO and AGEI staff. Moreover, the data provided by the COs did not always correspond to the international data about that country available from UNESCO, the World Bank and other organizations involved in cross-national data collection and reporting. It appeared that country data reported in the YTRs were seldom cross-checked with other sources before being submitted.

6. ORGANIZATION OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation report is organized in five parts. Section I describes the purpose and background of the AGEI, how AGEI operated across the 34 participating countries, and the rationale for the present evaluation. Section II presents the methodology used in the evaluation. Section III reports findings from the AGEI-wide document review and the site visits to six countries and two regional offices. Section IV discusses the implications and lessons emerging from these findings.

7. DESIGN AND OPERATION OF THE AGEI

7.1. Programme context

Shifting context for girls' education: Since the time the AGEI was initially designed and launched, the social and political contexts affecting girls' education have changed in rather dramatic ways. First, the number of countries facing national emergencies, primarily armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, and/or drought, has increased. Nearly half of the AGEI countries — 7 out of 16 in WCAR and 8 out of 13 countries in ESAR — confronted emergency situations in 2002. In emergency situations, the impacts on girls are different than for boys. For example, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in girls in some countries of southern Africa is five times that of boys. (One reason is that girls' liaisons are with older men, not with schoolboys). In drought, when families are more likely to suffer economic hardships, they are forced to make choices regarding which children they send to school, a choice that often favours boys.

These emergencies have had three effects on girls' education. (a) The urgency to address emergency situations has created significant pressure on UNICEF COs to concentrate their programme funds on minimizing the consequences of these emergencies. Programme funds that might have been allocated to support girls' education activities have been allocated to issues that have more immediate life-and-death consequences. (b) In many countries, the activities within AGEI that most directly support the wider set of UNICEF activities in HIV/AIDS prevention, conflict reduction, and ameliorating the effects of drought have been given priority. This has sometimes meant girls' education activities are chosen more for their programmatic linkages to higher priority issues than for their demonstrated effectiveness. This is not necessarily a criticism or implication that there is a dichotomy between girls' education activities and those associated with HIV/AIDS, conflict, and drought; on the contrary, girls' education is a particularly relevant component of programmes, and UNICEF is to be commended for the integration of efforts around organizational priorities. However, it introduces a further complexity in assessing the overall effectiveness of AGEI. (c) Girls' education has more difficulty competing for government attention and funding as governments themselves give higher priority to responding to emergencies than to promoting girls' education.

A second aspect of the changing context is that, at the time AGEI was designed, the central challenge was increasing girls' access to schooling. Since then, many countries have made significant progress in increasing education access and the emphasis is now on increasing retention, promoting achievement, and promoting equality among men and women's participation in decisions around schooling. In some countries, it appeared that AGEI country goals and strategies, appropriate at the time they were originally developed, did not keep pace with the changing external environment.

Third, education planning and financing mechanisms are changing as countries and international assistance organizations move to sector wide planning, sector wide investment programmes, multi-donor direct budget support, and basket funding. One consequence of these types of funding modalities is that education funds tend to be allocated in larger chunks. Smaller, programme-focused initiatives have more difficulty maintaining separate identities or separate priority.

This shifting context introduced pressures on AGEI that could not have been fully anticipated in the original AGEI plan. It is to the credit of UNICEF staff at country, regional, and headquarters levels that they were able to adjust to these shifts in context.

7.2. Programme formulation

When CIDA funding ended in 1996, funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed work started under the earlier CIDA girls' education programme to be continued and expanded. This evaluation focuses on activities undertaken as part of the Norwegian funded programme and henceforth referred to in this report as the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI).

The AGEI was implemented in two three-year phases. In 1996, AGEI-1 was initially launched in 18 countries, selected by Norway following a process facilitated by Education Section in UNICEF New York in collaboration with the Regional Offices of WCAR and ESAR and the Geographic Sections of UNICEF New York, and with UNICEF Country Education Officers who worked with government counterparts to prepare proposals that established goals, proposed activities, and expected outcomes that would be undertaken in their country as part of this multi-country initiative. Once funds were awarded, COs had to submit a Yearly Technical Report (YTR) documenting activities, accomplishments, challenges, and annual expenditures. To support COs, technical assistance committees (TACs) and technical assistance teams (TATs) were organized at the regional level to provide help to COs, as requested. An external evaluation was conducted in 1999, at the end of phase 1. Even as that evaluation was underway, plans were moving forward for continuing the AGEI into a second phase.

To participate in AGEI-2, COs, working with country counterparts, again prepared initial proposals detailing goals, activities and expected outcomes. In the allocation of AGEI-2 funds, all 18 countries that had participated in phase one were continued and an additional 16 countries were added. A consultant reviewed the AGEI-2 proposals and identified those that lacked clear goals or reasonable work plans and needed revision. As a result of this review, several AGEI-2 proposals were returned to their respective COs where, in all cases, they were revised, re-submitted, and eventually funded. Countries participating in each phase of the initiative are indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: List of Countries Participating in AGEI-1 and AGEI-2

Angola	Liberia
Benin*	Madagascar
Botswana*	Mali*
Burkina Faso*	Mauritania
Burundi	Namibia*
Cameroon*	Niger*
Cape Verde*	Nigeria
Chad*	Rwanda
Comoros	Sudan (OLS)
Eritrea*	Senegal*
Ethiopia*	Somalia
Gambia	South Africa*
Ghana	Swaziland*
Guinea*	Tanzania
Guinea Bissau*	Togo
Kenya	Uganda*
Lesotho	Zimbabwe*

*Countries participating in both AGEI 1 and 2

One of the AGEI goals was that activities would raise the visibility and importance attached to girls' education in ways that would (a) lead countries to commit government funds to support AGEI activities, (b) attract other international donors to channel funds to girls' education, and (c) attract other UNICEF country level funding to support these efforts. This premise was put to a partial test in the move to Phase 2. Though the overall amount of Norwegian funding for AGEI-2 was comparable to that available in AGEI-1, the number of participating countries was increased from 18 to 34, effectively reducing the size of individual country awards. It was anticipated that national governments and other donors would help make up the difference.

7.3. Programme funding, budgeting and expenditures

Over the course of the programme, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided funding of \$45,097,576 to support AGEI activities in a total of 34 countries, two regional offices and UNICEF headquarters. Specifically, during Phase 1 (1996-2000), Norway provided \$22,722,072 that was used to support AGEI work in 18 countries. During Phase 2 (2001- April 2004), Norway provided another \$22,375,504, which was used to support continued work in the original 18 countries and initiate new work in an additional 16 countries.

This evaluation does not specifically assess the financial management of the programme. Funding flows followed established UNICEF procedures. The allocation of funds received by each Country Office was done at the country level by UNICEF staff in a manner consistent with their Country Programme of Operation and in accordance with regular financial procedures.

Depending on the country, AGEI funds were sometimes combined with other UNICEF funding streams to support an activity. Occasionally, AGEI funds were allocated to the Ministry of Education, which combined those funds with government funds to support an ongoing set of activities (e.g., Eritrea). One consequence of both these arrangements was that beneficiaries were not always aware that funding for activities in which they were involved had been supported by AGEI funds. Country Offices often viewed this low visibility as a positive indication that their work was well integrated with that of Government.

Countries were not always able to fully spend their allocation in the year for which it was awarded, often for reasons related to political instability (e.g., Comoros, Madagascar and Somalia), differences in Government and UNICEF funding cycles, and the domino effect created when prerequisite activities on which AGEI work depended were delayed (e.g., Tanzania). In most cases, adjustments in the work flow were made with little problem. Table 1 reports expenditures during AGEI-2, as of December 2002. At about two-thirds of the way into Phase 2, approximately 60% of the available funds had been expended.

7.4. Programme structure and operations

7.4.1. Global

AGEI Steering Committee: The original plan was that the Steering Committee would set AGEI guidelines, review AGEI activities, provide overall policy advice, and keep key global stakeholders informed of the progress of the overall initiative. The Steering Committee was composed of two representatives of the Government of Norway, two representatives from UNICEF Headquarters, two UNICEF Regional Advisers and one representative from FAWE. Representatives from UNICEF COs were invited to attend each Steering Committee meeting on a rotating basis. These meetings were organized each year and provided opportunities for

nurturing partnerships, exchanging information, extending the reach of communication on AGEI, mobilizing resources, and collaboration.

Table 1: Phase II Expenditures (through 31 December 2002)

Country	Contribution in USD	Expenditures as of Dec. 2001	Expenditures as of Dec. 2002	Total Expenditure (2001 - 2002)	Balance	% Spent
Angola	410,049	-	389,601.75	389,601.75	20,447.25	95.0%
Benin	630,005	51,876.26	372,759.85	424,636.11	205,368.89	67.4%
Burkina Faso	631,436	92,518.64	337,899.34	430,417.98	201,018.02	68.2%
Burundi	734,380	48,306.86	316,434.79	364,741.65	369,638.35	49.7%
Cameroon	842,505	212,227.33	182,530.31	394,757.64	447,747.36	46.9%
Cape Verde	454,208	89,024.07	116,330.94	205,355.01	248,852.99	45.2%
Chad	704,861	62,063.40	501,170.95	563,234.35	141,626.65	79.9%
Eritrea	631,213	69,726.86	403,069.93	472,796.79	158,416.21	74.9%
Ethiopia	737,821	143,853.95	189,905.29	333,759.24	404,061.76	45.2%
Gambia	556,574	150,916.03	207,245.68	358,161.71	198,412.29	64.4%
Ghana	779,250	169,972.55	301,906.56	471,879.11	307,370.89	60.6%
Guinea	594,610	97,396.88	301,657.24	399,054.12	195,555.88	67.1%
G. Bissau	757,870	89,343.93	304,911.51	394,255.44	363,614.56	52.0%
Kenya	632,397	196,270.40	189,670.02	385,940.42	246,456.58	61.0%
Lesotho	606,691	39,544.96	49,352.19	88,897.15	517,793.85	14.7%
Liberia	631,361	78,374.37	170,494.33	248,868.70	382,492.30	39.4%
Mali	659,922	112,890.64	327,814.10	440,704.74	219,217.26	66.8%
Mauritania	262,852	3,139.63	151,575.26	154,714.89	108,137.11	58.9%
Namibia	527,455	62,595.37	68,840.91	131,436.28	396,018.72	24.9%
Niger	703,197	68,432.96	295,594.22	364,027.18	339,169.82	51.8%
Nigeria	924,884	176,079.89	407,066.51	583,146.40	341,737.60	63.1%
OLS-South	444,890	355,143.23	59,177.89	414,321.12	30,568.88	93.1%
Rwanda	368,984	48,639.21	213,558.88	262,198.09	106,785.91	71.1%
Senegal	789,201	113,103.33	457,852.81	570,956.14	218,244.86	72.3%
Somalia	786,693	181,164.09	382,030.99	563,195.08	223,497.92	71.6%
South Africa	801,730	160,477.76	347,294.40	507,772.16	293,957.84	63.3%
Swaziland	586,887	16,007.44	289,978.42	305,985.86	280,901.14	52.1%
Tanzania	491,007	11,285.56	99,908.36	111,193.92	379,813.08	22.6%
Togo	315,532	11,963.28	46,093.83	58,057.11	257,474.89	18.4%
Uganda	843,393	158,055.89	647,050.92	805,106.81	38,286.19	95.5%
Zimbabwe	394,635	13,678.11	68,901.51	82,579.62	312,055.38	20.9%
ESARO	315,422	102,037.45	107,829.83	209,867.28	105,554.72	66.5%
WCARO	316,272	81,218.73	34,227.12	115,445.85	200,826.15	36.5%
HQ/Educ. Section	1,539,765	286,196.15	240,168.78	526,364.93	1,013,400.07	34.2%
Madagascar	52,570	-	7,636.37	7,636.37	44,933.63	14.5%
Botswana	315,422	51,353.13	202,914.84	254,267.97	61,154.03	80.6%
Comoros	210,281	-	61,470.45	61,470.45	148,810.55	29.2%
Total	21,986,225	3,604,878	8,851,927	12,456,805	9,529,420	56.7%

Source: UNICEF Programme Funding Office; Taken from 2003 AGEI Consolidated Report

The role of the Steering Committee evolved over the course of the initiative. While it was successful in convening and updating major stakeholders about project activities, there is a general feeling that the Steering Committee was not a major force in guiding the direction of the worldwide initiative. During AGEI-1, participation in the meetings was influenced by a concern to incorporate a wide range of stakeholders. This resulted in large meetings, often with unclear and/or competing agendas. Meetings focused heavily on a review of country reports and more extended descriptions of AGEI activities in selected countries. While some participants found this useful, the focus was more on reviewing past accomplishments than on steering a course for the future. Recognizing this, the number of groups (and individuals) attending the meetings was reduced toward the end of Phase I, a move seen as improving the quality of discussion. Still, the Steering Committee is not viewed as having done much steering.

The Steering Committee meeting in early 2003, which centred on a discussion of the Accelerated Strategy for Implementing AGEI, was better received. Participants appreciated the forward-looking focus of this meeting. One by-product, in the view of some members, was that the locus of leadership more clearly shifted to HQ.

7.4.2. Regional

ESAR and WCAR Regional Offices: The Regional Offices played two main roles in AGEI. They provided technical support and assistance through the work of the Regional Education Advisor, the regional Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), and the Technical Assistance Teams (TATs). They also were the central mechanism for cross-country dissemination and sharing of effective practices undertaken under AGEI.

AGEI served to strengthen the regional structure of UNICEF. Prior to AGEI, most education planning was done at the level of the CO. Education Officers' reports were often sent directly to headquarters. Regional meetings were relatively rare. While the Regional Education Advisors were, as individual professionals, very competent, their formal role within the UNICEF system was relatively weak. AGEI represents one of the first and biggest multi-country education initiatives within UNICEF. It created a new need for cross-country sharing of information, since multiple countries were engaged in somewhat similar activities. With AGEI, regional staff took a stronger role in summarizing and guiding cross-cutting country activities, in quality assurance, and in identifying effective practices. This substantially raised the prominence of regional advisors, which also reflected general organizational policy favouring greater decentralization / regionalization within UNICEF as a whole.

Both **Regional Education Advisors (REAs)** played a crucial role in fostering cross-country sharing of strategies and experiences. Education Officers found the regional and sub-regional meetings convened by the Regional Education Advisors to be a helpful way for country level AGEI staff to learn about AGEI activities in other countries. The Regional Advisors also developed syntheses of country reports that were helpful in tracking overall changes in girls' access, persistence and achievement across their regions over the duration of the AGEI.

While **Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)** were implemented in each region at the beginning of AGEI-1, they were never viewed as particularly effective. Though they did convene different stakeholders in the early phase of the programme, their role and responsibilities were never clearly articulated and they were never considered to add much other value. They were discontinued relatively early in AGEI-1.

Technical Assistance Teams were generally seen as more helpful. TAT members reviewed country proposals and yearly technical reports as a means of identifying emerging problems and conducted in-country reviews as requested by COs or as deemed necessary from reviews of country documents. In ESARO, the TAT membership was relatively large (6 members) during AGEI-1. However, the logistics and expense of convening a large TAT led the Regional Office to reduce the size of the TAT at the beginning of AGEI-2 to two members who travelled more to participating countries to work with country staff and who gave more attention to providing technical assistance. In ESARO, the TAT seems to have been more productive and cost effective during AGEI-2. In WCARO, the TAT seems to have played a more useful role in AGEI-1.

One objective of AGEI was that it would influence other sections of UNICEF to increase attention to gender in their own areas of work. While Regional Advisors across different Sections work together closely, it is not possible to claim that AGEI actually shaped the agenda of other sections. Rather, the staffs of different sections collaborate on those agendas that naturally overlap. Advisors in the other sections recognize the need to consider gender in their own programmatic strategies and clearly demonstrated that they were doing so.

Outside of work underway at the Regional Offices, the only regional activity supported by AGEI was the Forum for African Educationalists (FAWE). As the only pan-African NGO focused on promoting girls' education, FAWE has been a high profile UNICEF partner at both the regional and national levels. At the regional level, FAWE and UNICEF developed joint action plans and collaborated in advocacy. These collaborative activities drew on funding beyond AGEI. Funding from AGEI for this effort was relatively modest: about \$200,000 over three years. At the national level, FAWE chapters in some countries receive financial support from UNICEF to support particular programmes or initiatives, though FAWE chapters are typically unaware of whether the funds are from AGEI or general UNICEF education funds.

Though FAWE's influence varied across countries, for the most part it played an important role in focusing government and citizen attention on issues of girls' education. Among other things, FAWE promoted a set of interventions that support girls' education, e.g., scholarships for girls, programmes to promote science and math, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the Girls' Education Movement (GEM), which initiated girls' clubs in schools across six countries. In Uganda, GEM clubs were identified as one of the most effective strategies for promoting girls' leadership roles within their schools and fostering girl friendly school environments.

While FAWE made some efforts to formally evaluate the effectiveness of its strategies, it mostly relied on the personal experience of FAWE country personnel in deciding what strategies were effective. The links between the practices UNICEF and FAWE each identify as effective in promoting girls' education was loose and the overlap was coincidental.

FAWE recognizes that its country experience has been mixed. It traces its less successful country initiatives to its failure to sufficiently involve government in the efforts. FAWE observes that education ministries are often bogged down under the weight of too many development partners each with its own agenda and each trying to implement its own programmes. Capturing sufficient ministry attention can be difficult. Some of this competition is, presumably, to be resolved by governments moving toward more sector-wide planning and programming. At the same time, FAWE, as a relatively small NGO, expects difficulty positioning itself within the SWAP process. FAWE fears that sector-wide planning threatens attention to gender issues in education. FAWE leadership observes that the design of a SWAP tends to be a very technical process. Those that really shape the inner workings of a SWAP are those that control the

technical design of the budgeting, monitoring, and reporting processes that eventually are adopted as the operating mechanisms. Many advocacy groups, such as FAWE, lack the expertise to engage in that technical level of discussion and, as a result, may be marginalized in the process.

7.4.3. Country level

Education Programme Officers (EPOs) in each country had the primary responsibility for contacting and working collaboratively with counterparts in government to design country level activities. EPOs and their government colleagues designed AGEI country activities within the parameters imposed by their UNICEF-Government National Framework, governments' own priorities, and available staffing. In most countries, AGEI work was targeted both at the national policy level and at the community and school level. National level activities generally concentrated on the formulation of legislation and policies that would provide a legal framework that promoted girls' access to schooling and ensured equitable treatment of girls once in school.

Activities at the community level tended to focus on raising community awareness about the importance of girls' education and promoting community participation in the activities of their schools, particularly in ways that supported girls. Activities at the school level were aimed at (a) increasing girls' access through such strategies as the provision of classroom places and incentive schemes, (b) improving the treatment of girls, once enrolled, through gender training of teachers and better peer support, (c) promoting retention, through such means as the provision of water, separate latrines for girls, feeding programmes and other incentives, and (d) improving the quality of the instruction girls received, through revision and provision of teaching materials and teacher training. In most cases, AGEI activities were targeted to the poorest communities in the most difficult circumstances, a factor that needs to be kept in mind in assessing the eventual success of programme interventions.

7.5. Programme reporting

The AGEI had a somewhat more intensive reporting structure (described earlier) than is typical within UNICEF, largely for three reasons: (1) Since multiple countries were engaged in the same initiative, there was hope that careful monitoring would yield information on creative and effective practices that could then inform the work in other countries. (2) Since formal attention to girls' education was relatively new in many of the participating countries, AGEI leadership wanted to ensure that UNICEF country staff would pay close attention to what was (and was not) working as a means of encouraging timely adaptation and readjustments (as necessary). (3) UNICEF HQ wanted a basis for describing to current and potential donors the activities being undertaken, the results that were being achieved, and the challenges these efforts were encountering.

The Yearly Technical Reports from each country were summarized in regional consolidated reports and, in turn, a global Consolidated Report. Different consultants prepared the global report each of the first three years. A single consultant then completed the Consolidated Reports for years 3-5. This continuity in preparation of the report proved beneficial, as the consultant was better able to identify and track issues over time. An external evaluation was conducted at the end of AGEI-1. At the end of the second year of AGEI-2, each country was required to commission an external evaluation, generally undertaken by a local or regional consultant. At the end of the project, an external, AGEI-wide evaluation was commissioned (of which this report is a part). While YTRs and country evaluations were used internally, the regional and global reports were distributed to participating countries, donor governments and

organizations, and relevant UNICEF personnel. Box A summarizes the expectations for Education Officers' participation in reporting, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

Box A: *In documenting AGEI at the country level, country offices were required to:*

- (a) develop a proposal in order to secure funds,*
- (b) prepare an Yearly Technical Report (YTR) describing AGEI activities, accomplishments and problems,*
- (c) undergo a mid-term evaluation, typically conducted by a local or regional consultant, and*
- (d) participate in a final evaluation.*

There was a widespread perception that the YTRs in AGEI-1 failed to provide the kind of information about project activities sought at the regional and global levels, a point noted in the external evaluation at the end of phase 1. A central concern in AGEI-1 was that the country reporting system did not yield much data that allowed for cross-country aggregation, comparison, or reflection. In response, UNICEF HQ made an effort to strengthen the YTR process at the beginning of AGEI-2. The new YTR format asked COs to provide national and zonal data that would allow better tracking of trends in girls' access, retention, and achievement over time. Detailed data reporting formats were provided to help ensure comparable information across countries.

This effort encountered three problems: First, national indicators were too broad to detect changes that might be due to AGEI activities, which were generally targeted to specific geographical areas or provided on a relatively modest scale. Second, national indicators collected by AGEI project staff sometimes were different from national data available through international databases. While this was often because data were from different years or different offices, it led to some confusion about what constituted valid and meaningful claims of changing circumstances for girls. Finally, zonal data sometimes were not available or were not sufficiently analyzed to provide a meaningful indicator of the circumstances of girls. Even where they were available, zonal data often took considerable staff time to collect.

Country offices differed widely in their willingness and ability to provide the requested data. In some countries, UNICEF staff relied on government education data to complete these YTR reports, which sometimes did not correspond to the categories requested on the YTRs. For example, Burkina Faso and South Africa did not report data disaggregated by gender, presumably because the data were not disaggregated in the government reports. In other cases, UNICEF staff did not have (or did not take) the time to secure the requested data. Problems in the reporting of zonal data were particularly acute. Some countries were unable to provide meaningful data that were specific to the zones, districts, or regions in which AGEI activities were operating. The net result was that country reports were missing key data elements and the data elements reported for the same country often differed from year to year. In the end, this made the analysis of trends in girls' education or the examination of changes over time in AGEI countries difficult.

