



GENDER EQUALITY INITIATIVE

Progress Report 2024 (September-December)



PRIORITÉ À L'ÉGALITÉ
GENDER AT THE
CENTRE



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2. GRANT SUMMARY

Basic Project Information	
Countries	Republic of Chad, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
Project Name:	Contribution to Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI) Phase 2: Technical support to Côte d'Ivoire and Chad to mainstream gender equality in and through education
Donor	Global Partnership for Education
Grant number	SC 240444
Organization and implementing Partners	GCI Alliance, hosted within UNICEF/UNGEI and IIEP-UNESCO
Agreement Period	14 July 2024-14 July 2026
Period Covered by this Report	1 September 2024-15 January 2025
Funding and Expenditures	
Total Project Funding	USD 999,999.96
Programmable amount	USD 934,579
Agency fees	USD 65,420.56
Total GPE Expenditures this Reporting Period	USD \$13,433.22

3. ACRONYMS

DEEG	Direction Egalité et Equité de Genre
DRENA	Direction Régionale de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EGENA	Etats Généraux de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation
GCI	Gender at the Centre Initiative
GES	Gender Equality Snapshot
GRESP	Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IIEP-UNESCO	International Institute for Educational Planning
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
LEG	Local Education Group
PTF	Financial and Technical Partners/ <i>Partenaires Techniques et Financiers</i>
SO	Strategic Objective
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender inequality is a pressing issue around the world. Girls continue to be more likely to have never enrolled in school and 118.5 million girls were out of primary and secondary school worldwide in 2021. Despite significant progress in gender parity in access to education and completion at the primary level in many countries, progress is beginning to stall. In Sub-Saharan Africa, progress in girls' enrollment in lower secondary education has been very slow since 2011. Similarly, upper secondary enrollment has seen little improvement since 2014 in upper secondary, with completion rates remaining critically low in many countries. The data reveal a high level of dropout for girls as they reach adolescence, and the impact of social norms affects their opportunities and choices. Girls face significantly higher rates of gender-based violence. Gender stereotypes and other biases in teaching curricula and pedagogy impact all children but set girls farther behind in developing dreams and aspirations for productive careers and citizenship.

To reinforce partner country capacity for education system transformation, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has launched a series of Technical Assistance Initiatives, including one on Gender equality. The Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative (GE TAI) aims to strengthen national education systems and foster sectoral dialogue at the country level so that gender equality is fully and effectively mainstreamed in and through education. To implement this technical assistance, GPE has partnered with the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI), a multistakeholder initiative jointly coordinated by UNGEI and IIEP-UNESCO. The pilot phase is planned to support gender equality capacity in Côte d'Ivoire and Chad, with an initial allocation of US\$ 1 million.

This first progress report covers the period of September 2024 to January 2025. The report includes a narrative on progress with regards to the implementation of the Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative.

During the reporting period IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI successfully completed a consultative inception process, which resulted in adopted roadmaps, work plans and budgets for the 2 pilot countries. These have been jointly developed by all relevant education stakeholders at country level, including Ministries of Education, civil society partners, GPE Country Leads, Local Education Group and UNICEF and UNESCO country offices. Key achievements during the reporting period include:

- Two inception workshops organized (1 in Côte d'Ivoire and 1 in Chad), engaging Ministries of Education (MoE), civil society partners, young feminists, and UNICEF/UNESCO country offices, to identify country needs and draft work plans
- Completed country-level roadmaps and work plans for each of the pilot countries
- Developed country-level budgets in coordination with UNICEF and UNESCO country offices
- Strategic discussions organized and facilitated with all education stakeholders as well as the GPE focal points for both countries.

In 2025 UNGEI and IIEP-UNESCO will implement the activities outlined in the 2 country work plans, and work on an extension of the GE TAI to more countries, including a global learning component.

5. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The GE TAI aims at strengthening capacity for government education officials, Civil society organizations and other education actors to integrate gender equality issues into the education system.

Briefing on pilot countries

In response to the GPE Board's request (for a transparent country selection process under this Initiative, the GPE Secretariat, together with GCI, selected the two pilot countries based on three criteria: (1) a diverse portfolio of technical assistance initiatives that reflects GPE's regional and contextual diversity; (2) a favorable policy environment, political commitment, partners' capacity and readiness, evidence of need and country demand; and (3) consultations with GPE country teams on ongoing policy dialogue, and priorities from shortlisted countries.

The initial results of this pilot, along with availability of co-financing from GCI coalition partners, will inform the potential adaptation and scaling of this approach in more countries, including as a more closely coordinated offer with GPE operating model milestones, processes and cross-country learning opportunities.