Overall, these efforts to solve one problem only created another. The shift to collection of more quantitative data resulted in a loss of qualitative description about issues and accomplishments and the quantitative data ended up being intermittent, incomplete and, overall, not very useful. YTR's in AGEI-2 offered little insight into how girls' education activities were operating or the real impact they were having at the individual, community or national levels.

The emphasis of the YTRs and Global Consolidated Reports generally was on describing the inputs, processes, and immediate outputs of the AGEI. While they provided a good discussion of what countries did with their AGEI money, they say little about the outcomes that flowed from those activities. The regional consolidated reports tended to concentrate on describing the changing context of girls' education in their regions, but, given the number of organizations advocating girls' education, those changes could not be attributed specifically to the influence of AGEI.

Perhaps the biggest value of the YTRs was the opportunity it forced upon each CO to reflect on their activities and accomplishments. YTRs were generally treated by the COs as a requirement; they were conceived by UNICEF HQ as an archive of data that would be needed for eventual project evaluations. Consultants were commissioned each year to summarize major themes and observations from the YTRs, but it is not clear that their reports were subsequently used by UNICEF in ways that re-shaped the project. While omissions in requested data and the lack of requested gender disaggregation were pointed out by the consultant, there appears to have been little follow-up from headquarters.

The review of YTRs conducted as part of this evaluation suggested that YTRs were a weak basis for documenting project activities and accomplishments. YTRs during Phase 1 mainly described project inputs, activities, and immediate outputs but, even then, only at a cursory level. They generally lacked analysis and offered little insight into the real issues project staff encountered in implementing AGEI activities. They gave little if any attention to documenting outcomes and impacts of activities. For example, the YTRs from one country continued to report, year after year, that the construction of girls' hostels was underway, but did not explain that this element of its programme was widely viewed as unsuccessful, having encountered a series of delays and problems, and one of the two construction projects was being discontinued.

UNICEF HQ and regional offices did offer guidance for the preparation of YTRs, but accepted wide variation in levels of compliance with those guidelines. In general, YTRs were inadequate, reflecting limited compliance with the framework provided by HQ.

Though considerable country staff time went into the preparation of the various annual reports, there is little evidence they lead to mid-course modifications at any level of the AGEI structure. The investment in reporting may not have been necessary since AGEI activities were expected to yield outcomes and impacts only over the long-term, annual student flow data do not change much from year to year, and there was limited opportunity for mid-course corrections.

7.6. Programme strategies and considerations

The design of specific activities in support of girls' education was largely left to the Education Programme Officers (EPOs) in each country, working collaboratively with their government counterparts. Their selection and design of activities was informed by strategies already underway through government, by their own creativity and, over time, the sharing of ideas developed in other countries.

The variety of strategies undertaken within and across countries, summarized in **Figure 2**, provides a window into what those most familiar with each country situation thought would best promote girls' education. While AGEI did not explicitly develop activities within a life-cycle approach, a life-cycle framework is used in Figure 2 to help organize the wide variety of interventions that were used. Activities are clustered into those most directly focusing on early (a) childhood development, (b) primary education (formal basic education), (c) literacy and

vocational training for young adolescents (non-formal or “second chance” education), and (d) other activities not clearly within one of the earlier categories.

The AGEI emphasized the comprehensive approach of *early childhood development* rather than the narrow one of pre-school education. This implied strong involvement of families and communities in the design and implementation of centres for very young children with gender parity and strong inter-sectoral links (e.g. with water, sanitation and hygiene education). Projects judged relatively successful by the UNICEF country staff involved in them include those in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Liberia, Togo and Uganda. The strategies most frequently used by these seven countries concentrated on construction of community-based centres. Activities to improve the quality of early childhood development centred on the recruitment and training of preschool teachers.

Figure 2: AGEI interventions organized by life cycle

Early Childhood	
Activities to increase access to early childhood programmes	
Burkina Faso	25 early childhood development centres
Cameroon	Supported 61 community preschool centres
Uganda	Created 85 community-based early childhood centres in 5 districts
Activities to improve quality of early childhood programmes	
Burkina Faso Chad, Cameroon, Liberia	Training in early childhood
Kenya	<i>ECD care-giver & parent education materials</i>
Togo	Supported the recruitment of 88 preschool teachers
Formal Basic Education	
Activities to increase access to formal education	
Angola	Primary schools
Burkina Faso	Supported the construction of Satellite Schools, and social marketing of complementary alternatives for basic education
Comoros	Classrooms
Eritrea	25 community feeder schools
Guinea	104 AGEI primary schools (57 were funded with Norwegian funds and Other Resources, and 47 were funded from Regular Resources)
Guinea Bissau	10 schools (60 classrooms)
Kenya	Rehabilitated boarding facilities for nomadic girls
Namibia	Schools with temporary hostels
Activities to improve quality of formal education – materials and supplies	
Burkina Faso	10,000 textbooks & basic school supplies
Burundi	Educational materials for 26,000 pupils
Cameroon	Textbooks; SARA posters, learning materials, books
Cape Verde	10,000 manuals
Chad	Teacher manuals & teaching materials to 36 schools
Ethiopia	Educational materials to 150 girls in cluster schools
Gambia	Textbooks
Guinea Bissau	Teaching materials, equipment, and school kits to about 67,000 pupils
Kenya	Basic teaching materials
Mali	Bags and storm lamps to 500 girls; SARA posters, learning materials, books, textbooks
Rwanda	Learning materials to children affected by disaster
Swaziland	Supplementary readers to primary pupils
Zimbabwe	Learning kits for P3 and P5 in selected schools
Guinea, Burkina Faso Mauritania,	School supplies

Niger, Senegal, Togo	
Activities to improve quality of formal education – curricula and learning materials	
Cameroon, Cape Verde, Mauritania, Senegal	Life skills education
Botswana	150,000 HIV/AIDS facts books
Burkina Faso	Book in national languages
Cameroon	Mother tongues in learning in primary schools
Chad	training plans & modules in basic education, health, nutrition hygiene, HIV/AIDS prevention, culture of peace, and gender
Ethiopia	Gender analysis of learning materials
Gambia	Curriculum review; development of guidance and counselling manual
Ghana	Handbooks for teachers promoting human rights
Guinea	HIV/AIDS and peace education materials
Guinea Bissau	Curriculum revision supportive of girls
Lesotho, Mali	Gender-responsive teaching and learning materials
Mauritania	Teacher guides in arithmetic for Koranic schools
Niger	Instructor guides for 4,000 teachers
Senegal	Teachers guide, student workbook for on HIV/AIDS & malaria
Somalia	Textbooks, teacher training materials
Sudan	Supplementary reading and teaching materials; provided instructional materials
Swaziland	Studied relevance of curriculum; developed parenting guide
Uganda	Breakthrough To Literacy; gender analysis of instructional materials; manual on interactive methodologies
Activities to improve quality of formal education – testing	
Comoros	Developed test for evaluating learner progress
Gambia	Developed MLA instruments
Uganda	Developed P3 and P5 English and math tests
Zimbabwe	Pilot tested a manual on learning assessment
Activities to improve quality of formal education training	
Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Angola, Namibia, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal	Training in school management and governance
South Africa, Sudan, Botswana, Rwanda, Benin, Cameroon, Nigeria	Life Skills & HIV/AIDS
Madagascar	Parent education
Kenya, Uganda	Community micro-planning and school mapping
Zimbabwe	Community capacity development
Gambia	Literacy training for women
Burkina Faso	Training to new mothers
Niger	Training on chieftainship/leadership and the CRC
Burkina Faso	Teacher training for Satellite School teachers – initial and on-the-job Training in integrated curriculum
Ethiopia	Guidance and counselling
Eritrea, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso	Recruitment and training of female teachers
Guinea Bissau	Training in mathematics, science, and Portuguese language
Guinea Bissau, Senegal	Training to teach in multi-class settings
Guinea, Mali	Training in health education
Somalia	Training for teachers in maintenance & management of textbooks
Togo	Training to teach large classes

Angola	Created intersectoral committees for girls' education in each municipality and local school committees in each school.
Activities to improve quality of formal education – community participation	
Ethiopia	Established girls' advisory committees in 11 school clusters
Kenya	Formed district education provider
Madagascar	Helped communities prepare school learning achievement programme contracts to encourage enforcement of laws protecting minors from sexual exploitation
Tanzania	Conducted community meetings (20 districts) on negative impact of heavy workload on girls' achievement
Gambia	Supported sensitization campaign in rural communities and establishment of mothers' clubs
Guinea Bissau	Trained local groups for community awareness.
Mali	Promoted election school committee officers by assembly, giving half of offices to women
Mali, Mauritania	Trained parents in child rights and implementing of girl friendly schools
Benin	Parents monitoring children's performance via school-monitoring card
Burkina Faso	Parent-School-Community sensitization campaigns in rural communities for girls' schooling, retention and success
Togo	Parent sensitization and informational campaigns, training of 50 new Student-Parent Committees
Activities to improve retention in formal education – material provision	
Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda	Separate latrines for girls
Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Comoros, Senegal	Water points
Eritrea	Water containers
Benin, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Togo	School feeding programmes
Nigeria	Provision of first aid kits
Togo	Hygiene project in 10 schools & supply of pharmaceutical kits
Mali,	Medical examinations for 7,000 pupils
To improve retention in formal education – emotional support, remedial help	
Benin	Girls' peer mentoring
Botswana, Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Uganda	Girls' Education Movement (GEM) clubs
Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania	Children's government
Chad	Remedial courses for 2,000 girls with learning difficulties
Ethiopia	Tutorial and remedial instruction programme for about 15,000 girls
Gambia, Tanzania	Conferences & discussion groups girls
South Africa	Math and science camps for 200 girls
To improve retention in formal education – gender training	
Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Togo	Developed or revised gender training modules
Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Eritrea, Angola, Ethiopia	Gender training of teachers

Madagascar, Lesotho, Kenya, Swaziland, Rwanda	Combined gender and HIV/AIDS training
Chad, Kenya, Somalia	Gender and HIV/AIDS training for headteachers, SMCs and community leaders
Benin, Ethiopia, Liberia	Gender training of community leaders
Rwanda	Gender training of parents
Zimbabwe	Gender training at teacher training colleges
Guinea Bissau	Gender training of journalists
Comoros	Gender training of education officials
Cameroon	Gender training of inspectors and headteachers
Niger	Gender training of PSA members
South Africa	Training for executive committee of National Association of School Governing Bodies
Non-formal and Second Chance schools	
Activities to improve access – construction	
Guinea	15 NFE centres; 5 literacy centres
Sudan	Village schools for non-formal education
Niger	Construction of warehouses and wells at nomadic schools
Activities to improve quality - provision of materials	
Burkina Faso	Support of satellite schools for basic literacy and math in children's first language
Guinea	Support of Nafa Centres
Mauritania	Teaching guides and training for teachers in non-formal schools
Activities to improve quality - training and support of personnel	
Uganda	Second-chance schools for out-of-school children (COPE; ABEK)
Burkina Faso	Gender training of NFE inspectors
Nigeria	Established mothers' clubs in 40 NFE centres
Other interventions	
Nature of activity	
Benin, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali	Income-generating activities for mothers
Nearly all countries	National policy development

The strategies most frequently used to improve girls' access to *formal education* included school or classroom construction and community advocacy/ social mobilization and some combination of training aimed at school, community, and government personnel. Both strategies were proposed in all 34 countries and implemented in 29 countries. Policy development and dissemination was a part of the country strategy in 24 of the countries.

Efforts to improve instructional *quality* frequently centred on the review, redesign, and/or production of curriculum, textbooks, and other instructional materials, achievement testing, and training of teachers and headmasters. In virtually all AGEI countries, some degree of community participation was sought for the construction of schools, the promotion of girls' enrolment, and the management of schools.

Activities to promote *retention* in schooling emphasized school feeding programmes, the provision of water and separate latrines, and first aid and hygiene supplies. Less frequent strategies to improve girls' education included training of female teachers and counsellors and girls clubs (GEM).

Seven countries used AGEI funds to support *non-formal and second chance options* for students who either had not gained access to formal schooling or had dropped out prior to

finishing the primary cycle. These interventions focus on young adolescent girls and boys (10-15 years of age). They offer literacy and vocational training courses. AGEI funds were used for construction, the provision of instructional materials, and training of personnel.

The success of these second-chance options seems to depend on the quality of their teachers, the status that is given to them, the chances for students to transition into formal schooling at a later stage, and their success in the job market with skills acquired during the training. Second chance opportunities supported by AGEI happened in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda.

A review of AGEI-2 proposals suggests that they by and large did reflect the increased experience and learning gained during AGEI-1. Phase 2 proposals were generally more restrained in their promises and the more overstated claims appear to have been detected in the headquarters review and sent back for revision. Some COs were advised of the amount of the Phase 2 funds they could expect to receive prior to actually submitting their proposal. This reduced the pressure on them to over-estimate outcomes but also may have de-coupled quality of project design from the competition for funds. Prior knowledge of likely funding also may have diminished the role of project quality in the allocation of awards. In some countries, funds were allocated despite weak implementation or poor performance during Phase 1.

All AGEI-1 countries continued into AGEI-2. This suggests that either all countries were making acceptable progress, that UNICEF may not have had clear criteria for screening out countries that were not making good progress, or that there were other important criteria (beyond evidence of previous progress) that influenced the decision. One important consideration was that initiatives of this type often need longer-term, sustained funding if they are to succeed.

8. FINDINGS

8.1. Relevance

This evaluation found that AGEI was a *relevant* programme. Girls lag behind boys in school access, retention, and learning achievement across much of Africa. These disparities are recognized by governments and the larger international community as serious constraints on the social, political, and economic development of the continent. AGEI activities were directly aimed at reducing these constraints and improving gender equity.

At the beginning of AGEI, in the mid-1990s, limitations on access was the dominant constraint on girls' and understandably emerged as the central thrust of most AGEI activities. Early childhood interventions, community advocacy in support of basic education, and second-chance options for out-of-school youth were undertaken to expand girls' participation in schooling. Over the course of AGEI, many countries were successful in expanding girls' access and, often, in reducing gender disparities in enrolment. The larger educational challenge in some countries shifted to improving the retention, achievement, and completion of those girls who had already achieved access. To some extent, UNICEF was slow to respond to this shift. Country offices were often committed to access-oriented interventions and were reluctant to change priorities mid-stream. Nonetheless, access remained a relevant and important problem for governments and UNICEF to address, even as other dimensions of girls' education grew in importance.

In its design and implementation, AGEI was essentially based on a *gender equity approach*, which aimed at reducing gender discrimination and promoting social/economic self reliance of women through policies and programmes that increased access to basic education and training

of girls. This was done within the existing structure of gender relations and without giving attention to the influence of patriarchal ideologies. AGEI did not reach the level of a *gender equality (empowerment) approach*, which extends beyond access and the incorporation of quality issues surrounding basic education. With the equality approach, gender is viewed as a socio-cultural construct, which requires understanding and affecting social relations between men and women in which women are systematically discriminated against and maintained in subordinate positions. This approach focuses on structural transformations in society to end discriminatory practices.

While the focus on equity was appropriate for AGEI, given the social context at the time AGEI was launched, efforts being supported through the UNGEI would benefit from broadening the focus to give more attention to issues of equality.

A further consideration of relevance concerns the impact AGEI had on shaping the UNICEF education agenda since the late 1990s. As late as 1997, UNICEF's was essentially dealing with basic education. AGEI contributed to the definition of UNICEF's organizational priority of girls' education and a clearer division of tasks with UNESCO. The latest step in the process is UNICEF's role in leading the UNGEI.

8.2. Role, focus and design

Role: The evaluation found that the AGEI played a useful role in raising the prominence of girls' education as a gender equity issue in many countries. This occurred both through both the attention given to the specific activities supported through AGEI and through the advocacy of UNICEF personnel in meetings of development partners with government. The AGEI programme provided both an opportunity and a reason for government and UNICEF to engage in ongoing discussion of the importance of educating girls and to explore and test innovative approaches.

Governments in several AGEI countries had finalized (or were close to finalizing) national policies aimed at encouraging the educational access and achievement of girls. These policies were the result of governments' own commitment and the encouragement of the wider international community, but UNICEF was often singled out by both government and development partners as a particularly strong voice in encouraging government action. In many countries, government and various external development assistance organizations viewed UNICEF as a leader in promoting girls' education.

For example, during country visits in Eritrea, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Uganda, key informants pointed to the important role UNICEF EPOs had played in shaping national priorities to encompass girls' education. An important source of its credibility is that UNICEF is widely recognized as one of the few development assistance organizations that have a significant presence at both the grassroots and the policy levels. Its field presence and knowledge of grassroots implementation issues were cited as a source of its credibility in the policy arena.

Overall, results of this evaluation indicate that AGEI contributed to sparking a sustained discussion about the importance of girls' education and the best ways to encourage greater female school access, persistence, and achievement across many countries. While evidence about the importance of girls' education was widely available before AGEI, this continent-wide initiative engaged educators and government officials from a wide range of countries in considering active steps they could take in their own countries to improve girls' education.

Focus: Across countries, there was wide agreement of governments and development partners about the main factors constraining girls' participation in schooling. The main supply-side constraints include: (a) lack of a school within reasonable distance and (b) lack of appropriate sanitary facilities in the school for girls, particularly at the point of puberty. Main demand-side constraints include: (a) family values and beliefs that do not value education for girls (e.g., parents' concern about girls being in the same classroom and having contact with boys); (b) economic constraints on the family, often centring on the need for girls' labour in the home, particularly to carry water and collect firewood; (c) the view of some parents that educating a girl is counterproductive to arranging a good marriage for her; and (d) parents' concern (often well-founded) for the girls' welfare when they have to travel long distances to the closest school.

There was considerably less agreement about what interventions were most appropriate in addressing these constraints. This finding supports the approach employed in AGEI, of encouraging wide experimentation to test a variety of approaches. Experimentation with a wide variety of activities to promote girls' education was generally viewed as a positive feature, as many interventions could be tested and the most effective identified for possible use in other countries. In the absence of clear information on what strategies are most effective, spreading relatively small amounts of money across a large number of countries to support relatively modest efforts appears to have been a useful strategy. However, this approach is most valid when combined with systematic efforts to assess the relative success of the various strategies being tested. AGEI was relatively weak in that assessment, a point discussed later.

Box B: Adaptive adjustments versus mission drift

Activities experience "mission drift" when they move away from the purpose they were originally designed to serve. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It may reflect adaptive adjustments on the part of programme managers to the real needs they encounter during implementation. However, such changes, if undocumented, can result in these activities being evaluated against inappropriate criteria, leading to potentially valuable activities being judged unsuccessful. Alternatively, such drift may signal a difficulty in initial problem identification, activity design, or subsequent implementation.

Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (COPE) provides a useful example. Originally intended to provide out-of-school children with a route back into formal primary schooling, focus group discussions with parents and educators found that COPE centres were functioning in three unanticipated ways. *First*, some children resisted transitioning to regular primary schools because they believed that the quality of the COPE instruction was better than the quality of the instruction they would get in the regular government schools. For them, entry to the formal education system was a step backwards and a waste of time. *Second*, COPE centres attracted drop-outs from government primary school. Rather than funnelling children into primary school, it has become a second chance for those unsuccessful in (or unable to sustain their enrolment in) regular schools. *Third*, COPE centres in some communities have become *de facto* primary schools. Parents started sending their younger children to COPE centres because they lived closer to a COPE centre than to a government primary school.

Initially COPE tried to bar these students, not wanting to compete with the government primary schools. However, the Ministry recognized that excluding these children usually resulted in them remaining out of school, the very thing COPE centres were designed to combat. Consequently, younger children are now allowed to participate in some classes in COPE centres.

COPE is serving important needs for children and communities, though not necessarily the ones it was originally designed to serve.

Focus increased somewhat in the transition from AGEI-1 to AGEI-2. Some COs modified their AGEI strategy in response to changing external circumstances and/or to insights developed from their experience in the programme. For example, Swaziland moved into HIV/AIDS prevention. Botswana discontinued nearly half of its activities in order to redirect resources toward activities more specifically focused on combating HIV/AIDS. The Madagascar office did not think it had the capacity to use Phase 2 monies, so the money was split between Botswana and Angola.

Design: AGEI-1 suffered from weak programme *design*. The logic linking particular interventions to their intended consequences was not always clear. Proposals were sometimes over-promised, offering overly ambitious claims about what they could accomplish. In the move to AGEI-2, the design of activities improved somewhat, particularly in terms of *smartness* of objectives and indicators and logical coherence of different levels of results. [Smartness refers to principles of results-based management that require objectives to be *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound* (SMART).] Nonetheless, many activities were initiated without clear, manageable objectives.

Original proposals were sometimes over-promised. At the beginning of AGEI-1, several COs offered overly ambitious claims about what they could accomplish with the money they sought. For example, a goal in one country was to raise the girls' school participation rate nationally from 35% to 70% in just three years through a set of activities that was largely concentrated in just a few districts. Some evidence suggests that this over-promising was encouraged by the convergence of two factors. First, at the early stages of the initiative, some country staff viewed the AGEI primarily as a mechanism through which they could secure additional programme funds, as long as there was some clear effort to help girls. Further, they seemed to believe that promising ambitious changes in girls' education would increase the attractiveness of their proposal in the overall competition for funds. Second, there was little risk in offering inflated claims. Over-promised claims, though noted as such in the annual consolidated reports, went largely unchallenged by UNICEF HQ.

Despite insufficient attention to outcomes, AGEI provided some experientially based information on the level of effect that different types of interventions might reasonably be expected to achieve. This is well illustrated by the experience of CHILDSCOPE in Ghana, featured in **Box C**.

8.3. Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the extent that intended outcomes are achieved. Many AGEI activities lacked adequate monitoring and evaluation and, as a result, clear evidence of the effectiveness of AGEI activities is generally weak. UNICEF staff demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the activities they had proposed and to achieving the outputs they had anticipated. They appeared to give less attention to larger programme outcomes and impacts. It was not that staff lacked interest in larger programme outcomes and impacts. Rather, there appeared to be an assumption that if outputs were achieved, outcomes and impacts could be assumed to follow.

**Box C: Raising girls' access to schooling through a community participation project
CHILDSCOPE in Ghana**

CHILDSCOPE, the centrepiece of their AGEI work in Ghana, is an integrated set of inputs concentrated on seven (out of 110) specific districts. CHILDSCOPE promotes community participation in school management through training and advocacy and provided training, supplies, scholarships and other incentives at the school level aimed at promoting girls' enrolment. Government and UNICEF staff expected these efforts would lead to increases in girls' enrolment of 10% over the life of AGEI-2. CHILDSCOPE was successful, but fell short of meeting that goal. The main findings of a locally conducted evaluation were that:

- Over three years, girls' enrolment increased 0.6% over the national average increase in girls' enrolment. From 1999-2002, overall girls' enrolment in the seven CHILDSCOPE districts increased by 1.7% while girls' enrolment nationally increased by 1.1%.
- During that time, retention of both boys and girls declined. The loss due to drop-out exceeded the gain in initial enrolment. The dropout rate was higher for boys than girls, suggesting that CHILDSCOPE was able to slow the attrition of girls.
- Overall transition rates from P6 to JSS1 for all public schools in the districts in which CHILDSCOPE was operating declined.
- Achievement in mathematics and English went up for both boys and girls, though not consistently so across districts. For the most part, girls outperformed boys.

These results suggest that community participation strategies, if pursued over a sustained amount of time, can raise girls' participation, but that gains might be small. Such information is useful in assessing the trade-offs and making difficult choices among different types of projects.

Three factors seem to have fostered this view. (1) Country staff tended to concentrate on those aspects of the AGEI that were most directly under their control. They did not always see the attainment of outcomes and impacts as being within their manageable control. (2) Within Country and Regional Offices, UNICEF has special staff assigned to monitoring and evaluation. Staff in the education office did not always see it as their responsibility to engage in these activities. Some view monitoring and evaluation as requiring technical expertise they do not have and prefer to leave it to those viewed as having that expertise. (3) Country education staff are often extraordinarily busy. They tend to focus their energy on achieving things most clearly in their proximate control.

Government and UNICEF staff often expressed strong beliefs about the effectiveness of particular interventions, but lacked systematic documentation of those outcomes and effects. They often had not conducted formal evaluation of seemingly effective activities in ways that would have provided objective evidence of their success. Consequently, despite undertaking a wide range of interventions, UNICEF has relatively little formal knowledge of what activities can be considered "best practices". There were notable exceptions. Good examples of strong evaluation included the evaluations of Breakthrough to Literacy (Uganda) and CHILDSCOPE (Ghana).

While systematic, objective data is thin, UNICEF staff have substantial personal knowledge of what works, based on their own experience working with AGEI activities. Some activities worked better than others. Strategies that appeared to be more successful, at least as reported by UNICEF staff involved in the activities, included the provision of water and sanitation (e.g., Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda), food rations for girls (e.g., Benin, Burkina

Faso, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Togo), early childhood programmes (e.g., Burkina Faso, Uganda, Togo, Cameroon), girls' education clubs (e.g., Uganda), Breakthrough to Literacy (e.g., Uganda), second-chance school options (e.g., Uganda) and, in some locations, community school construction (e.g., Eritrea). **Box D** offers a sampling of innovative practices sponsored through AGEI.

Box D: A sample of innovative practices sponsored through AGEI

AGEI in **Burundi** created a network of **journalists** dedicated to the promotion of girls' education.

In **Mali**, mothers received **scholarships**. Mothers who sent their daughters to school received payments, based on the daughters' attendance.

AGEI in **Niger** sponsored **radio messages** about the importance of girls' education.

AGEI in **Togo** started 50 new **PTAs**, in which at least one-third of the members were women.

Some AGEI activities were judged by UNICEF field staff to be less successful than they had anticipated. For example, girls' education clubs (e.g., Botswana), construction of hostels (e.g., Eritrea, Botswana), playground construction (e.g., Botswana), and one-shot materials distribution (various). When activities were not particularly successful, it was often attributed to one of two things. (a) In some cases, the design of the activity was not aligned with local value systems. For example, parents in Eritrea, fearing for their daughters' safety and morals, expressed reluctance to send their daughters to live in hostels located in urban areas. Student-mothers in Botswana did not send their babies to the day-care centre constructed primarily for their use, preferring to have their babies in the care of family members. (b) Some activities lacked local community ownership and leadership. For example, the nine GEM clubs started in Botswana lacked local champions. After four years, only one club remains active.

AGEI contributed to the development of some major gender strategies:

- Formulating national policy and plans on girls' education (and EFA, more generally) in some countries and supporting advocacy efforts promoting girls' education, raising awareness of obstacles to girls' education, e.g. forced or early marriage from a rights perspective, addressing sensitive issues like girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS
- Developing and implementing communication strategies on girls' education using a variety of media. Nurturing partnerships to help mobilize various groups around girls' education and raise awareness and commitment to addressing gender in education
- Building knowledge about girls' education by undertaking a gender review of education materials and practices (e.g., Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Lesotho, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal). Conducting studies on girls' education and collecting and using gender disaggregated data to increase understanding of gender disparities within countries
- Building gender awareness through training activities for different groups, including teachers, teacher trainers, students, parents, community groups, education officials, policy makers, and journalists. Removing gender bias in curricula and instructional materials.

- Forging intersectoral links by giving more attention to improving the school environment in terms of effecting children's retention, especially water and sanitation, health and nutrition (FRESH approach, school feeding programmes), and safety and security
- Supporting diverse educational strategies focused on access and quality (formal and non-formal education) through such mechanisms as creating national standards on developing girl friendly schools that are gender sensitive, locating schools closer to children's homes, and getting parents involved in school management.

AGEI activities sometimes yielded unanticipated consequences, both positive and negative, that go beyond the consideration of direct success or failure. For example, in Ghana there was a community backlash toward the girls' scholarship programme. The community reaction was serious enough to force District Councils to alter their allocation procedures; half of the scholarships are now allocated to girls and half to boys. In Uganda, when COPE schools performed better than regular schools, completers did not want to re-enter government schools, seeing it as a step backwards.

While the general premise of UNICEF was that the identification of effective practices would yield activities and strategies that could be used in other countries, there was some evidence that interventions successful in one country are not necessarily as successful in another. A review of experiences seems to suggest that several factors determine whether or not specific interventions will be successful. Among the most important seem to be the cultural context, local leadership, prevalence of gender stereotypes, government policies, and possible "participation fatigue" by communities.

One constraint on effectiveness was that the AGEI at its various levels was principally viewed as a female initiative that resulted in not gaining the full participation, support and involvement of men and boys. A critical gender analytical framework with adequate tools and methods were not developed in any consistent way. While there were several efforts undertaken that addressed gender issues, many of them were implemented on a relatively small scale and were not part of a systematic or systemic approach aiming at the realization of girls' and women's rights in a comprehensive fashion.

8.4. Efficiency

Efficiency is understood as the relationship of cost and effectiveness (e.g., the level at which results are achieved). An activity or programme is efficient if the same level of outcomes are achieved at a lower cost or if disproportionately higher level of outcome is achieved at the same or higher cost. Determining efficiency, then, requires good data on both level of outcomes and costs. As previously discussed, most AGEI activities lacked objective data on outcomes. Across AGEI, relatively little attention was given to cost of education for families, communities, government and external support agencies. The lack of information on both cost and effectiveness limit the evaluation of efficiency of AGEI.

The lack of information on costs and, to a lesser degree, on expenditures, was due to a combination of factors. First, when COs funnelled AGEI money through the Ministry of Education to provide partial support for larger government initiatives, UNICEF staff sometimes lost the ability to disaggregate and track expenditures by activity. This occurred, for example, in Eritrea.

Second, some countries merged funding streams within the CO to support AGEI activities in a way that made it difficult to determine actual expenditures by activity. That is, several UNICEF funding streams flowed together in support of activities that had multiple valued outcomes. Linking expenditure to specific outcomes proved difficult.

Third, there was an inadequate understanding at the country level of the difference between investment and recurrent costs, between direct and opportunity costs and, in some cases, between costs and expenditures. UNICEF COs had reasonably good information on aggregate AGEI expenditures. However, few Government or UNICEF Offices had clear or reliable information on the costs of the activities they believed had been successful. That said, some of the more effective activities were also the most expensive. Examples include COPE and ABEK in Uganda and CHILDSCOPE in Ghana. This has implications for the chances of sustainability, replicability of experiences, and mainstreaming of these strategies.

Finally, there was sometimes a paradox related to community participation. Poor communities were sometimes expected to contribute their labour and local materials to the building of schools and sometimes to the payment of teacher salaries, while affluent communities (e.g. in urban areas) have all school costs covered by government.

8.5. Sustainability, replicability and mainstreaming

The likelihood of governments and communities sustaining activities initiated by AGEI beyond external support appears to be relatively low. In most cases, AGEI adopted a classical project approach providing major external support for investments (mainly infrastructure, training, equipment) against a “soft” commitment from governments and communities to cover recurrent costs and future investments (amortization of investments, operation and maintenance of infrastructure, teachers’ salaries). In practice, many of these commitments are not likely to be honoured in the long run because of lack of resources and because of a lack of commitment to overcoming the challenges of girls’ education and promoting women’s empowerment. One condition of sustainability will be that discrimination against girls and women and their disempowerment is overcome in a structural sense.

National policies in support of greater access and better treatment of girls in schools did not necessarily lead to corresponding changes in budgeting practices of finance ministries at national or sub-national levels. While national policy frameworks that were adopted represent important accomplishments, those policy frameworks did not always redirect funding flows in ways necessary to sustaining or extending successful activities at the community and school levels. At the other end of the spectrum, community and school level interventions generally did not track cost data in a way that would have provided education financial managers with needed information about the inputs needed to continue or extend seemingly successful activities. When neither policies at the national level or successful activities at the local level were linked to realistic assessments of cost, no formal provision for ensuring funds needed for sustaining or mainstreaming AGEI activities were made by governments.

Chances of *replicability and mainstreaming* of activities aimed at girls’ education also is being influenced by the changing nature of development funding. As development partners are moving to sector-wide planning, sector-investment plans, and multi-donor budget support, some government and UNICEF personnel are concerned that it will be harder to maintain specific agendas in support of girls’ education, e.g. attention for non-formal education.

Overall, very little evidence was found on sustainability or mainstreaming AGEI activities. For the most part, that happened only when there was further external funding. The experience of the Breakthrough to Literacy project in Uganda illustrates this point (**Box E**).

Box E: *The efficacy of demonstration projects*

One premise of UNICEF work in many countries is that clear evidence of the effectiveness of particular activities will lead to government adopting those activities in other locations and eventually implementing them on a wider scale. The experience in Uganda with BTL suggests that, while evidence of effectiveness is necessary, it is not necessarily sufficient to prompt adoption, even when the intervention is aligned with government policies and government budget is available.

The Uganda MOES acknowledges the effectiveness of BTL and is aware of the results of the external evaluation documenting its impact on language learning in Primary 1 and Primary 2. It is aware of the mushrooming enrolments in BTL classes, often at the expense of enrolments in nearby non-BTL schools. It is also aware of the desire of many schools (and parents) to create or expand their BTL offerings.

Expansion of the programme would require the MOES to provide training for BTL teachers and the instructional materials needed to implement the programme. However, some MOES staff observe that the MOES already has allocated funds for teacher training and for materials procurement and that some of these funds are being spent on efforts that yield far less impressive outcomes than those observed in BTL. It might be feasible for the MOES to extend BTL with the funds that are already available within the education budget. In the view of some observers, the resistance is not due to philosophical or educational concerns about BTL, but to the complexities of introducing change in large bureaucracies. Directing resources to any one programme often comes at the expense of others, which may also have strong constituencies.

The message: Clear demonstration of the effectiveness of an activity is not enough, by itself, to spark adoption on a wider scale.

8.6. Adequacy of project support

The framework agreements of both AGEI-1 and AGEI-2 were relatively general and un-specific. Overall programme guidance was open, allowing for creative proposals from the field. On one hand, the decentralized approach fostered a wide variety of interventions and strategies but which often lacked coherence and focus. On the other hand, it gave COs and governments wide latitude to design activities that were relevant to the local context.

At times, there was ambiguity across levels of UNICEF about who (and what level) was responsible for the design of AGEI activities. At the beginning of the programme, some Education Officers in the field expected Headquarters and Regional Offices to provide more guidance than they actually received regarding effective practices. Headquarters saw its role as fund-raising and managing relationships with donors and expected country staff to suggest what activities were most effective for promoting girls' education based on actual experience in the field. Over time, the role of disseminating information on country practices was largely handled as the regional level, through workshops, sub-regional consultations, and the regional consolidated reports. The result of this relatively open approach is mixed.

Global level: As described earlier, the Global Steering Committee convened stakeholders interested in promoting girls' education in annual meetings that were intended to nurture partnerships, exchange information among countries, mobilize resources, and promote collaboration. While elements of these meetings were useful to participants, the Steering

Committee did not provide the forward looking guidance that was originally anticipated by many participants.

Regional level: Regional Education Advisors served as the main point of information sharing across countries and were widely seen as playing a particularly important role in the initiative. In turn, AGEI did much to strengthen the regional education function within UNICEF. The work of the REAs was praised by both Global and country level staff.

The Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), intended to operate at the regional level, were not seen as useful and rather quickly discontinued. The Technical Advisory Teams (TATs) were seen as more useful, but underwent considerable change over the life of the programme. Their role differed across regions and phases of the programme. In WCARO, the TAT seemed to play a more useful role during AGEI-1 while in ESARO the TATs appeared to be more useful during AGEI-2.

Both AGEI-1 and AGEI-2 made an effort to establish systems to monitor data on access, quality and learning achievement with a special focus on the sub-national level. The first level of synthesis of these data from across countries was at the regional level. As the AGEI evolved, WCARO and ESARO took different approaches to collecting the quantitative data, which also affected the type of qualitative data and information that was generated. While WCARO concentrated on establishing baselines and collecting data in the project targeted areas within countries (a bottom up approach), ESARO worked on gathering data on several indicators at national and provincial levels in countries in close collaboration with entities responsible for statistical data collection and analysis which also supported its country/regional capacity building responsibility (a top down approach).

The Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) received financial support from AGEI at both the regional (Nairobi) and country levels. Though its influence varied across countries, for the most part it played an important role in focusing government and citizen attention on issues of girls' education. It promoted the Girls' Education Movement (GEM), which initiated girls' clubs in schools across six countries. In Uganda, GEM clubs were identified as one of the most effective strategies for promoting girls' leadership role within their schools and fostering girl friendly school environments.

Country level: Three issues surfaced regarding the adequacy of project support. First, AGEI activities in several countries were slowed or inconvenienced by delays within UNICEF in moving AGEI funds from Headquarters to the country level (e.g., Niger, Botswana, Ghana). This was noted in several YTRs, several country visits, and the AGEI-1 external evaluation. The reasons for these delays could not be determined from the information available to the evaluation team.

Second, some EPOs and regional staff believed there was ambiguity around who was responsible for evaluating AGEI activities. Country offices did not necessarily see that it was their responsibility to conduct formal evaluations of the success of the interventions they were trying. One reason was that in most COs the evaluation function was somewhat segregated and allocated to a special evaluation unit. Moreover, country education staff were not trained to conduct evaluation. Regional offices offered technical assistance to countries when asked. However, they lacked staffing and funding to undertake evaluation of specific country activities, relying heavily on the judgments of country staff for the assessment of what constituted effective practices. UNICEF HQ was too far removed from field activities to know how to most usefully intervene to support activities.

Finally, data collected through AGEI were not always consistent with official national statistics, those published in UNICEF's State of the World Children, or those published by other international agencies. This made the collection and reporting of data needed in AGEI more complicated than necessary and reduced the opportunities to cross-check data with other sources. Country Offices in WCARO encountered difficulties in obtaining consistent and reliable data at the local level. In ESARO there were problems in obtaining local data that could be related to AGEI funded interventions. On the other hand the two approaches have the potential to complement and strengthen data collection and analysis by governments and UNICEF and other agencies (e.g. the Multi-Cluster Surveys). There is a need to systematically assess the validity of AGEI supported data collection methods and determine their potential to become part of regular generation of education statistics.

9. LESSONS LEARNED

While the AGEI will be completed at end of 2003 / beginning of 2004, results of this evaluation offers lessons that may be useful in further programmatic efforts on behalf of girls' education, such as those being supported through the UNGEI.

9.1. Gender equity vs. gender equality

Future large-scale girls' education initiatives need to balance improving gender equity in school access, persistence, and achievement with promoting equality in female participation in leadership and decision making roles throughout the education structure.

The emphasis on girls' access, retention and achievement in education is necessary but not sufficient. It should be part of a broad effort to promote and sustain women's empowerment and full participation at all levels of society. Future large-scale girls' education initiatives need to balance the necessary focus on improving gender equity in school access, persistence, and achievement with equally necessary attention to promoting equality in female participation in leadership and decision making roles throughout the education structure. This move will require the use of a wider range of indicators to be able to demonstrate accomplishments in this domain. Efforts need to directly address structures at all levels of society and pave the way for the equal and equitable inclusion and involvement of both women and men, girls and boys, in achieving a gender sensitive and balanced pursuit of sustainable social, political and economic development.

Considerable attention has been given to clarifying the constraints on girls and women. Future projects should emphasize the identification of effective solutions for moving past these barriers. As part of that, girls' education strategies need to become more integrated in the human rights-based programming approach, which emphasizes the need to empower rights-claimants (girls and boys, women and men) and strengthen the capacities of duty-bearers (families, communities, civil society, government). By its very nature such a programming approach will be inter-sectoral. That is, it will need to go beyond the education sector. The approach should be inclusive of men and boys and consider them as partners as opposed to viewing them as part of the problems faced by girls and women.

9.2. Influencing the discourse at the policy level

AGEI demonstrated that relatively small amounts of money, strategically spent, can do much to influence national policy deliberations around girls' education.

The AGEI demonstrated that the strategic allocation of relatively small amounts of money across a large number of countries to support relatively modest efforts appears to do much to raise the prominence of target issues and shape policy discussion at the national level. This approach is most valid when combined with systematic efforts to assess the relative success of the various strategies being tested. AGEI was relatively weak in that assessment, a point discussed later.

Nonetheless, AGEI did much to change the shape and policy discourse across sub-Saharan Africa in ways that helped move the issue of girls' education from relatively obscurity ten years ago to one of the top education priorities of many countries (and of UNICEF itself) today. These accomplishments are particularly impressive, given the relatively small amount of funding actually available to each country through the AGEI.

9.3. Managing for results

In AGEI, few COs attended to whether the desired consequences of activities actually occurred. Future efforts similar to AGEI would benefit from more attention to outcomes.

A central consideration in this evaluation was the extent that COs and Headquarters attended to the links among outputs, outcomes and impacts — central elements within UNICEF's results-based framework. Outputs are the direct and proximal results of an intervention, e.g., the number of teachers trained in a teacher training activity. Outcomes refer to the effect those outputs have on those teachers, e.g., the extent to which trained teachers actually use better pedagogical practices. Impacts are the longer term consequences of the intervention, e.g., the extent that girls learn more and experience a more supportive learning environment in the classrooms of those teachers who received training.

A key lesson from AGEI is the need in programmes like this one to strengthen and systematize the understanding of programme results at different levels (processes, outputs, outcomes, attributable impact) and place them into a logical framework. Use of a more logical framework should allow for a more realistic assessment of what can be achieved through targeted interventions, which were, for the most part, relatively small-scale and heavily dependent on external support.

9.4. Developing realistic estimates of likely outcomes results-based framework

Many educators lack a firm basis for anticipating what would constitute a reasonable level of accomplishment. Interventions sometimes appeared to fail not because they were inappropriate, but because they could not achieve inappropriately high goals.

As national and international efforts to promote girls' education move toward a results-based framework and, many educators lack a firm basis for anticipating what would constitute a reasonable level of accomplishment. One consequence in AGEI was that anticipated outcomes were over-promised in the design phase. When outcomes were more modest than anticipated, it was sometimes difficult to know whether this represented a weakness in the activity or over-optimism in planning.

Some evidence suggests that this over-promising was encouraged by the convergence of two factors: (1) At the early stages of the initiative, some country staff viewed the AGEI primarily as a mechanism through which they could secure additional programme funds, as long as there was some clear effort to help girls. Further, they seemed to believe that promising ambitious changes in girls' education would increase the attractiveness of their proposal in the overall competition for funds. (2) There was little risk in offering inflated claims. Over-promised claims, though noted as such in the annual consolidated reports, went largely unchallenged by UNICEF HQ. A reasonable question is why HQ accepted unrealistic goals. Other analyses of UNICEF have identified "the approval culture" of UNICEF, in which the emphasis is on honouring CO prerogatives in programme planning and CO statements are seldom challenged at higher levels of review. The awarding of AGEI funds reflects this same pattern of behaviour.

9.5. Clarifying criteria of success

AGEI provided information useful to future projects about establishing realistic goals and objectives.

UNICEF staff were generally clear that UNICEF should not be in the business of long-term support of small development projects, believing that role was better left to NGOs. Most UNICEF staff saw the proper role of UNICEF as one of experimentation and testing of new interventions. At the same time, there was reluctance to do the careful evaluation that goes with experimentation, reluctance to discontinue activities that might be less successful, and inadequate attention to strategies for transitioning successful interventions to local and national authorities for longer term sustainability.

The experience of AGEI highlighted the recurring dilemma UNICEF country staff and government counterparts faced in deciding when an activity that is not yielding results should be discontinued or just given more time to demonstrate its worth. In AGEI, it is noteworthy that no countries were dropped in the transition from AGEI-1 to AGEI-2 and that, for the most part, activities started in phase 1 were continued in phase 2. Where changes in country programmes occurred, they were often prompted by external forces (e.g., a shift in priorities to focus UNICEF funds on HIV/AIDS) rather than by a judgement that either an activity was so weak it should be discontinued or so successful that it could be shifted to government for continued support. In part, the decision about when to discontinue an activity would be assisted by stronger evaluation data. However, such decisions also require clear criteria for what will be considered a success.

9.6. The efficacy of demonstration projects

Clear demonstration of the effectiveness of an activity is not enough, by itself, to spark adoption on a wider scale.

A widely used strategy for promoting education reform is to demonstrate the effectiveness of an intervention on a small scale in a way that is highly visible to a wider audience, thereby creating a local demand for wider implementation of the intervention. In this way, demonstrably successful practices would be spread due to local demand. However, in AGEI when countries used a “demonstration project approach”, few interventions composing those demonstrations were adopted and replicated without external funding

9.7. The role of description in replication

Successful replication of effective activity depends on having a clear description of the characteristics of the intervention and its programme of use.

The purpose of providing complete descriptions of the AGEI activities underway within a country is to provide a sound basis for replication. If an activity was successful, those wanting to adopt it in other locations need to understand its key components and its programme of use. It is of little help to know that an activity was effective if those interested do not have sufficient information to be able to adopt the strategy in their own setting. YTRs were uneven in this regard, though the majority fell short on description. While some provided clear and useful description of their activities, many others provided descriptions that, while accurate, were clear only to those that were already familiar with the programme. For example, one CO described a system of incentives to encourage girls’ to enrol in school but did not clearly explain that the various incentives were not necessarily concentrated in the same schools. The outcome of the intervention might have been different if those incentives had been concentrated.

Some descriptions of AGEI activities were vague. For example, almost every country identified community advocacy as one of its strategies. It appeared that community advocacy, community training, and social mobilization were used somewhat interchangeably to describe efforts to communicate the importance of girls’ education to parents and community leaders. The country studies suggest that countries differed rather widely in what they actually did under this label. Generally, however, messages developed at central levels of government were channelled through several layers of personnel and integrated with development messages being sent by personnel in other sectors before being delivered. It was not always clear that UNICEF and government officials at the centre were aware of the messages that were actually delivered at the community level or had any way to assess the impact of those messages on community or family behaviour.

9.8. Over-reporting; under-informing

In future UNICEF projects similar to AGEI, country level reporting requirements could be reduced significantly even as useable information could be increased, by a rethinking of the reporting mechanisms.

The review of YTRs conducted as part of this evaluation suggested that YTR's were a weak basis for documenting project activities and accomplishments. YTRs during AGEI-1 mainly described project inputs, activities, and immediate outputs but, even then, only at a cursory level. They generally lacked analysis and offered little insight into the real issues project staff encountered in implementing AGEI activities. They gave little if any attention to documenting outcomes and impacts of activities. For example, the YTRs from one country continued to report, year after year, that the construction of girls’ hostels was underway, but did not explain that this element of its programme was widely viewed as unsuccessful, having encountered a

series of delays and problems, and one of the two construction projects was being discontinued. As a consequence, YTRs provided a weak basis for understanding the actual dynamics of AGEI activities within countries. Many YTRs were weak on description of the activities and lacking in reflection about factors that contributed to their success or lack of success.

The weakness of the YTRs was noted in the external evaluation at the end of AGEI-1 and UNICEF HQ made an effort to strengthen the YTR process at the beginning of AGEI-2. The new YTR format asked country offices to provide national and zonal data that would allow better tracking of trends in girls' access, retention, and achievement over time. Detailed data reporting formats were provided to help ensure comparable information across countries. In the end, these efforts to solve one problem only created another. The shift to collection of more quantitative data resulted in a loss of more qualitative description about issues and accomplishments, and the quantitative data ended up being intermittent, incomplete and, overall, not very useful. UNICEF Headquarters and Regional Offices did offer guidance for the preparation of YTRs, but accepted wide variation in levels of compliance with those guidelines. In general, YTRs were inadequate, reflecting limited compliance with the framework provided by HQ.

The net result was that country reports were missing key data elements and the data elements reported for the same country often differed from year to year. In the end, this made the analysis of trends in girls' education or the examination of changes over time in AGEI countries difficult. Overall, AGEI-2 YTR's offered little insight into how girls' education activities were operating or the results they were achieving at the individual, community or national levels.

9.9. Rethink monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The strong personal beliefs held by many Government and UNICEF staff about the effectiveness of AGEI activities were not necessarily grounded in objective evidence.

Across AGEI, there was almost no attention to outcomes or impacts. The main consequence is that, for the amount of money and energy spent on girls' education through AGEI, UNICEF has surprisingly little solid evidence about what strategies are actually effective in increasing girls' access, persistence, or achievement. Given the frequency of this finding in multi-country studies of UNICEF work, it may be important for UNICEF to assess why inattention to evaluation is such a persistent issue.

Informal evidence suggests that a number of strategies employed in AGEI were effective in promoting girls' access, retention, or achievement. However, in many cases this was based on individual observations, word-of-mouth, and relatively informal evidence. Formal evidence of the effectiveness of those practices was largely lacking. Few Country Offices had actually undertaken formal evaluation of those components in ways that would have provided objective evidence of their success. This represents an unfortunate loss of information for the field and an important missed opportunity for UNICEF

9.10. Attention to cost and aspects related to efficiency

Lack of cost data constrained sustainability and mainstreaming of seemingly effective practices. Governments needed to understand the financial consequences of what they were committing to.

As governments and UNICEF gain more experience with interventions to promote girls' education, they will increasingly need cost data that allow them to make difficult choices among alternative activities. One key need is for more complete cost data that captures the costs to families and communities as well as to government and external funding partners. Attention to collecting cost data from these groups needs to begin at the start-up of project activities, as post hoc reconstruction of such data has proven difficult. In AGEI, inattention to the true costs of activities to families, communities, and government appear to be a major reason that sustainability and mainstreaming was so limited.

UNICEF needs to develop an approach to assess both the total investment cost and the recurrent cost that are required for specific activities. There should be adequate attention to the relative burden-sharing between government and communities in poor and relatively more affluent locations. Mobilizing community efforts at the investment stage (e.g. local materials and unskilled labour for school construction) does not always ensure sustainability, if teachers' salaries or school maintenance will also have to depend largely on community efforts.

Having cost data can raise new questions about the efficiency of seemingly effective strategies and trade-offs between moderately effective-high cost and highly effective-moderate cost strategies. Again take the case of Ghana. As reported earlier in Box A, the substantial multi-year investment in CHILDSCOPE (Ghana) was effective in increasing girls' enrolment by 0.6% over three years. At the same time, the WFP-UNICEF school feeding programme in Eritrea was able to raise girls' enrolments by about 14% in just one year by tying child feeding and family food distribution to girls' attendance. The WFP school feeding programme operating in the north of Ghana reports similar results. Some argue that feeding programmes are short-term interventions, not sustainable over the long-term. However, evidence from Ghana suggests that, despite widespread positive regard for CHILDSCOPE, no one at the school, district, or central government levels expected it would be sustained beyond the availability of external funding.

9.11. Attention to sustainability, replicability and mainstreaming

The strength of linkage between central government actions on girls' education and girls' education strategies being tested at community and school levels affects visibility of innovations and therefore chances for replication, mainstreaming and sustainability.

Future initiatives similar to AGEI would benefit from a closer linkage between central government actions in support of girls' education and the wide variety of innovative strategies being promoted at the community and school levels. There were examples in AGEI where successful strategies at the community and school level did not have much visibility at the national level or had visibility and, for other reasons, were not adopted by government for wider dissemination.

9.12. Complementarity of formal and non-formal basic education

AGEI demonstrated successful "second-chance" strategies for reaching youth who had dropped out of school and older youth who had missed early opportunities for schooling.

AGEI demonstrated successful "second-chance" strategies for reaching youth who had already dropped out of school and older youth who had missed early opportunities for schooling. The

success of COPE and ABEK in Uganda and Nafa Centres in Guinea and Centres for Nonformal Basic Education (CEBNF) in Burkina Faso illustrate the important role non-formal options can have in the overall education framework. In the case of the Nafa Centres in Guinea, the Government has incorporated the non formal model in its education system, and makes it possible for students to transfer into the formal system upon completion of the programme. The Government is presently working on how to diversify the professional / skills training choices for students, which could potentially have consequences for bringing innovation into the local economy. At the same time, the AGEI experience highlighted the problem governments have in knowing how to effectively integrate non-formal and formal structures. For example, even though COPE was widely recognized as effective, the government was reluctant to extend the model using government funds.

While Education for All emphasized the need for adequate attention for both formal and non-formal basic education, there is an increasing trend in current development practice to narrow the focus to Universal Primary Education (UPE). More specifically, there is a danger that education-related Millennium Development Goals and current practices in sector-wide planning and budgeting marginalize forms of basic education that are outside UPE, such as early childhood development and non-formal ("second-chance") education for children out of school.

While UPE is a major development goal, it is important to support, promote, and institutionalize education that is equitable and empowering in both formal and non-formal settings. Non-formal education needs to be understood as an essential and interlinking part of strategies to reach EFA. In promoting a single, unified yet diverse educational system, stronger linkages need to be established between the formal and non-formal, the standards and equivalency between the two need to be better defined.

At the same time, it is important to ensure that non-formal education retains the level of flexibility associated with it so that it can reach out to groups that otherwise would be excluded from the education system. It also needs to ensure that it has standards and basic learning achievements that compare to the formal school, allow for passage to the formal school, and regulations that make it an accredited institution within the government's unified educational system.

In creating a unified educational system, it opens up avenues for transfer of successful practices between both formal and non-formal settings. However, these opportunities for transfer often need to be encouraged and supported in overt ways.

10. OVERALL IMPACT OF AGEI

The changes that have occurred in girls' participation, retention, and achievement over the course of the AGEI programme are the result of many factors in addition to AGEI both within and outside the education system. Consequently, increases in girls' access cannot be attributed specifically to AGEI activities. UNICEF can be proud of its contribution, but must share credit with national governments and other development partners who have also been promoting girls' education. Similarly, declines in girls' access observed in some countries do not necessarily mean that AGEI activities were not effective. In some cases, the drop in girls' access might have been even more pronounced had AGEI interventions not been underway. In 2003 there were more girls in school than when AGEI started in 1996, though this was not uniformly true across all AGEI countries. Overall, however, it can be concluded that AGEI, making use of a multi-country approach, made a widespread and meaningful contribution to improving girls' education across Sub-Saharan Africa..

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ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of the UNICEF supported African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) 03 April 2003

Background and context

Education for All Goals (EFA) formulated in Jomtien (1990) and in Dakar (2000) as well as Millennium Development Goals (2000) emphasise the importance of girls' education to achieve gender equality as part of policies related to poverty alleviation and human development.

Since the mid-1990s, UNICEF has increasingly championed girls' education not only as a means of achieving equity goals set for education, but also as a means of leveraging overall progress in EFA. Girls' education is one of the five main priorities of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2002-2005. UNICEF has recently set out a strategy to accelerate progress on girls' education through partnerships with governments, civil society and the private sector as a contribution to achieving MDG.

The African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI)

From 1994 - 2000, with support from the Norwegian Government (and prior to that, the Canadian Government), UNICEF sponsored an African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) aimed at improving the enrolment, retention, achievement, and school completion of girls (AGEI-1). In 2000, the Norwegian Government extended its commitment by funding a second phase of the AGEI, scheduled to operate from 2001–2003 (AGEI-2). The AGEI was expanded to include 34 countries, representing both a continuation of the work in the initial 18 countries and activities in an additional 16 countries. The countries participating in AGEI-2 are listed in Figure 1. (Countries which participated in both AGEI-1 and 2 are in bold).

Figure 1: List of Countries Participating in AGEI-1 and AGEI-2

Angola	Liberia
Benin*	Madagascar
Botswana*	Mali*
Burkina Faso*	Mauritania
Burundi	Namibia*
Cameroon*	Niger*
Cape Verde*	Nigeria
Chad*	Rwanda
Comoros	Sudan (OLS)
Eritrea*	Senegal*
Ethiopia*	Somalia
Gambia	South Africa*
Ghana	Swaziland*
Guinea*	Tanzania
Guinea Bissau*	Togo
Kenya	Uganda*
Lesotho	Zimbabwe*

*Countries participating in both AGEI 1 and 2

To encourage local participation in these activities, UNICEF pursued a decentralized management strategy based on a set of common principles outlined in the document, *Girls' Education: a Framework for Action*. The country specific activities were part of UNICEF supported Country Programmes of Cooperation. UNICEF Country Offices and their partners

carried the main responsibility for the design and implementation of the activities in each country. The Regional Education Officers provided support and technical assistance, and received and synthesized progress reports on country activities. This strategy encouraged the development and documentation of a rich variety of activities across the 18 participating countries.

The AGEI places strong emphasis on local participation in initial planning and subsequent implementation of project activities. Governments and other partners in each of the participating countries, generally working through a local project team, collaborate with the UNICEF Country Office to determine the particular activities undertaken in each country. Consequently, activities that compose this initiative differ from country to country.

The activities underway in these countries are summarized in the document *The African Girls Education Initiative Proposals Phase 2 (2001-2004)*. The activities of AGEI-2 concern both formal and non-formal education and tend to cluster in five areas: (a) girls' access; (b) quality, (c) advocacy & communications; (d) policy; and, (e) monitoring and evaluation. It should, however, be noted that the details of seemingly common activities may, in practice, show considerable variation.

AGEI-2 includes a partnership between UNICEF and FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists). The focus of this cooperation is on advocacy and political mobilization. FAWE occupies a recognised position as Africa's lead organisation in the field of girls' education. FAWE has received US \$ 200,000 from the AGEI-2 fund to support advocacy activities under FAWE's national chapter plans.

Review and evaluation in AGEI

The part of AGEI-1, which was funded by the Government of Norway, was subjected to a Mid-Term Review in 1999. The MTR noted that the trend with respect to girls' enrolment levels was positive. National gross enrolment rate had improved generally and the data from West and Central Africa indicated that repetition, dropout and completion rates had improved. A wide range of achievements and promising indications were emphasised, notably increased opportunities for international partnership and progress registered in bringing forward the agenda for girls education.

Remaining challenges included maintaining the programmatic focus on girls, improving monitoring and reporting, enhancing capacity building and technical assistance. With respect to monitoring and evaluation, the key barriers were found to be (a) the poor capacity for collection, analysis and reporting of data by the Ministries, and (b) a general lack of conviction on the part of some Country Offices of the importance of this process. The Government of Norway and UNICEF proposed some significant changes to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the next phase, e.g. improvements in the Yearly Technical Reports (YTR), a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation at the country level.

Preparations for the present major evaluation of AGEI started in early 2002, when the Education Section at UNICEF New York Headquarters sent suggestions for the collection of comparable data to AGEI countries. Main components were a) the validation of indicators (both quantitative and qualitative), b) the establishment of baseline parameters for systematic data collection to meet reporting requirements of the Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) as well as c) the gathering of available information for the present evaluation to be conducted in 2003. Country Offices were also encouraged to undertake country-specific evaluations, which would feed into the overall evaluation. As a result, several data reports and country-specific evaluations have

become available since the end of 2002. The evaluation can also make use of a comprehensive set of Yearly Technical Reports¹.

At the same time, the Education Section developed draft Framework Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of AGEI in 2003, which included suggested data elements to be collected during site visits. During the second half of 2002, the draft was revised by the Evaluation Office, which would henceforth assume full responsibility of the Evaluation to ensure its independence and impartiality. The present final draft of the TOR was prepared in March 2003 and takes into account comments received from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Norway.

Purpose of the evaluation in 2003

The present evaluation of the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) will be a core contribution to the comprehensive evaluation of UNICEF's implementation of the MTSP priority *Girls' Education*, which is foreseen in the Evaluation Plan that is part of the Report on the Evaluation Function in the Context of the Medium Term Strategic Plan (Executive Board Report E/ICEF/2002/10, cf. also Executive Board Decision 2002/9).

The evaluation will also contribute to strategy development of UNICEF's support and a more programmatic approach to basic education in general and the refinement of the acceleration strategy for girls' education in particular. In this sense, the exercise can contribute to a better definition of UNICEF's particular contribution to the achievement of EFA goals and MDG in partnership with governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector as well as with other UN organisations and international financial institutions. The evaluation will contribute to strategy development at the global, regional and country levels.

Evaluation objectives

The objectives of the evaluation of the African Girls' Education Initiative are the assessment and analysis of the following aspects:

- ***Relevance*** of AGEI as a strategy a) to overcome the gender gap and to promote gender equality; b) to promote access, quality and learning achievement for both girls and boys; and c) to contribute to poverty alleviation and human development as embodied in EFA goals and MDG.
- ***Role, design and focus*** of the AGEI activities in promoting girls' education, e.g. the quality of the formulation of objectives, their alignment to overall goals and the existence of mechanisms to adapt to changing environments. The evaluation will also take a closer look at AGEI as a multi-country programme as opposed to a conventional arrangement with separate country projects.
- ***Effectiveness*** of AGEI activities in general and UNICEF support in particular, i.e. the degree to which stated objectives were achieved in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact at national and regional levels and there is evidence of outputs and outcomes that can be related to UNICEF support
- ***Efficiency*** of AGEI activities, i.e. the degree to which the least costly approaches were used to achieve the objectives, or, if the relevant information is incomplete or absent, the degree to which attempts were made to give adequate attention to factors required for a cost-benefit analysis.

¹ Most unfortunately, the quality of the material is of uneven quality (cf. under *Methodology*)

- **Sustainability** of project and programme outcomes and their **replicability** in other country settings, i.e. mainstreaming of AGEI approaches in UNICEF supported country programmes as well as national policies and strategies (e.g. SIP, SWAP) and / or other major programmes benefiting from external support (e.g. from International Financial Institutions, bilateral donor agencies etc.) as well as in the regional context (e.g. through FAWE)
- **Adequacy of programme support** for AGEI activities within and across participating countries, i.e. the role and composition of the AGEI Steering Committee, the role of Technical Assistance Teams (TAT), support provided by UNICEF Headquarter, Regional and Country Office management etc. Of particular interest will be to what extent design and implementation of AGEI-2 has benefited from lessons learned under AGEI-1 and more particularly from the Mid-Term Review of AGEI-1.

The evaluation will be formative in nature. Its aim is to generate information and analysis that will be useful at three levels: (i) in designing and implementing girls' education programmes in other countries and regions, (ii) in strengthening the capacity of UNICEF and its partners in the design and delivery of girls' education programmes; and (iii) in contributing to the achievement of EFA goals and MDG

Key Evaluation Questions

N.B. Key evaluation questions should be understood as illustrative, rather than proscriptive or exclusive areas of enquiry. The evaluation team should adopt a certain degree of flexibility in formulating questions to cover the evaluation objectives.

Relevance of AGEI

Key Evaluation Questions:

- To what extent do available statistics concerning enrolment, attendance and / or completion confirm that there is a gender gap in AGEI countries and that there is an immediate need to specially focus on girls' education?
- To what extent were activities undertaken under the AGEI directly relevant to promoting greater school access, persistence and achievement of girls and boys?
- Within countries, how well integrated were AGEI activities at different levels, e.g., school, community, national? What evidence is there that AGEI activities were aligned to poverty alleviation and overall human development strategies?
- To what extent did country teams find it necessary to make changes in the design or implementation of AGEI activities to accommodate changes in the external circumstances affecting the country (e.g., conflict, drought, epidemic)?

Role, design and focus

Key Evaluation Questions:

- To what extent were objectives and activities of the programme designed to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound?
- To what extent and in what ways did the design of AGEI activities allow for adequate attention (a) to EFA goals, b) to country specific education policies and strategies and (c) to social and economic realities on the ground?
- How well focused were AGEI activities on overcoming the gender gap and in promoting school access, persistence, and achievement of girls?
- To what extent and in what ways was the claim that girls' education enhances access, quality and learning achievement of all children (girls and boys) explicitly incorporated in the design of AGEI activities?
- What lessons can be learned regarding the design of girls' education programmes?
- How do AGEI activities relate to UNICEF's overall policies and strategies as expressed in Medium-Term Plan (1997 to 2002), the guidelines for human rights based programming approach (1998), and UNICEF's guidelines for the country programming process?
- To what extent and in what ways did the design of the AGEI elaborate on possible advantages of the multi-country character of the programme?
- Are there any common problems in design or implementation across countries? If so, could they be anticipated and avoided in future country initiatives? To what extent and in what ways was there an advantage in the multi-country character of AGEI?
- Are there common characteristics among programmes that are identified as successful in this evaluation?
- To what extent was feedback from the Mid-Term Review used to reorient AGEI activities? How did lessons learned under AGEI-1 benefit design and implementation of AGEI-2?
- How was the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation proposed by the Mid-Term Review given shape in AGEI-1 and AGEI-2 countries (e.g. better baseline data and indicators, more comprehensive and adequate reporting)

Effectiveness

Key Evaluation Questions:

- To what extent and in what ways was information needed to assess the outputs, outcomes, and impact of AGEI activities collected and analyzed?

- To what extent and in what ways were the objectives of the AGEI achieved in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impact?
- To what extent has the programme been successful to reduce the gender gap and to increase girls' education?
- To what extent have countries been able to create schools that actively promote gender equality (with regards to the organisation of school activities, teaching, learning materials etc.)? What are the critical factors for (lack of) progress?
- Which outputs and outcomes can be considered direct results of UNICEF support?
- To what extent and in what ways did programmes result in measurable improvements in the access, persistence, school experience, and achievement of girls and what interventions tend to be most effective in accomplishing those ends?
- What evidence is there that AGEI approaches were mainstreamed in UNICEF supported Country Programmes, i.e. that national resources as well as Regular and Other Resources were used on a broader scale to support girls' education?
- To what extent did UNICEF support play a catalytic role in mobilising action and resources from other partners (including governments, NGO's, civil society, the private sector and other external support agencies)
- What evidence is there that AGEI activities were scaled up and had effects on strategies aiming at poverty alleviation and overall human development?
- to what extent this support contributed to effective strategies at the macro-level aimed at poverty alleviation and human development.
- What lessons can be learned for future programme design and implementation?

Efficiency

Key Evaluation Questions:

- To the extent that relevant information is available, were AGEI activities implemented in an efficient manner, i.e. generating the best possible outputs, outcomes, and impact of the least possible cost?
- If the relevant information is not available, to what extent were attempts made to collect and analyze data that would allow for adequate cost benefit analysis?
- Were there strategies for minimizing cost that offer promising models for future programme design and implementation?

Sustainability and Replicability

Key Evaluation Questions:

- What indications were there to suggest that programme outcomes (and possible impacts) would be sustained beyond the period of external support? What factors contributed to the likely sustainability of outcomes? What factors worked against sustainability?
- How were activities at the project levelling linked to those related to advocacy and policy dialogue?
- Are there examples of participating countries choosing to implement project activities on a wider scale, (e.g., evidence of “going to scale”)?
- What lessons can be learned from country experience about better linking UNICEF supported activities at the operational level to UNICEF advocacy and policy dialogue?
- To what extent and in what ways do national partners (at both the local and national level) feel ownership of the activities in their country and/or at the regional level? To what extent is it likely that governments and other partners (e.g. FAWE) will continue these activities in the absence of external funding?
- How have national education systems been strengthened and how firmly is girls’ education incorporated in national and regional agenda’s?
- How can experiences in one country benefit initiatives and activities in other countries?
- To what extent are AGEI approaches mainstreamed in national policies and strategies (e.g. SIP, SWAP) and / or other major programmes benefiting from external support (e.g. from International Financial Institutions, bilateral donor agencies etc.) as well as in the regional context (e.g. through FAWE)

Adequacy of project support

Key Evaluation Question:

- What was the role and composition of the AGEI Steering Committee and how useful was the mechanism for AGEI?
- To what extent and in what ways was assistance provided by UNICEF Headquarters as well as Country and Regional Education Officers useful and necessary to the success of this initiative?
- How did transfer of UNICEF staff and of turnover in Government personnel working with a project affect continuity of the programme?

- What evidence is there that governments and / or NGO teams implementing these activities were clear about their role and responsibilities for implementing the intended activities?
- How did national counterparts view the role of the Technical Advisory Teams (TATs), which were to provide technical assistance to countries seeking help in designing, implementing, and evaluating their programme activities?
- What advantages (or disadvantages) did the multi-country arrangement of the AGEI framework and institutional mechanism have for UNICEF and the participating countries to promote among others the development of innovative interventions and approaches and to share lessons learned?
- To what extent did design and implementation of AGEI-2 benefit from lessons learned under AGEI-1 and more particularly from the Mid-Term Review of AGEI-1.

Methods

Collection of information and analysis

Data for this evaluation will be collected through document review, analysis of existing data, interviews, and site observations. To the greatest extent possible, all information will be adequately triangulated and validated. Notably the Ministry of Education in each of the case study countries will be closely associated with the evaluation. This will be accomplished in four stages (which will partly overlap).

- **Stage 1** will involve a review of the international literature on girls' education and background documents for each of the participating countries and for the overall initiative.
- During **Stage 2** the evaluation team will review available data from each of the country-level reviews, from other materials documenting the inputs, outputs, and outcomes associated with their activities as well as from other sources (national statistics, Multi-Cluster Indicator Surveys etc.)
- During **Stage 3**, the evaluation team will conduct site visits in up to six country programmes and, as appropriate, two Regional Offices and Headquarters and conduct workshops.
- Eventually, synthesis of information and analysis as well as report-writing during **stage 4**.

Within each country selected for a site visit, the team is expected to meet with government and other officials, local programme staff, programme participants, and key community leaders as well as UNICEF country programme managers. It will be important to hear the voices of girls, who are participating in these programmes and of their parents. To this end, the team is encouraged to conduct focus groups discussions or apply some similar data collection method that ensures that these voices are heard.

Sample for country case studies

During the field data collection phase, the Review team will visit both of the UNICEF Regional Offices in Africa (Nairobi and Abidjan / Dakar) and conduct site visits in six participating countries: Burkina Faso, Botswana, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, and Uganda. The country cases will be illustrative rather than representative given the great variety in country contexts and specific programme mix. Selection of the countries to be visited has been made in consultation with the Programme Division / Education Section at UNICEF Headquarters. Five general criteria have been used in selecting countries for site visits:

- **Attention to different types of context and outcomes:** AGEI supports a wide range of activities which should be reflected in the choice of case study countries. The selected countries should have an adequate mix of projects aimed at, for example, increasing access, enrolment, retention and drop out rates, increasing quality and learning achievement and completion. There should be an adequate attention to high HIV/AIDS prevalence and emergency situations.
- **Learning from more and less successful experiences.** The selected countries were to include both successful and less successful experiences, from which lessons can be learned. The selection should allow determining which factors may impede the programme from achieving its objectives and / or which factors are particularly conducive to success.
- **Participation of phase 1 and 2 Countries:** The emphasis in this evaluation will be on countries that have participated in the AGEI the longest and where, presumably, the interventions to improve girls' education would have had the greatest opportunity to have an effect. Among the selected countries, only Ghana was not an AGEI-1 country. Its inclusion is, however, justified by the particularly wide range of activities under AGEI.
- **Geographical Balance.** In country selection, the team should seek a reasonable geographical balance between East and West Africa and between Anglophone and Francophone countries
- **Logistics.** The importance of logistics in the selection of site visit locations must be recognized. Country selection will be influenced by the availability of key staff in each country, other demands on their time during the data collection phase of this study, and the capacity of the local UNICEF Country Office to accommodate the team's schedule.

Data Collection Instruments

While recognizing that the particular nature of project activities underway in each country may differ widely, it is anticipated that the 2003 evaluation team will still need some comparable data across sites. To help ensure comparability of data across countries, the evaluation team will employ a set of site visit protocols that will be used consistently across all countries. These protocols will be designed to capture the unique characteristics of each country programme as well as the commonalities across countries. During the planning and start-up phase of the project, these protocols will be developed by the team leader and other team members in consultation with the Evaluation Office at UNICEF Headquarters.

Workshops

To ensure wide participation of country level participants and local audiences in the evaluation, the evaluation team, wherever feasible and in collaboration with the country project staff, will conduct a country-level evaluation workshop. These workshops will provide an additional opportunity for the evaluation team to hear the voices of those most directly involved in the programme and to explain their own activities to evaluators.

As appropriate, the evaluation team will also conduct one or more evaluation workshops for UNICEF regional and headquarters staff to report the findings of the 2003 evaluation in forums that allow for discussion of the findings and deliberation on the longer-term lessons that UNICEF should be gleaming from this evaluation.

Attribution

The attribution of outcomes of UNICEF-supported activities back to specific inputs and contributions is difficult and often impossible. Improved access and quality of education are often the result of a variety of factors that are not all directly related to UNICEF support, including implementation decisions of local partners and the macro-economic and social environment in which the project operates. Factors such as economic growth, poverty reduction, monetary and fiscal policies, and government spending can have an enormous impact on access to and quality of education and provide a more or less favourable environment to individual project activities.

The evaluation will nevertheless document to the greatest possible extent results in terms of outputs and outcomes of AGEI that can be reasonably attributed to UNICEF support, which benefited from Norwegian funding. Of particular interest will be the question, whether UNICEF support played a catalytic role in mobilising action and resources from other partners (including governments, NGO's, civil society, the private sector and other external support agencies) and to what extent this support contributed to effective strategies at the macro-level aimed at poverty alleviation and human development.

Evaluation Management and Membership of Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be managed by the Evaluation Office at UNICEF Headquarters. As part of the management of this evaluation, the Evaluation Office will ensure coordination of data collection, an adequate interface between UNICEF Headquarters and Regional and Country Offices, general guidance to workshops, and guidance on report-writing. The Education Section in Programme Division at UNICEF Headquarters will provide technical support.

The core evaluation team will consist of two full members, a research assistant and one member in each of the countries visited. Team members should not have been involved in the implementation of AGEI-1 or AGEI-2. The team will be composed of consultants, who, in combination should possess the following skills (individual profiles / tasks will be determined at a later stage):

- Comprehensive knowledge and experience in issues related to girls' education as a developmental issue
- Gender sensitivity (gender balance in the evaluation team must be ensured)
- Good knowledge and experience with evaluation methods, in particular those required for the review of documents and field data, participatory site visits and triangulation and validation of information;
- Excellent writing skills
- At least one team member should be fluent in French.

The emphasis on the use the same core team across countries will help ensure comparability across sites. While the team leader is expected to deploy team members in a way that best accomplishes the purposes of this evaluation and best utilizes the individual skills of team members, it is assumed that: the 2003 evaluation team for each country visit will include at least one team member from the country being visited. This can be adjusted, as necessary, but the aim is to avoid overburdening country programme staff.

During the first country visit, the core team will be joined by the evaluation manager in the Evaluation Office as well a designated staff member of the Education Section., who will act as

resource persons for methodology development. The evaluation manager in the Evaluation Office may support other country case studies as required.

Figure 2: Team Membership and Selection

CORE TEAM MEMBERS	SELECTION PROCEDURE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Team Leader (Senior consultant)	Selected by UNICEF Evaluation Office	Has primary responsibility for ensuring the consistent use of site visit protocols, assignment of writing responsibilities across team members. Is responsible for preparation of draft and final reports. May be asked to provide oral presentation of results at conclusion of Review. Will coordinate the team.
External consultant (Gender expert)	Selected by UNICEF Evaluation Office in consultation with the Government of Norway	This consultant will assist the Team Leader in data collection, synthesizing site visit data, and preparing draft and final reports. This consultant should participate in some of the site visits. Special attention should be given to including a person with gender expertise.
External consultant (research assistant)	Selected by UNICEF Evaluation Office in consultation with team leader	The assistant will assist in collecting, systematising and reviewing documents and field data available at UNICEF Headquarter and making them available to evaluation team. The assistant may participate in at least one of the country case studies.
Local consultants	Nominated by Country Representative in consultation with the Regional Education Advisor and appointed in consultation with evaluation management	Each country will have a local evaluation consultant, who will take primary responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation team has all the country data needed for the 2003 evaluation. In countries receiving a site visit, this person will serve as the local team member on that site visit team. The role of that member is to help provide local context that will help the team better understand the country project and assist with local logistics.

Proposed Schedule of Activities

The tentative schedule for the 2003 evaluation is as follows:

Timing	Activity
Jan – March 2003	Finalize selection and recruitment of team members Background briefing by UNICEF HQ
Feb.-April 2003 (stage 1)	Team review of background documents (including write-up of a brief report - stage 1) Selection of six countries for site visits Prepare team travel plan Prepare site visit protocol (interview protocol)
May-September. 2003 (stage 2)	Document and field data review (including write-up of a brief report)

May- October 2003 (stage 3)	Site visits to six countries and two Regional Offices including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and synthesis of field notes • Write-up of a brief report stage 3 (including country reports) Preparation of a structured outline for the final report
November 2003	Organisation of an evaluation workshop in an African capital
October – December 2003 (stage 4)	Preparation of draft report; Revisions to draft report; Submission of final report

Reporting

The evaluation team will produce succinct interim reports on stages 1, 2 and 3 (that will include relevant annexes) as well as a comprehensive evaluation report at the end of the assignment (equally with relevant annexes). The detailed schedule of reporting is the following (timing see above):

- **A report on stage 1**, which will involve a review of the international literature on girls' education and background documents for each of the participating countries and for the overall initiative.
- **A report on stage 2**, during the evaluation team will review available data from each of the country-level reviews and other materials documenting the inputs, outputs, and outcomes associated with their activities
- **A report on stage 3**, during the evaluation team will conduct site visits in up to six country programmes and two Regional Offices and conduct workshops. The report will contain brief **country reports** on each of the countries visited during the site visits. The country reports will include: further description of the programme's design and operation, responses to the evaluation issues specified above, completed site **visit** protocols, and team members' personal appraisals of the programme and its likely outcomes.
- **A comprehensive evaluation report (stage 4).**

The **final evaluation report** will describe activities underway in each country, but the emphasis will be on cross-cutting issues, particularly as they can inform continued work in girls' education. A structured outline of the final report will be submitted for comments to the Evaluation Office. UNICEF Headquarters at the end of stage 3 and a draft version of the evaluation report at the stage of report-writing. The final draft will be submitted for comments to the Education Section as well as the Government of Norway. These comments may or may not be endorsed by the evaluation team. The final report is subject to approval by the Evaluation Office. The Team Leader and some members of the team may also be requested to make an oral presentation to UNICEF HQ.

ANNEX B: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

- Ayalew Abai, Deputy Regional Director, ESARO
- Jim Ackers, Sr. Project Officer, Education, UNICEF Nigeria
- Augustine Agu, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Ghana
- Karen Allen, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ESARO
- Assane Amadou, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Guinea
- Marilyn Aniwa, Development Officer, High Commission of Canada in Ghana, Accra, Ghana
- Lucien Back, UNICEF-NY
- Mamadou Bagayoko, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Burkina Faso
- Patrick Bogino, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Mali
- Leslie Casely-Hayford, Development Consultant, Accra, Ghana
- Christine Churcher, Minister of State for Basic Secondary and Girls' Education
- Ingalill Colbro, Sr. Programme Funding Officer, PFO, UNICEF NYHQ
- Dina Craissati, REA, UNICEF WCARO
- Liv Elden, Senior Programme Officer, UNICEF Ghana
- Ato Essuman, Chief Director, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ghana
- Joan French, Representative, Burkina Faso
- Anna Haas, Deputy Head of Education, SIDA, Sweden
- Kristin Hansen, Sr. Executive Officer, MFA, Norway
- Aster Haregot, Programme Off/AGEI Coordinator, UNICEF NYHQ
- Claire Hughes, DFID, UK
- Karin Hyde, M & E Technical Assistance Team Member, ESARO
- Anne Jellema, Advocacy Coordinator, Global Campaign for Education
- Ellen van Kalmthout, Programme Officer, UNICEF NYHQ
- Mariam Kane, Gender Specialist, CIDA
- Robert Keatley, HIV/AIDS Sector, ESARO
- Charles Kirkcaldy, Education Advisor, DFID, Accra, Ghana
- Lucy Lake, Programme Director, CAMFED, UK
- Jo Lesser, USAID, Mali
- Gordon Lewis, Representative, Gaborone, Botswana
- Edilberto Loaiza, Programme Officer, Strategic Information, UNICEF, New York
- Sibeso Luswata, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Uganda
- Aminata Maiga, World Bank, Mali
- Changu Mannathoko, REA, UNICEF ESARO
- Shirley Miske, AGEI Consultant, Minnesota
- Penina Mlama, Forum for African Educationalists, Nairobi
- Martin Mogwanja, Representative, Gaborone, Botswana
- Simon Mphisa, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Eritrea
- Edith Mururu, UNICEF Kenya
- Connie Nyatta, EPO, Nairobi Kenya
- Saori Ohkubo, Junior Programme Officer, UNICEF Ghana
- Justus Olielo, Communications Section, ESARO
- Ms. Amina Osman, Sr. Programme Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat, UK
- Mima Perisic, EPO, UNICEF Somalia
- Dorothy Rozga, Representative, UNICEF Ghana
- Marcel Rudasingwa, Representative, UNICEF Guinea

- Sheldon Shaeffer, Director, UNESCO Regional Office, Bangkok
- Francis Turner, Representative, UNICEF Mali
- Anne Marie Tyndeskov Voetman, Head of Section, MFA, Denmark
- Geeta Verma, EPO, UNICEF Southern Sudan
- Sheila Wamahiu, Project Officer, Education Section, Programme Division, UNICEF, New York
- Carol Watson, UNICEF HQ
- Merete Wilhelmsen, MFA, Norway
- Cream Wright, Chief Education, UNICEF HQ

Botswana

- Ali Asghar, Operations officer, UNICEF /Botswana
- Ruth Baloi, Project Coordinator for UNICEF MOE/BONEPWA+ project, BONEPWA+
- S. Basiamang, Director, Department of Primary Education, MOE/Botswana
- Michael Blundell, evaluation team leader, Tswapong Management Services
- Mmamiki Kamanakao, Project Officer, Integrated Early Childhood Development, UNICEF Botswana
- Gordon Jonathan Lewis, Representative, UNICEF Botswana
- Keletso Mokobi-Makgekgenene, team member (Law and Human Rights), Tswapong Management Services
- Gaongalelwe Mosweu, GEM volunteer
- Kgosi Motshabi, RADs evaluation team member
- Reuben J. Motswakae, Director, Department of Secondary Education, MOE/Botswana
- John Ntseane, RADs evaluation team member
- Philamon Ramasui, Permanent Secretary, MOE/Botswana
- Annah Ramotsisi, PLWHA field officer with BONEPWA+
- Mareledi Segotso, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Botswana
- Pranchande Man Shrestha, UN volunteer/Programme Advisor to BONEPWA+
- Sheldon Weeks, RADs evaluation team member

Burkina Faso

- Dicko Amidou, teacher, Yacouta village Satellite School
- Mamadou Bagayoko, UNICEF Education
- Pauline Bagre, DPEF
- Felicité Barro, DEPE/NASSN
- Saliou Barry, DPEB, Dori, Seno Province (Director)
- Bernadette Confé, DGAENF
- Fatimata Dao, DPEF
- Aïssatou Amidou Diallo, teacher, Yacouta village Satellite School
- Korkea Diallo, World Bank
- Moumouni Diallo, DPEB, Dori, Seno Province (Supervisor)
- Joan French, Representative, UNICEF Burkina Faso
- Boulougou Guibougou, representative of the Management Committee of Sorgha Satellite School
- Pokiandi Guibougou, teacher, Sorgha Satellite School
- Potiaba Guibougou/Yarga, representative of the Association of Mother Educators (AME)

- Boubacar Hawaguédé, Mounassiol, Dori, Seno, Treasurer of CEBNF/Management Committee
- Rémy Habou, DGAENF/DENF
- Hervé Thiebo Hervé, Permanent Secretary, DPPEB
- Georges Kafando, UNICEF Education
- Hamidou Karmakji, Mounassiol, Dori, Seno Province, Director of the CEBNF
- Fatimata Korbeogo, Directorate of Early Childhood Development of MASSN
- Yilké Augustin Koudoufrou, DGEB/MEBA
- Donacienne Lankoandé, DPEF, Bogandé, Gnagna
- Karim Lankoandé, TIN-TUA
- Tanie Lankoandé, representative of the Association of Mother Educators (AME)
- Isabelle Millogo, DPEF
- Monique Napon, DPEF
- Fatima Ouoba/Sana, DPEF
- Adama Ouedraogo, The Netherlands Embassy
- Alisata Ouedraogo, DPEF
- Clementine Ouedraogo, Promo Femmes Développement
- Hajiratou Ouedraogo, DPEF, Dori, Seno Province
- Honoré Ouedraogo, Counsel, Ministry of Basic Education
- Mahamoudou, Ouédraogo, teacher, Yacouta village Satellite School
- Faustin Ouattara, ES/C.E.B.N.F./DEP/MEBA
- Alice Ramé Sambie, FDC/SCF/US
- Ignace Sanwidi, Consultant en Education
- Charles Y. Sampalgou, Supervisor, DPEBA, Goandé, Gnagna Province
- Emma Sawadogo, Promo-Femmes Développement
- Dieudonné Sawadogo, DPEF
- Félicité Sawadogo, Ambassade Canada
- Dianou Sibidi, TIN-TUA
- Djibril Sidibe, FAWE/Burkina
- Haoua Sidibe, DPEF
- D. Franck Tamini, UNICEF Education
- Djingri Tindano, representative of the Association of Mother Educators (AME)
- Adama Traore, DEP
- Almissi Yarbanga, Chief, DPEB, Bogandé, Gnagna Province
- Marguerite Yarga / Lankoandé, teacher, Sorgha Satellite School
- Elisabeth Zerbo, TIN-TUA

Eritrea

- Sara Abraham, Mercy Corps
- Mebrwhitu Alayolar, MOE UNICEF, Director of ATTI
- Esaw Araia, MOE, Project Officer
- Hailu Asfaha, MOE
- Christian Balslev-Olesen, UNICEF Eritrea
- Jennifer Bitorde, WFP
- Marion Bradley, World Bank
- Berhane Demoz, MOE-SIP (PMU)
- Ely-Salem Elhadj, Head of Programme Unit, World Food Programme

- Florian Fichtl, World Bank, Country Manger
- Akberet Fre, Lutheran World Foundation
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ANNEX C: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED FOR THIS STUDY

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ANNEX D: DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS

COUNTRY VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE: OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Main objectives of country site visits

- To assess the extent that girls' education has become a priority of government and has been integrated into a wider set of government and other donor activities.
- To develop a clearer idea of how the AGEI activities in the country operate. (e.g., Do they correspond with what was described in project documents? Are there unanticipated features of the activities?)
- To the extent possible, determine the cost of the programme.
- To determine what project personnel and local observers use as indicators of programme success.

Main strategies during country visits

- Interview relevant government officials and leaders of other NGOs and donor organizations
- Interview project leadership and staff
- Observe and interview participants
- Review project documentation that was not available from UNICEF HQ (cost data, phase I proposal, etc.)
- Interview representatives from FAWE and other groups involved in girls' education

Review available country data on girls and boys participation, persistence, achievement, and graduation, with a focus on the particular geographical areas in which AGEI activities are being implemented

COUNTRY VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

The Site Visit team is encouraged to use this Interview Guide in talking to key programme personnel. Keep notes on a separate page. While the interview can proceed in any order you wish, please organize your interview notes in this order (to make the final analysis of site visit data easier).

→ **Country visited:**

→ **Date:**

→ **Team member conducting interview:**

→ **Person being interviewed (name, position, role in programme):**

1. **Title of programme:**
2. **Programme objectives:**
3. **How were the programme objectives identified (initially)?**

Description of AGEI programme

4. Is the project concerned only about girls, or is it also concerned about the participation and performance of boys?
5. Please describe (in detail) the components of your national AG I programme, particularly those aspects that may be different or may not be included in the project documents
 - Component:
 - Objectives:
 - Target population (number, age, gender, etc.):
 - Method of selection:
 - Incentives for girls (and boys)?
 - Budgeted/actual costs:
 - Post-programme strategies (e.g., transitions):
6. What strategies are used to raise or maintain quality of the education delivered?
7. How is this programme monitored? (Personnel, frequency and nature of visits, reports, etc.)

Impacts and Challenges

8. What are the main accomplishments of the programme?
9. What would you attribute these accomplishments to?
10. What aspects of this programme do you think are the most successful? Why?
11. What aspects of this programme do you think are least successful? Why?
12. What would you identify is the key threats to this programme?
13. What would you consider the best strategy for addressing those threats?
14. What have been the principal challenges involved in **implementing** the programme?
15. What have been the principal challenges involved in **sustaining** the programme?
16. Have there been other important issues and events that have affected the programme?
 - What are these issues and events?
 - What impact have they had?

Changing nature of programme

17. Have programme *objectives* changed over the life of the project?
18. Have the AGEI *strategies* in this country activity changed over the life of the project?
 - Describe the changes:
 - What factors caused the changes?
 - How were the changes accomplished?
19. At the beginning of Phase II of the AGEI, each country developed a new proposal.
 - Were any specific changes to the country AGEI programme made at this time?
 - Have there been other shifts in programme design or implementation since the beginning of the programme?
20. Based in your experience so far, is there anything that you would like to have done differently with respect to:
 - Identifying priorities:
 - Developing strategies:
 - Methods of implementation:
 - This monitoring process:
 - Management:
 - Other facets:

Participation of government and local organizations

21. How was the Ministry of Education involved in the design of the AGEI project activities?
22. How has the MOE been involved since then?
23. Who are your national partners within the AGEI (in addition to the MOE)?
 - Their role:
 - Key contacts:
24. What is the decision-making process within the programme (what groups and individuals influenced key decisions)?
 - What processes were used to make decisions?

Sustainability

25. How is this particular programme viewed within the context of the national education programme? (As a pilot, an experiment, as a first stage?)
26. What aspects of this programme would continue if external funding were to end?
27. What aspects would most clearly not continue?
28. What is your assessment of the Ministry of Education's commitment to continuing ***this project?***
 - What aspects would they be most likely to continue?
29. Has the issue of girls' education been integrated into the overall education programme within the Ministry of Education?
 - What is the evidence for this?
30. Has the issue of girls' education been integrated into the education programme of other donor groups? If so, has this project been influential in causing that to happen?
 - What is the evidence for this?

31. Are you aware of any AGEI programme elements that have been borrowed by Government or other international assistance agencies?
If yes, please elaborate.
32. What are the most important lessons from your programme experience that should be shared with other girls' education programmes?
33. Is it likely that Government will continue this programme when international funds end?

Staffing (issue: integration of activities into larger community)

34. Who is involved in the management of this programme? (Elaborate)
35. Who is involved in implementing the programme? (Elaborate)

Communication and Advocacy

36. How is information about the programme disseminated?
 - To potential beneficiaries:
 - To national partners:
 - To other UNICEF offices:
 - To others (specify):
37. What formal and informal communications helps/hinders activities within the national programme?
38. What methods are used for communicating with Headquarters about this programme?
 - With the Regional Office?
 - With other country offices?
39. Do you have recommendations or suggestions for ways of modifying these communication mechanisms?

Technical Assistance Team (TAT)

40. Are you aware of the TAT?
If yes, what is the purpose and role of the TAT
41. What sort of interactions have you had with the TAT?
42. Has your interaction with the TAT contributed to how you planned or how you operate your programme?
43. Can you describe ways in which the TAT has contributed to helping your programme?
44. Based on your experience so far, are there any recommendations you would like to make about the way the TAT functions?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR USE WITH OTHER AGENCIES (DONORS, NGO, ETC.)

To interviewers: Describe the organization, its role in education development, and why it is (or might be) involved in AGEI.

Country:

Organization:

Team member conducting interview:

Name/title of respondent:

Organizational emphasis on girls' education

1. Does your agency have a role in the AGEI activities underway in this country?
If yes, please describe:
2. Apart from its role in AGEI, has this organization played a role in the promotion of girls' education? Please describe.
3. Can you point to any way in which AGEI programme has contributed to your organization's focus on girls' education?
4. How did you learn about the AGEI programme initially and how do you get the latest information about its activities?
5. From your perspective, has the issues of girls' education been integrated into the overall education programme of the community? Of the MOE?
What is the evidence for this?
6. Is there a mechanism for interagency cooperation and collaboration in the area of education in this country? What form doesn't take?

Impact of AGEI

7. What would you identify as the key accomplishments of the AGEI programme?
8. What would you attribute these accomplishments to?
9. What you see is the key challenges facing AGEI?
10. What proposals to have for overcoming these challenges?
11. Can you identify any lessons learned from AGEI?
12. Have your AGEI activities changed over the life of the project based on the experience gained during the first few years? In what ways?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR USE WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Country:

Team member conducting interview:

Name/title of respondent:

1. Is girls' education a special area of attention within the MOE?
2. Who in the MOE pays attention to girls' education?
3. To what extent did Ministry of Education participate in the design of the AGEI project?
4. How was the decision made about the role of the MOE within the AGEI programme?
5. To what extent does the AGEI represent a new emphasis within the MOE?
6. To what extent does the MOE participate in monitoring project activities?
7. What would you identify as the key accomplishments of this programme?
8. To what do you attribute these accomplishments?
Provides specific information:
9. What do you see is the key challenges facing the AGEI?
10. What proposals do you have for overcoming these challenges?
11. Is there anything that the MOE would like done differently, given the experience so far, with respect to:
 - Identifying priorities:
 - Developing strategies:
 - Methods of implementation:
 - Monitoring process:
 - Management:
 - Any other facets:
12. To what extent are the AGEI initiatives being absorbed into the mainstream of the MOE?
13. To what extent does the programme concerned about the participation and achievement of both boys and girls?
14. Are you familiar with a work of the Technical Advisory Team (TAT)?
If so, have they provided useful assistance? Elaborate.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR USE WITH REGIONAL OFFICE

Regional Office:

Team member conducting interview:

Name/title of respondent:

Overall impact and sustainability of AGEI initiative

1. What would you identify as the key accomplishments of the AGEI programme in this region?
2. To what would you attribute these accomplishments?
3. To what extent do you see the AGEI activities being integrated into the ongoing agenda of Governments' own education programmes in this Region?
4. In what ways have AGEI programmes changed over the life of the project?
5. To what extent do you think the AGEI activities will be sustained beyond the end of external funding?
6. What are the usual mechanisms (formal or informal) for communicating about this programme with (a) HQ, (b) country offices, (c) other Regional Offices, and (d) other agencies and partners?
7. How do country staff learn about what AGEI strategies have been most effective in other countries?
8. Who are your major partners and what role do they play in promoting girls education?
9. From your perspective, which countries have been most successful in promoting girls education?
To what do you attribute their success?
10. What are the major challenges you feel the region faces as a whole with respect to this programme?
11. What are the major challenges you feel the region faces as a whole with respect to this programme?
12. Can you suggest strategies for adjusting/addressing these regional challenges?
13. Do you feel that individual countries face particular challenges?
What are they?

Modifications to AGEI over the life of the programme

14. From your perspective, have the strategies used by the country offices to promote girls education changed over the life of this project?
15. Is there anything that the regional office would like done differently, given the experience so far with respect to:
 - a. Identifying priorities
 - b. Developing strategies
 - c. Methods of implementation
 - d. Monitoring process
 - e. Management
 - f. Any other facets?

Technical Advisory Team

16. From your perspective, what have been the key elements of the TAT's work?
17. How has the TAT contributed to your role within the AGEI?
18. Can you suggest any other ways in which the TAT could contribute either to your work or to the promotion of girls' education?
19. Based in your experience so far, are there any recommendations you would like to make about the way the TAT functions?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR USE WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

Regional Office:

Team member conducting interview:

TAT members present:

Through an open discussion, cover the following points in conversation with TAT members:

Strengths and Weakness of AGEI

1. From their perspective, what have been the main accomplishments of AGEI?
2. What have been the main challenges that AGEI country staff have experienced in implementing the AGEI?
3. What are their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the AGEI programme?
4. What are their views on the evolution of the programme within the individual countries and across the region as a whole?
5. Their suggestions and recommendations for the future of the programme?
6. What do you see as the longer-term prospects for AGEI priorities and activities to be picked up within national governments' priorities and work plans?

Role of the TATs

7. How frequently does the TAT meet?
8. What is the agenda and nature of those meetings?
9. Has there been a shift in the way the TAT operates since the beginning of the AGEI project?
10. What role does the TAT play within countries? (Elaborate)
11. TAT members' views on their role in promoting the AGEI in the participating countries.
12. What impact you feel the TAT has had on AGEI activities in the region?
13. How does TAT get current information on AGEI activities and issues within each country?

PROJECT LOCATION OBSERVATION GUIDE

Country:

Site/location visited:

Date:

Team member conducting visit:

1. What is the name of this project?
2. Who is implementing this project?
3. Who are the partners involved?
4. What are the objectives of this particular project?
5. What strategies and activities are being used to carry them out?
6. How is reporting to UNICEF MOE done (By whom? How often? Is data gender disaggregated?)
7. How long as the project in operating?
8. What significant issues in events have emerged?

Staff

1. Are there enough staff given the number of participants?
2. How are staff remunerated? Is the level of remuneration adequate?
3. Are non-human resources adequate? (Be explicit, if resources are not adequate).
4. What do staff see as their main contribution to the project?
5. What impact is the project having on the community?
6. Are there any other changes they can identify as result of the project activities?
7. What aspects of the project do they consider to be the most successful? Why?
8. What aspects of their project do they consider to be the least successful? Why?

Project / Community Relationships

1. What mechanisms exist for communication between the project and the community?
2. Is there a management committee (or other organizational entity)? Who belongs to it?
3. Is there a provision for gender equity in the management committee?

Physical Surroundings

Are the physical facilities adequate?

INTERVIEWS WITH BENEFICIARIES

Country:

Site/location visited:

Date:

Team member conducting visit:

Name/title of respondent:

1. Your relationship to project.
2. How long have you been involved with this project?
3. How did you become involved with this project?
4. What activities do you participate in?
5. How do you think you have benefited from this project?
6. Have other members of the community benefited from this programme?
 - In what ways?
7. Do you participate in the management or implementation of this programme? How?
8. Has the project changed community attitudes toward education?
 - Toward education for girls?
 - How has this change been demonstrated?
9. If you could, is there anything you would change about the way this programme is:
 - Implemented?
 - Managed?
 - Monitored?
10. From your perspective, what are the most important impacts of this programme?

FIELD CHECKLIST

Country:

Site/location visited:

Date:

Team member conducting visit:

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that basic information has been recorded for each of the field sites the team member visits as part of a country site visit.

1. The personnel present:
2. Their role in the project
3. Who interviewed?
4. Any unusual features about this project?
5. How many staff?
6. Main beneficiaries?
7. Management?
8. Objectives/strategy
9. Arrangements for visit?
10. How long did visit last? Was it long enough?
11. List of institutions/personnel visited

ANNEX E: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES²

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² Note: The full case studies are available in the CD-ROM attached to this report and on the Evaluation Website.)

Botswana Case Study - October 2003
David W. Chapman, Holly Emert, Botsalano Coyne

Project Description (excerpts from case study):

Botswana, after Swaziland, has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world, with 37.4 of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics now infected. About 60% of those infected with HIV/AIDS are female. An estimated 64% of deaths of children under five years of age are thought to be caused by AIDS related diseases, transmitted by their mothers. There are an estimated 65,000 children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. It is estimated that a third of the children in Botswana will grow up without one or both parents. Child-headed households are become increasingly common.

In response, UNICEF programmes in Botswana have been progressively amended to focus on responding to the consequences of this epidemic. For that reason, the AGEI programme in Botswana has been considerably modified since its inception in 1996. The current issues that need to be addressed in girls' education in Botswana centre on: (a) preventing the fast spread of HIV/AIDS and (b) reducing drop-out among girls at the junior and senior secondary levels. The high drop-out is due, in part, to the high rate of teenage pregnancies and school policies that expel pregnant girls from school for one year and then bar their return to the same school. Data also suggest that one impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is that girls' enrolment may have now dropped slightly below that of boys.

The original Phase I project focused on increasing access to schooling for children of Remote Area Dwellers (RADs), improving gender sensitivity of instructional materials used in schools, providing gender sensitivity training for teachers, and promoting multi-grade teaching in rural schools.

Given the HIV/AIDS epidemic, several of those initial emphases were dropped or revised in the transition to Phase 2. The Phase 2 activities continued support for the RAD programme. It also supported the Basic Education for Pregnant Girls (Diphilana) pilot project being implemented in Mahalapye and the Botswana Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (BONEPWA+) project. The Diphilana project has sought to provide uninterrupted quality basic education for students who would otherwise drop out of school due to pregnancy. The goal of BONEPWA+ has been to remove the stigma of HIV/AIDS through community outreach efforts.

Key Observations

Prominence of girls' education in official policy

In Botswana, girls' education is not a particularly salient issue for the Government. Girls are not disadvantaged in initial school enrolment, persistence or achievement and other, more crucial issues prevail. It is not a specific priority in the Government Five-Year Plan or in the UNICEF-Government Framework. This may have contributed to some of the implementation issues that emerged over the life of the project.

Start-up vs. follow-through

Implementation of AGEI activities was uneven, though not always for reasons that could have been anticipated. The shift in UNICEF priorities to concentrate on HIV/AIDS, and the concomitant drop in UNICEF support for some of the initial AGEI activities was a contributing factor to the demise of several components of the AGEI programme. Nonetheless, in activities that did go forward, there appeared to be more emphasis in both UNICEF and in the MOE on the initiation of activities than on resolving issues that arose during implementation.

Consequently, little action was taken when no children of students were enrolled in the day care centre developed, in large part, for those children. Children's poor living conditions in the hostels went largely undetected and unremedied. With no further action from Government or UNICEF, the number of GEM chapters dwindled.

Confusion about roles and responsibilities

A key factor across the major programme components that undercut effective implementation was a confusion of roles and responsibilities across government units involved in the project. For example, there was disagreement between MOE and the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) about responsibility for resolving issues that arose in the RADs hostels; there was lack of clarity between the MOE and the participating community about responsibility for continuation of Diphilana activities.

Limited Government buy-in

Recent evaluations commissioned by UNICEF Botswana suggest that one of the factors constraining the success of AGEI activities was limited ownership by Government at different levels. For example, key participants in both the central Ministry and the pilot community saw Diphilana as primarily a UNICEF-driven project. In the views of people at both levels, its continuation depended heavily on UNICEF making it happen.

High turn-over of personnel

While personnel turn-over is cited in many countries as a factor in the success and sustainability of AGEI interventions, it posed a particularly acute problem for Botswana. Significant turn-over of UNICEF staff, Ministry officials, and school personnel is cited by UNICEF, Government and project personnel as a reason why (a) the overall programme was revised on several occasions, (b) so many AGEI activities were either dropped, postponed, or abandoned soon after they started (e.g., twinning arrangement in the RAD project), and (c) activities were not sustained or taken to any larger scale. This suggests that the success of AGEI activities was heavily dependent on individuals. Institutional commitment has not yet developed.

Data dilemmas

Little evaluation of the effectiveness of AGEI funded activities was conducted prior to 2003. The RADs evaluation and the UNICEF Botswana commissioned evaluation of AGEI activities, both conducted in 2003, found that a lack of needed data hindered their efforts to assess key outcomes. For example, no data are available that indicate the extent to which the RADs project affected student enrolment, persistence, or transition to junior secondary. Data that are available were not disaggregated by gender, so it was not possible to determine whether there was any disproportionate benefit to girls. Similarly, no data were available on the enrolment, retention or pass rates of girls in the Diphilana pilot school, though informal information suggested these indicators had improved.

UNICEF monitoring systems

The Botswana case suggests that YTRs were not a particularly effective way for other levels of UNICEF to detect weaknesses in the conceptualization or implementation of AGEI activities. The YTRs generally did not capture the position of AGEI activities within larger initiatives of which they were a part, the implementation problems that were being encountered, or the lack of evidence regarding outcomes. Some of this loss was due to the way the YTRs were structured, some to the way that UNICEF staff chose to report on progress. Even when problems were clearly identified in the YTR, it is not clear what regional or headquarters could have done to help. For example, the 2000 YTR does clearly lay out the problems in programme

implementation and management caused by staff transition within UNICEF, yet no solutions were offered.

Timeliness of funding flows within UNICEF

The EPO in UNICEF Botswana has done an impressive job of more clearly targeting and rationalizing AGEI activities since she began six months ago. Previous EPOs displayed commitment and energy in getting initial activities started, but staff turn-over (discussed earlier) eventually undercut some of their efforts. A factor that further complicated their efforts to maintain a coherent programme was difficulty experienced by UNICEF HQ in getting AGEI funds dispersed to Country Offices in a timely manner. Initial Phase 2 funds were received late in the year, making it impossible to engage partners and implement activities in the remaining time available.

Burkina Faso Case Study – October 2003

Lucien Back, N'gra-zan Christophe Coulibaly, Karen Hickson

Project Description (excerpts from case study):

The AGEI in Burkina Faso (called the Support to Girls' Basic Education Programme) is part of the Strengthening Basic Education Programme within the UNICEF Burkina Faso Programme of Cooperation. It has focused on improving access, retention and performance, and quality of basic education, especially for girls, through support of the Satellite Schools (ES) (formal primary schools), the Centres for Non-formal Basic Education (CEBNF) and the BI-SONGOs (ECD centres).

The ESs and CEBNFs were initiated in 1995, and considered key entry points for facilitating education reform. By 1998 the BI-SONGO early childhood centre was initiated for a number of different child development reasons, including freeing girls from child care so they could attend school, and helping mothers with child care and development. Today, there are 249 ESs, 50 CEBNFs and 25 BI-SONGOs. Along with support to policy and planning, they constitute the three main components of the Girls' Basic Education Programme and the broader Strengthening Basic Education Programme.

The Girls' Basic Education Programme (AGEI) started in 10 provinces in 1995, which by 1998 increased to 11 provinces. The provinces receiving financial support from Norway included four of the 11 in Phase I and five in Phase II - Gnagna, Komandjari, Seno, Yagha, and Namentenga, the latter being the province added in Phase II. All targeted provinces are located in the northern and eastern provinces of Burkina Faso, which are the zones with the highest levels of poverty and weak educational demand, especially for girls' education.

The management of the three educational structures and processes have depended on interlinkages among government, civil society (NGOs), communities and schools. The community groups (e.g. PTAs (APEs), Mother Educators' Associations (AMEs), and Management Committees (COGES) are the front line civic and community organisations for school and community constituents and interface with district/provincial educational authorities.

At the end of Phase I and beginning of Phase II, it was indicated that the ESs and CEBNFs had produced certain shared characteristics: community participation, synergy among interventions, strengthening of partnerships, integration of useful competencies/lifeskills, and use of a rights-based approach and a gender approach.

The main goal of the AGEI in Burkina Faso has remained constant - "to contribute to increasing the primary enrolment rate of girls to 40% by 2004 while reducing gender disparities". The project targets about 35,000 children between the ages of 3 and 15 years old as part of the life cycle approach within the evolving Country Programme's (CP) human rights-based approach to programming (HRBAP).

The specific AGEI objectives have related to developing education policy and planning; increasing children's, especially girls' access to education; improving the quality of education; enhancing students' academic performance, and expanding gender sensitisation.

The AGEI objectives are in line with those in the government's 10-Year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB) 2000-2009. Their formulation was based on an analysis of the situation in the zones of intervention, lessons learned from the preliminary and first phases, and with a view towards removing major and persistent constraints to girls' education.

Key Observations

With regard to developing education policy and planning

UNICEF Burkina Faso has played a strong role in advocating for girls' education and technically assisting Burkina Faso in developing the ESs (Satellite Schools), CEBNFs (Centres for Non-formal Basic Education), and BI-SONGOs (Early Childhood Care Centres) within the framework of EFA per Jomtien and later Dakar, and the country's education reforms, including the PDDEB, the sector wide 10-Year Basic Education Development Plan and Programme, which accounts for 3000 ESs and 1000 CEBNFs to be established between 2000 and 2009.

Implementation of the PDDEB began in 2002, two years after its planned start date. Not only is the time lag affecting the rate of implementation, but also planning, procedural and communication processes within MEBA and among partners are slowing it down. For MEBA, there exists the challenge to decentralise, which is not easy given how centralised the education system has been over time, and the related challenge to establish leadership, which would permit clear coordination of the various objectives and activities of several Departments within MEBA, and among partners. For the Financial and Technical Partners (PTF), the complex administrative and financial procedures of some members of the PTF negatively affect the rate of PDDEB implementation. Communications within the PTF group generates tension, which relate to different perspectives on what should be the roles, methods and procedures of the different PTF members vis-a-vis the MEBA and PDDEB.

At the regional/provincial level where only minimal training has been undertaken, and initial Plans of Actions have been made in respect to the PDDEB, little attention has been given to capacity strengthening, and developing and communicating standard operating procedures. In order to achieve the systemic change desired in the education system, the interlinkages between the national and regional, and regional and district/local levels need to be systematised. UNICEF Burkina Faso has concentrated its planning, organisational and capacity building efforts at national and targeted community levels. Given the pressing need to make this sector-wide plan and programme work, UNICEF Burkina Faso should not miss the opportunity to actively support the government in strengthening the middle level of the education system.

To fully achieve the goals of the PDDEB, a strong partnership among all stakeholders is a necessary ingredient. This especially means that within government, MEBA (Education Ministry) and MASSN (Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity – responsible for early childhood development (ECD) need to resolve their differences and more strongly integrate their policy development and programming efforts.

The financial and technical partners (PTF), multi and bi-lateral agencies, and international NGOs also need to tend to their relations with each other in order to significantly support Burkina Faso in working towards its national educational goals. In particular, the relations between UNICEF Burkina Faso and the "Noyau Dur" partners (World Bank, the Netherlands, and Canada) could be much more than cordial if communications and dialogue were fully open and transparent.

Addressing the coordination, procedural and communication bottlenecks and needs among international partners and within the government have become critical, especially given the fact that millions of dollars are waiting to be spent on educational reform through the World Bank sponsored "Fast Track Initiative", and thousands more in support of girls' education via UNICEF's "Accelerated Girls' Education Initiative".

UNICEF Burkina Faso sees its support of girls' education and basic education using AGEI project support as part of its broader basic education programme, and fitting within the government's national education programme and system. However, the government counterpart, particularly at middle and local levels, does not always understand UNICEF support as being an integral part of its overall programme. For example, in Seno province, MEBA staff clearly articulated that the "UNICEF (AGEI) project" was not included in the PDDEB Plan of Action because it was considered to be separate and already financially accounted for so the rationale was that it did not have to be put in the overall Plan of Action. Given the tendency of external aid agencies over time to focus on certain aspects and geographic areas of the education system in an uncoordinated and project oriented fashion, this was not surprising. This "standard operating modality" has not yet changed in spite of the PDDEB "programme" oriented vision.

UNICEF Burkina Faso has been acknowledged as a strong advocate of girls' education and an influential player throughout the 1990s to today in terms of policy and programming promoting and supporting girls' education. The PDDEB has set forth objectives in support of girls' education, which include innovations supported by UNICEF and other partners, such as the Association of Mother Educators (AMEs) and girl-to-girl tutoring. Furthermore, Burkina Faso was selected in 2002 to be the sub-regional leader for girls' education on behalf of the CEDEAO, which underlines the importance and effects of advocacy for and sensitisation on girls' education by UNICEF Burkina Faso and other national and international partners.

UNICEF Burkina Faso's support of early childhood development through the BI-SONGO has given it another niche in the development picture in addition to primary level girls' education within the EFA framework. In effect, the "Noyau Dur" partners make a case for UNICEF to use its strengths in further developing innovative approaches in this policy/programmatic area.

Notably, early childhood development does not appear in the PDDEB. UNICEF is working with MASSN to rectify this in addition to getting an ECD policy adopted. This could potentially result in taking the BI-SONGO "formula" to scale, and more efficiently and effectively linking it to the primary school system.

With regard to increasing access

Both ESs and CEBNFs have increased children's access to basic education. However, the issue of transfer for ES and CEBNF students to formal schools is significant, and needs to be systematically and systemically resolved.

In spite of UNICEF Burkina Faso support and partners' efforts to close the gender gap in education, it has persisted and continues to indicate significant disadvantaging of girls in accessing and completing basic education. Along with a sense of the AGEI project insufficiently focusing on particular needs of girls in visited areas, the statistics and anecdotal accounts point to the fact that there continues to be much to do to eliminate barriers to girls' education in the Burkinabe learning environment.

External assistance to basic education, including that provided by UNICEF Burkina Faso, has contributed to substantial growth in the basic education system, mainly in the primary school system. As a result, the focus on primary school has limited dialogue and reflection on the longer term aims of what comes after primary schooling and in terms of the challenges being met by young people in Burkina Faso today.

With regard to improving quality

The ESs, CEBNFs and BI-SONGOs have been important innovations in the education system of Burkina Faso, adding quality to the education system and responding to real needs in children's learning environments. However, four significant challenges are affecting their chances for further development, and replicability and sustainability: i) the insufficient base of revenue at community level that would allow for expected financial contributions to the local education system; ii) the lack of teacher status in the ESs and CEBNFs; iii) the inadequate vocational training and equipment supply in CEBNFs; and iv) the absence of ESs and CEBNFs in some provincial Plans of Action, and the complete exclusion of preschool education in the PDDEB.

Efforts made to introduce a human rights-based approach to programming (HRBAP) are in process and the Country Office has been working on how to best develop and apply it. It has developed a schema that shows how it has progressed from working at community level through parallel sectoral interventions to converging sectoral interventions (which is the phase in which the AGEI has been implemented most recently) and envisions integrating all interventions, including communications, HIV/AIDS, child protection, monitoring & evaluation. It would appear that the AGEI has provided concrete ways and means for the Country Programme to test the waters in terms of developing and initiating implementation of the HRBAP in the Burkinabe context.

With regard to enhancing students' performance

The earlier studies of ES student performance as compared to classic school student performance gave ES students the edge, particularly in mathematics. Their success was attributed in part to the use of the bilingual teaching/learning approach. According to the latest study on student performance, ES students' performance was found to be slipping due to various challenging issues presently affecting ESs (e.g. lack of official teacher status, therefore, affecting morale and motivation). Issues affecting the ESs need to be addressed head on, and innovations that promote and support student performance need to be maintained, enhanced and expanded. Some classic schools have benefited from learning from and adapting ES innovations due to ES teachers becoming classic school teachers and bringing with them their knowledge and skills acquired from the ES training and experience, or from teacher exchange during teacher training. There exist opportunities to further explore in regard to systematising the exchange and merging the adaptation of experiences in the two types of schools. This could also help to lead to equalising the status of ES teachers with that of EC teachers within the national education system.

With regard to expanding gender sensitisation

Due to social mobilisation and incentives in favour of girls' education, gender parity is often evident in ES classrooms, although it begins to change as children progress to the upper grades and girls start to drop out. This is a sign that it is not enough to advocate for gender equity but gender equality needs as much if not more attention. In the case of UNICEF Burkina Faso, adding a gender technical expert to the Education Team would help to assure that adequate time and attention are given to this critical dimension of girls' education and EFA in close collaboration with all partners.

Eritrea Case Study – May 2003
David W. Chapman, Janne Lexow, Saba Issayas

Project Description (excerpts from case study):

Eritrea faces two overlapping emergencies: the effects of war and drought. There are immense challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and development after the border war with Ethiopia from 1998-2000. The impact of war and drought on children has been documented in the Preliminary Report of the Eritrea Demographic and Health Survey 2002. This survey indicates that malnutrition levels have exceeded critical levels requiring rapid interventions. A large number of schools were destroyed during the war, particularly in the Gash Barka and Debub regions. The greatest barrier to the education of girls continues to be the lack of access to schools within a reasonable distance the social and the cultural traditions and beliefs of families. These beliefs assign women a lower social status. Despite strides to improve the status of women through the liberation war and subsequent favourable government policies to address gender equality, attitudes and traditions have been slow to change. The 2003 CRC Committee review of Eritrea's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) noted that, despite several positive steps forward, there is still widespread societal discrimination against girls and approximately 90% of girls are subject to female genital mutilation (FGM).

UNICEF AGEI activities in Eritrea included the construction of community feeder schools (25); the construction of two hostels for rural girls to live in order to attend secondary school, which were the least successful aspect of the AGEI in Eritrea and the part that accounted for a substantial percentage of overall AGEI funds; the MOE incentive programmes to encourage girls to education, including in-kind incentives (e.g. jerry cans to store water, a donkey to carry water and firewood and, in drought areas, extra WFP food rations); gender sensitivity teacher training, that was expected to be integrated into the regular teacher training curriculum; special coaching of female teacher trainees, including from ethnic minorities, to strengthen their content knowledge in math and English; provision of textbooks, desks, and learning materials; and community advocacy aimed at encouraging parents and community members to see the importance of sending girls to schools.

Key Observations

UNICEF AGEI activities are relatively modest in breadth, but appear to have an impact disproportionate to the size of the investment.

Considerable agreement about the problems. There is wide agreement across government and development partners about the main factors constraining girls' participation in schooling. The main constraints include:

- Family values and beliefs that do not value education for girls. One aspect of this is the concern of some parents about girls having contact with boys (e.g., being in the same classroom).
- The need for girls' labour in the home, particularly to carry water and collect firewood.
- The view of some parents that educating a girl is counterproductive to arranging a good marriage for her.
- Concerns for the girls' welfare when they have to travel long distances to the closest school.

Considerable agreement on the solutions. There also is wide agreement among government and development partners as to the most promising interventions. The widest agreement is around the following strategies:

- Build schools closer to students
- Introduce ways of reducing the time girls spend on household chores
- Sensitize teachers to gender issues
- Increase number of female teachers in schools
- Increase output of females from teacher training institutes (TTIs)
- Persuade parents of the value of education
- School feeding programmes that requires girls attendance as a condition of continuing

This wide consensus about both the problems and potential solutions is seen by government as a reflection of the leadership and coordination the Ministry of Education has offered in encouraging the education of girls.

Low visibility of AGEI. UNICEF, like many other donors, works through the Ministry of Education. The MOE has programmes to build community feeder schools, provide incentives for girls to attend school, produce and distribute textbooks, etc. Many development partners support these efforts by funnelling their money through the MOE, which pools the funds from different donor sources and then distributes these funds to support these school and community level initiatives. The MOE does not distinguish AGEI funding from general UNICEF financial support of MOE activities.

One consequence of this approach is that AGEI has little visibility as a special programme within the MOE or with other development partners. Similarly, school and community level recipients may not realize the role any particular development partner is playing in the support of any particular activity. On one level, this approach is very consistent with what UNICEF and many other donors articulate as good development policy. It emphasizes the role of the national government. Many see this approach as one that promotes sustainability of development strategies, as the MOE develops ownership and as the activities are more likely to continue as individual donors' contributions rise and fall. At the same time, some development partners, especially those that depend on fundraising, express concern that it is difficult to link their organizational contribution to specific activities.

The linkage among AGEI activities within the country. UNICEF-supported strategies to promote girls education in Eritrea are not focused on the same schools. For example, there is no planned overlap of UNICEF constructed schools, teachers who received coaching, incentives for girls, though such overlap may occur. This is viewed by some as a negative feature of the AGEI programme. Senior officials in the Ministry of Education argue that UNICEF activities should be consolidated and focused on a narrower set of schools. They argue that such consolidation would result in greater impact on girls, at least in the target schools.

Some in UNICEF hold a different view. They believe that spreading activities broadly and having at least some activity underway in many schools raised the profile of UNICEF and gave it a stronger claim to participation in broader policy discussions (e.g., a "seat at the table"). While spreading activities may not maximize impact on girls in specific communities, it maximized UNICEF's access as a participant in the national policy forum which, in the long-term, leads to greater impact. There appears to be support for this argument. UNICEF's impact on the

national agenda in Eritrea concerning girls' education appears to be considerably greater than can be explained by the direct impact of its specific interventions.

Exclusiveness of focus on girls. UNICEF is the only development partner in Eritrea with such a concentrated focus on girls' education. This is mildly controversial. The concern of some donors is that the emphasis should be on education for all rather than on girls specifically. Virtually all donors of the major development partners in Eritrea recognize the importance of girls' education, but they argue that they usually address that issue as a subcomponent of a wider set of education priorities and strategies.

Closely connected to the discussion on focus is a mild scepticism expressed by some donors with UNICEF's emphasis on a rights-based argument in support of girls' education. They view the rights-based approach as too abstract in the face of parents' need to see the benefits of educating their daughters. They suggest that the practical benefits of educating girls are well established and should be more clearly the focus of presentations to parents. This view does not necessarily need to be a source of concern for UNICEF. UNICEF has been clear about both its rights-based approach and its focus on girls and these characteristics do much to give UNICEF a distinctive identity among international development assistance organizations. This view, however, may signal the need for advocacy for the UNICEF approach within the donor community itself.

Disproportionate impact. UNICEF Eritrea's impact at the national policy level appears to be greater than would be explained by its programmatic impact. Given the dispersion of its relatively modest programmatic efforts across many regions and schools, specific impacts are likely to be modest.

Its programmatic contribution in building 25 community feeders schools, supporting incentives to encourage girls to attend school, supporting textbook production, offering gender sensitization workshops to ATTI graduates, and coaching to 33 female ATTI trainees is modest, especially given the dispersion of those efforts across multiple sites. The level of UNICEF impact can be explained, in part, by the good working relationships that UNICEF staff seem to have developed with Ministry of Education officials and UNICEF's clarity of focus on selected development issues.

Earmarking. The extent that funds should be earmarked for girls' education, either in the government budget or within the UNICEF budget, is a source of ongoing, low-intensity debate. In the current education sector framework documents, while nothing stated is inconsistent with a specific emphasis on girls' education, it is not specifically mentioned as a priority (Ministry of Education, April 2003). The MOE sees their commitment to girls as integrated into their larger strategy. One reason is that the MOE and many of the donors believe they incorporate a commitment to girls' education in all the programmes they run and, as a consequence, girls' education does not require special earmarking.

Within UNICEF itself, the education staff hold a different view. They were clear in their belief that funds should continue to be earmarked for girls' education. The concern of some UNICEF staff was that (a) in the emergency situation caused by war and drought, the pressure to programme funds to immediate, life-saving interventions is overwhelming and (b) that this tide could swamp even the most well-intentioned efforts to channel funds into interventions with longer-term payoffs (such as girls' education). The continued earmarking of funds for girls' education provided some political protection for this longer-term agenda within an organization trying to address multiple urgent needs.

Documentation of success. Eritrea lacks documentation for AGEI activities that may be quite successful. Indeed, the Eritrea AGEI activities have received a considerable amount of national and international scrutiny. The primary conclusion of an external evaluation of the Eritrea AGEI, conducted in 2003, was that most of the activities now underway should be continued, school construction efforts should be expanded, and more attention should be given to reducing student grade repetition and dropout (Zerai, 2003, p. 5). Nonetheless, UNICEF Eritrea has been more focused on implementation of activities than documentation of results. If the interventions to promote girls' education in Eritrea offer promising directions for other countries, more systematic data documenting outcomes and impacts will be needed.

SWAPS and SIPS. International donors, led by the World Bank, are in conversations with the GOE about moving to sector-wide programming in the education sector (SWAP). However, the SWAP approach in Eritrea differs from other AGEI countries, primarily because it is not policy-based but rather, in the view of the World Bank, more project-based. It is designed so that, once the overall sector wide plan is adopted by government, development partners can choose to help fund activities that are consistent with their organizational priorities.

World Bank is working with the MOE to spearhead the development of a sector-wide strategy in education. The overall MOE framework would cost about \$160 million to implement. At present, the World Bank anticipates providing \$45 million in IDA credits.

Ghana Case Study – October 2003
David W. Chapman, Holly Emert, Juliana Osei

Project Description (excerpts from case study):

UNICEF and the Government of Ghana initiated efforts to promote girls' education during 1994-1996 with funds provided by CIDA within a project that was the predecessor of the AGEI. The centrepiece of this initial work was the development of CHILDSCOPE, a programme established in selected districts to support an integrated set of inputs. It aims at increasing girls' access and school quality, by centring on community participation in school management. Work started under this project continued in 1997-2002 with UNICEF support using funds from CIDA through the Ghana Girl-Child Education Project. As part of this continuation funding from CIDA, many CHILDSCOPE activities were continued through the Alliance for Community Action on Female Education (ACAFE) (a five country pilot project supported through UNICEF under the auspices of the AGEI). Supported by UNICEF, the Alliance coordinated the efforts of about 25 NGOs that, together, kept CHILDSCOPE alive and operational. When this project ended, UNICEF Ghana applied for AGEI funding and was accepted as one of the 16 countries added to the Initiative in Phase 2.

Approximately half of the AGEI funding was allocated to support national level interventions aimed at helping all schools, e.g., teacher training, textbook revision, etc. The remaining half was used to maintain support and expand CHILDSCOPE. In 2001, as part of the transition to AGEI, the coordination of the 25 NGOs activities, previously handled by ACAPE, was taken over by the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE).

The education system of Ghana is organized into 10 regions and 110 districts. The AGEI concentrated in seven of 110 districts, which are among the most educationally under-served and disadvantaged areas and characterized by low levels of access and high drop-out rates of girls.

Major interventions at the national level included planning, advocacy, teacher training, revision of textbooks and curriculum to increase gender sensitivity, school mapping, and support of the Girls' Education Unit in the Ministry of Education (MOEYS).

At the district, community, and school (280 participating schools) levels, AGEI funds were used to continue and expand CHILDSCOPE in the seven target districts. While some activities were district wide, such as training programmes, most activities concentrated in selected communities and were specially designated as CHILDSCOPE.

CHILDSCOPE is centred on increasing community participation through community advocacy. It supported the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) technique that builds community capacity and participation. PLA workshops helped School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) become aware of the role they could play in school management e.g., monitoring of student progress, teacher attendance, and school policy making. Interventions involved schools, and supported district level teacher training, scholarships, bicycles for girls living far away from school, provision of school materials, construction of toilets and water connections to some schools, and gender sensitization workshops with parents and community leaders.

Key Observations

Agreement on problems and solutions: There is widespread agreement among major development partners about the main problems facing the education sector and about the type of interventions likely to help government strengthen the sector.

Outcomes and Impacts of CHILDSCOPE: Measurable gains between 1999-2002 in girls' access, persistence, and achievement in CHILDSCOPE districts have been modest. From 1999-2002, girls' enrolment in CHILDSCOPE districts increased 0.6% over the national average. CHILDSCOPE districts increased by 1.7%, while girls' enrolment nationally increased by 1.1%. Gender disparities in CHILDSCOPE districts did not narrow over the course of the intervention.

Retention of both boys and girls declined in the four CHILDSCOPE districts in which data were available, though girls dropped out of CHILDSCOPE schools at a lower rate than boys. The loss due to drop-out exceeded the gain in initial enrolment.

The transition rates from primary (P6) to junior secondary school (JSS1) for all public schools in the districts in which CHILDSCOPE was operating declined. In the target districts and schools, transition rates increased slightly for both boys and girls in three districts, decreased for both boys and girls in three districts, and in the remaining district decreased for boys and increased for girls.

Achievement in mathematics, as measured by the Performance Monitoring Test (PMT), increased between 1998-2000 for both boys and girls in four of the five districts for which data were available. For the most part, girls outperformed boys. Girls' achievement in English (1998-2000), as measured by the PMT, increased in three districts and declined in two; boys' achievement increased in four and declined in one.

Visibility of UNICEF's girls' education work: Major donors see UNICEF as an active proponent of girls' education in donor meetings with government and believe that UNICEF had considerable influence on the inclusion of girls' education as a priority within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP). At the same time, these donors were largely unaware of UNICEF's field activities in support of girls' education.

Changing the unit of intervention: CHILDSCOPE was originally targeted at the school level. This approach led to problems, as schools within the same district received significantly different resource flows. This is leading UNICEF and government officials to move away from this approach and to define participation in CHILDSCOPE in terms of districts.

Changing mechanisms: The sudden availability of funds through AGEI may have inadvertently undercut the sustainability of an alliance of 25 NGOs that had organized to pick up some of the community based activities following the end of funding from an earlier girls' education project.

Clash of goals: In some cases, goals collided when the push to help girls conflicted with the need to honour community wishes that moved in a different direction. The scholarship programme, intended as a means of reducing the direct cost to families of sending girls to school, was modified in the face of community backlash to benefit boys and girls equally.

Competing voices within communities: In some communities, conflict developed between (the informal) Parent-Teacher Associations, responsible for raising local funds, and (the formal) School Management Committees (SMC), which saw their role as determining how those funds should be spent and state approved. The tension that ensued caused the delay of CHILDSCOPE activities in some communities, whereas in others the tension was bridged often by overlapping membership.

Timing of funding: One constraint on AGEI activities has been the irregular and inadequate timing of funding. AGEI funds allocated by UNICEF headquarters were nearly six months delayed in being sent to the UNICEF Ghana office. Further delays occurred in the process of the MOEY dispersing the funds to the CHILDSCOPE schools.

What achievements constitute success: The impact of CHILDSCOPE on girls' access, retention, and achievement is much more modest than was originally anticipated and those increases came at a high cost. This might suggest that, while CHILDSCOPE was effective, it was not a particularly efficient set of interventions.

Effective but not necessarily efficient: Some argue that even keeping up with national rates of access and retention represents a meaningful achievement. Others question why the expenditure of such significant funds over such a sustained period of time has not led to more notable changes in girls' access and retention. The degree to which CHILDSCOPE was an efficient intervention depends, in large part, on whether there are alternative strategies that could have achieved the same outcomes and impacts for a lower cost.

Establishing realistic goals: The stated objectives of both UNICEF Ghana and the Girls' Education Unit of the MOEYS was that the combined national, district, and school level activities would increase girls' enrolment and retention by upwards of 10% over three years. Results suggest that achieving more than a 1% gain over ten years might be a more realistic goal. The Ghana experience also points out that interventions that increase enrolment do not necessarily increase persistence or continuation to the next level of schooling.

The experience of UNICEF Ghana with CHILDSCOPE may offer useful insights into the efficacy of community participation strategies as a means of promoting girls' access, retention and achievement. Results suggest that community participation strategies, pursued over a sustained amount of time, can raise girls' participation, but that gains are small. Moreover, the gains are more likely to be seen in initial enrolment, but less likely in retention in primary grades, achievement, or continuation to junior secondary grades. Finally, these small gains come at a high cost, both in the intensity of interventions that were needed to achieve the gains and the length of time that was needed to achieve them.

Limited sustainability: Ministry officials indicate that while they are committed to sustainability, it will only occur to the extent that external or community generated funds are available. District and school level officials shared the view that sustainability depended on the continued flow of external funds, but did not believe communities would be able to be the source of those funds.

Efficacy of demonstration projects: The intention in concentrating CHILDSCOPE in seven districts was that these would serve as demonstration sites. No evidence was found to suggest that the interventions spread to other communities or districts without the specifically focused external funding.

Community participation as a strategy: The efficiency of community participation strategies needs to be understood in terms of the full range of valued outcomes that community participation fosters. Girls' education is not the only important desired outcome. Many who believe that community participation is an essential element in social and economic development do so for reasons unconnected to girls' education. Consequently, while the CHILDSCOPE experience offers insight into how a community participation strategy affects girls' education, it does not necessarily address the larger value of community participation strategies in development.

Guinea Case Study – October 2003
Lucien Back, Aliou Diallo, Karen Hickson

Project Description (excerpts from case study):

The AGEI in Guinea was preceded by the Girls' Education Programme, which was supported between 1994 and 1996 with funding from CIDA Canada and the Finnish Committee. In this initial stage the programme concentrated on eliminating gender stereotyping in pedagogic materials and curricula, opening (non-formal education) Nafa Centres, training primary school teachers, trainers, and Nafa Centre animators, and supporting the National Equity Committee and monitoring of the Nafa Centres.

The AGEI Phase I (1997-2000) and Phase II (2001-2004) were supported principally by the Government of Norway. Other funding sources included the French government and the French Committee for UNICEF. These funds have supported activities aimed at developing stakeholder capacity, empowering communities and families, providing supplies and technical services to les écoles amies des enfants et des filles or les écoles IEFA (AGEI schools) and Nafa Centres; and supporting advocacy and social mobilization in favour of girls' education

The main goal of the AGEI in Guinea in both first and second phases of the AGEI project is to increase girls' access, retention, and improve the quality of learning to enhance performance in formal primary schools and non-formal Nafa Centres in the areas of intervention, which are prefectures with girls' enrolment rates that are less than or equal to 30%. Through 2002, this included 15 prefectures in which there were 150 sub-rural prefectures and 15 urban communes. As of 2003, the focus was narrowed to encompass the prefectures where girls' access to education continues to be a most significant challenge. The target zones are designated as UNICEF zones in the Programme of Cooperation and UNDAF.

Lessons learned in the first phase paved the way for the project during the second phase to better target its resources, which has resulted in more efficient geographic targeting of areas of intervention, and redesign of activities aimed at more effectively strengthening capacity of partners, improving the monitoring system, establishing activities and incentives specifically in favour of girls' active participation in education, empowering and increasing a sense of ownership among community members for the IEFA schools and Nafa Centres, contributing to decentralization processes and strengthening of capabilities at the prefectural level, etc.

Today, there are 57 IEFA schools that have been supported with Norwegian funding and Other Resources. Another 47 are funded with Regular Resources through the UNICEF Guinea Programme of Cooperation in four of the fifteen AGEI targeted prefectures where all five UNICEF Guinea programmes converge. In total, there are 104 IEFA schools. 150 Nafa Centres have been established and supported so far through the AGEI.

The three main components have focused on (1) providing institutional support in policy and planning (e.g. Specific Policy on Girls' Education; Steering Committee on girls' education); (2) supporting the implementation of the programme "Education and Community" in prefectures with low girl GER (less or equal to 30%) through the formal IEFA schools; and (3) strengthening and extending the Nafa non-formal education approach.

Key Observations

Relevance of the AGEI: The AGEI Project in Guinea is considered relevant in terms of supporting the goals and objectives of the Guinea-Vision 2010, the PRSP, and the National EFA policy and programme, and in response to the political, economic, social and cultural contexts of the country.

Consensus on constraints facing girls' education: There is a broad-based agreement on the constraints facing girls' education, awareness of potential solutions, but frustration on how to sustain solutions or make them happen.

UNICEF's different roles: UNICEF Guinea plays different roles, including that of catalyst in helping to spur a "movement" in girls' education that is evident nationally and in AGEI project zones. It also takes on an "NGO" role, which raises pros, cons and questions, including how such a role can be sustained in the long-term, and how to balance it among competing roles and responsibilities.

Different gender roles played in support of girls' education: Men and women involved in supporting girls' education play different roles. Men voice their support, but generally treat girls' education and gender as women's issues. The women carrying the banner for girls' education, such as those in the National Equity Committee and FEG/FAWE, are well informed about gender issues and completely committed to girls' education, but can only do so much because in general they represent a relatively small number of women who have made inroads in occupying more influential positions. Assessing men's roles, responsibilities and capacities in helping to determine how they can become stronger partners in girls' education, in combination with conducting an updated gender analysis, become starting points in finding ways to fully involve men and women together in pursuit of girls' education and Education for All.

Influencing policy, but how to manage related programming: UNICEF Guinea is recognized as being a major force behind formulating the draft Specific Policy for Girls' Education, which is expected to become official shortly, but it is not clear how it can be adequately managed so that it leads to developing best practices and effecting long-term behaviour changes in favour of girls' education.

Strong leadership and coordinated external support as key determinants in moving from discrete project approach to an integrated programme approach: In light of the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative, UNICEF's 25/2005 Accelerated Girls' Education Initiative, meeting PRSP goals, etc. a strong leadership role on the part of the government is needed to fully engage funding partners in coordinating their support to girls' education through use of a programme approach. The situation is such that the government has capacity gaps, UNICEF and agencies lack an operational UNDAF, and external partners in general have organizational priorities that come with "territoriality" control issues and time constraints, which put up obstacles in more effectively finding ways to coordinate efforts.

Commitment on gender parity/equity but what about gender equality: There exists strong commitment to girls' education in quantitative terms (access, parity/equity) at all levels and within the framework of EFA, but there is no clear consensus, focus or vision on girls' education in qualitative terms (equality). The new Chair of gender / women studies at the University of Conakry could potentially work with academics and practitioners to stimulate the development of strategies that could result in acquiring a clearer focus and vision on what concrete actions could be taken to promote gender equality in combination with gender equity.

Making choices on continuing support or exiting: Based on lessons learned in Phase I, it was decided during Phase II to geographically target specific zones with acute poverty and low education gross enrolment rates. Not counting emergency prefectures, 15 prefectures were targeted until the end of 2002 when it was decided to reduce the number to better concentrate on zones needing the most attention on girls' education. The decision is indicative of the difficult choices an organization like UNICEF must make with regard to how it best uses its financial and human resources, and how long it can support particular communities and activities before exiting. It points to the need for clear exit strategy criteria that include indicators of assurance that gains would be maintained and/or built upon.

Design adjustments between phases: While the main goal remained the same, design adjustments were made between Phase I and II based on lessons learned, which caused slight shifts in objectives towards better geographic targeting of resources, more effective capacity strengthening of partners, an improved monitoring system, empowering communities/building community ownership of the IEFA schools and Nafa Centres, etc. According to a fairly recent AGEI evaluation, it was deemed that the smartness of objectives between Phase I to Phase II improved in terms of becoming more specific and measurable for indicators with quantitative outputs but not for qualitative outcomes. Considered at least in part to design modifications, the implementation rate for physical infrastructure improved and so did utilization of funds in 2002 as compared to earlier years.

Implementing life cycle and human rights based approaches: The Country Programme has been evolving towards use of the life cycle approach in education and in convergence with other sectors (e.g. WES, Health), but more needs to be done to link ECD and primary education, and implement the Human Rights-based Approach to Programming (HRBAP). UNICEF Guinea's planning project at the prefectural level could provide the juncture necessary to move ahead in determining how to effectively and truly implement HRBAP.

Some best practices and challenges: UNICEF country staff considered the following strategic interventions to be best practices containing promising strategies for girls education: community participation / involvement in girls' education, especially through the Mothers' Associations (AMEs), Parents' Associations (APEAEs) of IEFA schools, the Management Committees of Nafa Centres that lead to community empowerment and ownership of schools; advocacy and social mobilization to sensitize parents and community; teacher training and support of pedagogy encouraging girls to perform well; incentives for girls; focusing on girls' education at the prefecture level; after school activities, such as the catch up courses for girls, girl-to-girl tutoring, Student Parliament, Human Rights Clubs; expanding partnerships with local NGOs; and the intersectoral approach converging at schools. At the same time, the IEFA school package and Nafa Centre programme have many challenges and issues that can compromise the effectiveness of both initiatives, which underlines the importance of stakeholders to continue supporting implementation of AGEI strategies in view of strengthening and refining best practices.

Challenges associated with building a results-based monitoring & evaluation system: Developing a culture of monitoring and evaluation is being worked on by the UNICEF Guinea Country Office in collaboration with governmental partners, which is particularly challenging in terms of building and maintaining capacity at all levels, and coordinating systematic data collection and analysis with all partners. More attention to a results-based monitoring system would facilitate documentation and communication of innovations and challenges, including with regard to understanding outcomes and impact, and would potentially help to improve coordination of and collaboration among efforts favouring girls' education.

Earmarking funds for girls' education: Earmarking funds for girls' education appears to depend on knowing if the project or component being funded is supportive of girls' education, such as the AGEI. It was during Phase II that UNICEF Guinea decided it was necessary to budget for certain activities that only targeted girls (e.g. incentives). UNICEF Guinea transfers AGEI funds directly to prefectures and NGOs working on AGEI activities. In the case of one prefectural DPE, it was indicated that they account for the AGEI funds in a budget line called the IEFA (AGEI) project, sometimes referred to as the UNICEF project. It can be said that this earmarking of funds for the AGEI project has, on the one hand, contributed to maintaining and protecting a focus on girls' education goals, objectives and activities, whereas on the other hand, it has locked the AGEI project into the concept of being a "stand-alone project" and not completely part of the country's larger education "programme". It is possible that this project/programme division will change with the adoption and implementation of the Specific Girls' Education policy.

Evolving SWAPS and SIPS, and determining how to merge concept and practice, especially at prefecture and local levels: The Guinea experience with SWAPS and SIPS has been evolving over the years beginning with the Structural Adjustment Programmes in Education (PASE I and II) and now the Education for All (EFA) Programme 2001-2013. The UNICEF Guinea Country Programme's Child Development Programme, containing the AGEI project, interfaces with policy and programmes of the Education ministries due to a planning and oversight process managed through a National Steering Committee. As most of UNICEF's work is done at prefecture and local levels, it has traditionally used the project approach, which is how the IEFA School and Nafa Centre began. In the case of the Nafa Centre, it became a national programme. UNICEF plays a dual role in supporting it, using the project approach for targeted Nafa Centres in the project zone, and a programme approach in working with partners on its development at the national level. It seems at the prefecture level there exists a conceptual understanding of the EFA sector-wide programme, but not a clear, practical programmatic approach to implement it. It points to the need to build capacity on developing a practical application that can manage external funders' accountability requirements, and allow projects to fit together within a systematic and systemic programmatic approach aimed at achieving EFA goals and objectives.

Minimal attention to cost efficiency: Not much work has been done on cost efficiency, or costing of interventions. Recently, UNICEF Guinea's Education Team provided unit and cumulative costs for an IEFA school package and a Nafa Centre. (See Annex 5: Code of Conduct for teachers) In general, aside from a World Bank study dealing with cost efficiency and a UNICEF study on opportunity costs, there is an incomplete understanding of the cost efficiency of interventions, which has implications for replicability and sustainability.

Raising the profile of girls' education: The AGEI in Guinea has made some significant inroads into supporting girls' education, including helping to give it a higher profile, and experimenting with innovations that successfully increase girls' access and retention in school. But, much work remains to be done in terms of extending educational opportunity to the other half of girls who are out of school and improving the quality for those who are in school, and moving actions taken in schools and communities towards achieving in combination gender equity and gender equality in education, family and community learning environments.

Uganda Case Study – June 2003

David W. Chapman, Rabina Kyeyune, Karen Lokkesmoe

Project Description (excerpts from case study):

UNICEF Uganda made substantial changes in its AGEI programme during its transition from Phase I to Phase II. During Phase I, four main activities were supported under AGEI. They centred on creating alternative opportunities for out-of-school children to re-enter the formal education system and combating the spread of HIV/AIDS through Life Skills training in the schools. In Phase II, AGEI involved several activities linked to promoting girls' education, including child friendly schools, Girls' Education Movement (GEM), Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL), Focusing Resources for Effective School Health (FRESH), Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (COPE), Alternative Basic Education in Karamoja (ABEK), Early Childhood Development (ECD) using the "appreciative inquiry" strategy to promote community involvement.

Three factors converged to shape this redesign at the beginning of Phase II: (a) the move to rights based programming; (b) a heightened emphasis on district level programming; and, (c) the influence of the child-friendly school concept. Additionally, the Country Office recognized major constraints in girls' school enrolment, attendance, and achievement had their roots in other sectors. For example, girls' responsibility for household chores, particularly carrying water, was a main constraint on parents sending them to school; the lack of sanitation was a primary reason for girls' dropping out of school. If girls' enrolment were to increase, it would be necessary to improve sanitation and provide alternative ways of helping families and communities address their needs for water. Moreover, girls were at a much higher risk than boys of contracting HIV/AIDS and schools serve as a primary mechanism for providing education on HIV/AIDS prevention. Getting girls into school was part of a strategy to combat HIV/AIDS. While the Country Office also realized the potential advantages of wider health — education linkages, the national health policy, though formulated, was not yet implemented. The programme reorganization was more than cosmetic. As part of the reorganization of activities in preparation for Phase II, several staff members previously assigned to the Water Section were shifted to the Education Section to help ensure cross-sector integration.

Key Observations

Design changes between Phase I and Phase II: UNICEF Uganda, more than many AGEI countries, made substantial changes in its AGEI programme during its transition from Phase I to Phase II. This shift was prompted by (a) the move to rights based programming; (b) a heightened emphasis on district level programming; and, (c) the influence of the child-friendly school concept.

Modular programme design: The modular approach of the Uganda AGEI programme offers a useful example of how a girls' education programme can be designed in a manner that promotes easy diffusion of components. It is argued by some that new practices are most likely to be accepted when the elements of that change can be adopted in small increments and when adopters have the time and opportunity to make their own decisions about the comparative advantage of the new practices relative to the old ones. The UNICEF Uganda country programme offers an example of how girls' education can be fully integrated into the overall country programme.

Sector Investment Programme/Sector-wide Programming: Uganda represents a particularly interesting case of Sector Wide Programming. In implementing its sector investment policy, the Government of Uganda (GOU) has placed a hard ceiling on the national budget and, in turn, each sector has been given a spending ceiling. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) will start counting donor-funded, project support within these ceilings as of July 2004. Operationally, this means that donor support allocated to the Ministry of Education for a particular project will reduce the GOU allocation to the Ministry of Education by the same amount. Hence, external donor support will not increase the overall amount available for education. While this approach reflects the GOU's commitment to fiscal responsibility, the inclusion of project funds under the budget ceiling will (a) limit the availability of external funds, (b) force Ministries to be very clear about their priorities, (c) limit the ability of international agencies to shape those priorities, and (d) create difficult practical considerations, such as how to allocate cross-sectoral project funds against the budget ceilings of the separate Ministries involved in the activity, and how to free up MOES funds to support innovative ideas.

One possible approach of some donors may be to channel education development funds through non-government organizations (NGOs). Presumably money given directly to NGOs would not be counted within the Government budget although this position could change. One problem is that, while there are numerous NGOs that could receive and spend the money, few are in a position to shape national policy, which is one goal of international donor support.

One implication of Uganda's approach to SIP is that international donors may not be able to directly invest in strategies to promote girls' education. Alternatively, if funds are given to support girls' education, it would mean that the GOU would need to reduce its commitment to some other aspect of education.

Earmarking funds for girls' education: There is a strong feeling among Country Office staff that the earmark for girls' education should be maintained. UNICEF staff argue that any analysis of the serious problems that will continue to face the region of Africa in the next decade centres on issues that will require more highly educated women as a key in their solution. However, they observe that there are still forces within Government and within UNICEF itself that look at education priorities in a different way and, given a choice, would be less inclined to allocate funds to girls' education. These pressures combine with Government's own actions to cap government spending on education to create a political and fiscal environment in which an earmark is needed if special attention to girls' education is to be ensured.

Effectiveness of AGEI Activities: The UNICEF Uganda programme provides one of the best examples within the AGEI of the use of evaluation in documenting the effectiveness of an AGEI intervention, specifically the Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) programme. It serves as an example of the kind of documentation UNICEF needs if it is to advocate for a series of "best practices."

Results of the formal evaluation were repeatedly confirmed by comments of parents and teachers in every district visited as part of this country study. Parents said that their children in BTL were learning to read much faster than their other children in non-BTL schools. County officials expressed concern that the presence of BTL programmes was distorting enrolment across schools and swamping BTL schools with over-enrolment as parents pulled their children out of nearby primary schools to send them to BTL schools. Virtually every parent and educator wanted more BTL classes in their schools. The formal evaluation documents what parents and teachers already knew. Students in BTL classes learn more.

Breakthrough to Literacy stands as one of the few activities across the six country studies to undergo a formal evaluation. As such, it serves as an example of the kind of documentation UNICEF needs if it is to advocate for a series of “best practices.” However, this country case study also found that evidence that the demonstrable success of an intervention does not automatically result in a practice being adopted by government.

At the same time, this country study also found that some other AGEI activities strongly supported by UNICEF Uganda, by government, and by parents lack systematic documentation of effect. Of particular interest is that, in some cases, available formal data seem at odds with less formal assessments by those closest to the programmes. In Uganda, the two main interventions to reach out-of-school children, ABEK and COPE, suggest they may be serving an important need, but not necessarily the one it was designed to serve. This, in turn, raises a question about the appropriateness of the original goals and the ability of the project to document its own shift in purpose in a manner that allows a meaningful assessment of effectiveness.

Adaptive adjustments versus mission drift: The Uganda AGEI programme illustrates that activities may not always achieve their main goals, but may accomplish other important outcomes. A number of AGEI activities, once implemented, moved away from their original goals. This was not necessarily a bad thing. It sometimes reflected adaptive adjustments on the part of programme managers to the real needs they encounter during implementation. However, such changes, if undocumented, can result in these activities being evaluated against inappropriate criteria, leading to potentially valuable activities being judged unsuccessful. On the other hand, such drift may signal a difficulty in initial problem identification, activity design, or subsequent implementation.

COPE provides a useful example. Originally intended to provide out-of-school children with a route back into formal primary schooling, focus group discussions with parents and educators found evidence that COPE centres were functioning in three unanticipated ways: first, some children resisted transitioning to regular primary schools because they believed that the quality of the COPE instruction was better than the quality of the instruction in regular government schools; second, COPE centres attracted drop-outs from government primary school; and third, COPE centres in some communities have become de facto primary schools.

Little formal evaluation of COPE has been done. School officials estimated that 10 - 60% of COPE students did transition back to primary school, depending on the community. However, these data are not consistently collected or examined. No tracking studies have yet been conducted to determine what happens to COPE students when they leave the COPE programme. COPE is expensive, so the lack of information on what happens to the children it serves should be of some concern.

At the same time, evidence from the focus group discussions suggests that COPE is serving important needs for both children and communities, though not necessarily the ones it was originally designed to serve. Students, parents, school officials, and district leaders all expressed a desire for the COPE curriculum to be extended to provide more vocational skill training. They want COPE centres to become a recognized vocational option to regular schooling rather than a channel back to the formal schools.

Evaluation efforts must have a clear framework for being able to distinguish adaptive adjustment from inappropriate mission drift.

Refining the Criteria of Success: The ABEK and COPE examples raise a more general issue across AGEI countries. The evaluation of AGEI activities needs to consider both the extent that intended goals are achieved and the extent to which unanticipated outcomes, possibly just as important as the intended goals, are achieved. The risk of this approach is that it is possible to find redeeming qualities in almost any activity. There is a risk that, with flexible criteria, no activity is ever found to fail and evaluative activities become meaningless.

In assessing AGEI “best practices,” UNICEF needs both (a) a mechanism through which AGEI activities can be honoured for what they accomplish rather than for what they fail to attain; and, (b) clear criteria for when to discontinue activities that have moved too far from their original intent, even if they are yielding other useful outcomes. One way to navigate this distinction is through careful attention to the extent the conditions and needs that informed the original plan have changed. If conditions have changed dramatically and AGEI activities are serving the new needs, the adjustments are more likely to be welcomed than if the conditions have remained largely the same and the activity drifted. Evaluators and programme planners need to stay focused on the problem they are trying to solve, even if that differs from the problem their activities do solve.

UNICEF needs to be responsive to AGEI activities that yield important, but unintended, outcomes. At the same time, it needs to have criteria that allow education staff to determine when an AGEI activity is failing.

Indicators of AGEI impact: The use of aggregate national education statistics to monitor and assess the impact of girls’ education activities in Uganda is of limited use. The districts in which UNICEF is concentrating its work are among the most difficult in the country and not reflective of the situation of the country as a whole. Moreover, these districts differ from each other in the nature of the problems that face communities in general and girls in particular. Meaningful changes in the conditions of girls’ education in the geographical areas in which UNICEF is working are unlikely to be detected in aggregate national statistics.

The efficacy of demonstration projects: One premise of UNICEF work in many countries is that clear evidence of the effectiveness of particular activities will lead to government adopting those activities in other locations and eventually implementing them on a wider scale. The experience in Uganda with BTL suggests that, while evidence of effectiveness is necessary, it is not necessarily sufficient to prompt adoption, even when the intervention is aligned with government policies and government budget is available.

The Uganda MOES acknowledges the effectiveness of BTL and is aware of the results of the external evaluation documenting its impact on language learning in P1 and P2 (discussed earlier). It is aware of the mushrooming enrolments in BTL classes, often at the expense of enrolments in nearby non-BTL schools. It is also aware of the desire of many schools (and parents) to create or expand their BTL offerings.

Expansion of the programme would require the MOES to provide training for BTL teachers and the instructional materials needed to implement the programme. However, some MOES staff observe that the MOES already has allocated funds for teacher training and for materials procurement and that some of these funds are being spent on efforts that yield far less impressive outcomes than those observed in BTL. It might be feasible for the MOES to extend BTL with the funds that are already available within the education budget. In the view of some observers, the resistance is not due to philosophical or educational concerns about BTL, but to

the complexities of introducing change in large bureaucracies. Directing resources to any one programme often comes at the expense of others, which may also have strong constituencies.

The lesson for AGEI is that evidence is necessary but not sufficient to lead to widespread adoption, even within an education ministry that has proven itself to be forward thinking and creative on many other fronts. This suggests that demonstration and evaluation are not enough, by themselves, to spark adoption on a wider scale.

Parent contributions: COPE, ABEK, and several other AGEI activities in Uganda expect some level of community contribution as a condition of participation. One reason is to help communities see their own role and responsibility in supporting the schooling of their children. Another is to promote sustainability. In Uganda, however, the expectation of community contribution posed a paradox.

Under the 1997 government policy to achieve universal primary education, government committed to funding for all primary schools, including those that previously had been community supported. The policy was successful; primary school enrolments more than doubled. The paradox was that communities with high concentrations of out-of-school children (some of the poorest communities in the country) were being asked to contribute to the support of COPE, ABEK, and EDC centres while government was paying the full cost for primary schools in nearby, more affluent communities.

The Ugandan government has resolved this paradox in Uganda by agreeing to pay the costs of these complementary education opportunities. However, the issue raised by the Uganda experience is important because it reflects a strategy that is used across a number of countries.

Promising strategies to promote girls' education. *BTL* has already been identified as demonstrably successful and has great promise for wider dissemination. Second, while less formal evaluation is available, *GEM* clubs are an initiative that appears quite promising and worth a more formal evaluation as a step toward being advocated as a "best practice." *GEM* is one of the few initiatives that directly provides a voice for girls (and their strategic allies, boys). The enthusiasm of both observers and *GEM* members suggests that *GEM* can be a powerful mechanism for mobilizing community activity in support of girls' education. Third, the *provision of water* and *separate latrines* for boys and girls appeared to have a strong, positive impact on keeping adolescent girls in school. This indicates that some of the activities most effective in promoting the retention of girls are not directly educational activities, but related to the physical infrastructure of the school itself. Finally, as discussed earlier, *COPE* appears to serve an important educational need, though not necessarily the one for which it was designed.

Partnerships at the district level: Uganda, like a number of countries across Africa, has been following a policy of progressive decentralization of responsibility to the district level. Within Uganda, districts are empowered to implement activities, though issues of money flow remain a problem. Part of the success of the AGEI work in Uganda appears to be tied to UNICEF's ability to work successfully at the district level.

UNICEF has country staff specifically assigned to work with education and government leaders in each of its target districts. These staff make frequent visits and have a personal working relationship with leaders at each of the administrative levels (e.g., district, county, sub-county, parish, village). UNICEF has funded, and District education officials have facilitated, a considerable and sustained amount of training at each of these levels. The UNICEF Uganda

experience working at the district level links to a wider discussion about effective strategy for promoting new education practices within increasingly decentralized education systems.

Community advocacy. As in other AGEI countries, community level advocacy and training are important components of the overall GOU-UNICEF programme.

UNICEF Advocacy at the Policy Level: UNICEF Uganda has had an impact on national policy formulation that is disproportionately greater than the money it brings to education development. Three factors appear to contribute to this: (a) UNICEF has direct, substantial and continuing contacts at the district, county, sub-county, parish, village levels. This gives UNICEF staff a depth of knowledge about conditions, trends and issues, which, in turn, gives them considerable credibility in policy discussions. (b) UNICEF is a member of the Education Sector Working group. One of the UNICEF strategies for influence is never missing a meeting. And, (c) unlike most other development assistance organizations, UNICEF has education experts on staff. This sometimes gives UNICEF the advantage of being able to engage at a more technical level in the discussions than might be true of other development partners.

ANNEX F: SUMMARY OF COUNTRY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Note:

The summary of country activities and results for Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa are available on the CD-ROM attached to this report. The summaries are based on yearly technical reports provided by the UNICEF Country Offices in the two regions for selected years.