Côte d'Ivoire

The government of Côte d'Ivoire (with technical support from IIEP-UNESCO) has developed its partnership compact, as an exercise in prioritizing and operationalizing the reforms identified during a national consultation in July 2021 called *Etats Généraux de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation* (EGENA). The Compact proposes a series of measures to strengthen gender equality in and through education, through reforms in gender-sensitive pedagogy, prevention, and management of multiple forms of gender-based violence, prevention of early pregnancy and early marriage through the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education in lower secondary, provisions for greater parity in teaching and management staff, and interactions to change social norms. Beyond the Partnership compact, the Ministry of Education has developed specific gender equality strategies, for example the *Gender Policy Document* (2020-2025), and the *Reintegration Strategy for Pregnant Girls and Mothers* (2016).

Chad

With strong political will, Chad has already made some progress in its stance and ambition regarding gender equality in and through education. It has shown its commitment during Phase I of GCI and when becoming a signatory to the Freetown Manifesto. During the GCI pilot

phase, GCI has accompanied the country in the development of the partnership compact process, including through GCI workshops on gender data analysis, gender-responsive education planning and transformative leadership.

The partnership Compact was finalized and validated in November 2023. The priority reform aims at enhancing the quality and delivery of education services, with a specific focus on raising the standard of teaching. The overarching goal is to substantially enhance equitable access to high-quality education and foster success in basic education for all students. This initiative is particularly dedicated to addressing the educational needs of girls and the most vulnerable children, including refugees and internally displaced individuals.

Gender equality is well integrated into the partnership compact with measures geared towards basic education sub-sectors on gender-sensitive pedagogy and curricula, retention, school environment, gender-based violence, and community norms. The gender aspect is also mainstreamed into the enabling factors, with propositions to collect administrative and learning data and produce relevant evidence on gender equality, as well as gender-responsive planning and monitoring approaches. The partnership Compact also proposes multi-sectoral approaches and partnerships to promote gender equality through cross-ministry collaboration and community engagement through civil society organizations.

Objective:

The goal of the GE TAI is to strengthen country capacity to mainstream gender equality in the education system, through two strategic objectives (SO):

- **SO1: strengthening the capacity of Ministries of Education and national education actors to develop and implement strong gender-responsive education sector policies, plans and budgets.**
- **SO2: strengthening capacity amongst Ministries of Education, local education groups, civil society and young activists to engage actively in inclusive dialogue on gender-transformative education.**

Strategies and Activities

Strategies include the provision of support to governmental officials and civil society organizations, including women's rights associations and young activists, on gender equality and gender transformative education in order to foster more equitable education systems.

The SO1 implies:

i) capacity development through training, coaching, accompaniment and joint activities to produce relevant gendered data and analyze policies with a gender lens such the Gender Equality Snapshot (GES) Toolkit, education sector analyses, coaching to MoEs in institutional gender diagnostics to enable better understanding of how formal and informal institutional norms interact with the objectives of gender equity in education within the administration, identification of barriers to gender mainstreaming within the organizations that participate in the sectoral dialogue, and show how to achieve greater ownership of gender-inclusiveness goals among the actors involved; analysis of the efficiency of education budget including support to ministries and local education groups to analyze budget processes and decisions to understand their impact on gender equality; production and use of data and evidence on gender (including EMIS and learning assessment units).

ii) capacity strengthening within Ministries of Education to fully integrate gender equality in education sector plans and policies through: support to the formulation and building of gender-responsive strategic education policies and regulation frameworks, the development of gender-transformative sector monitoring and evaluation practices; training for mid and senior level education planners in Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning, delivering of targeted training on selected thematic areas such as SRGBV, gender-transformative teaching & learning, female leadership in schools, girls' retention in education.

iii) training senior government officials to effectively drive change for gender equality by supporting leadership competencies which advance gender equality in education within their organizations, empowering feminist leaders within Ministries of Education and other relevant

ministries who can effectively advance gender-transformative education, supporting institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender equality within education ministries, by strengthening the capacity and institutional role of Ministry of Education gender units and focal points and fostering collaboration between departments and other ministries to improve gender-responsive sector planning and policies.

The SO2 includes:

i) capacity strengthening of civil society partners and young activists to assess gender equality in and through education and to advocate for and support to Ministries of Education to include gender equality in education sector planning by providing GRESP training, Gender-Transformative Leadership and advocacy training for relevant staff of civil society organizations and networks; develop and/or support coalitions of young education and gender activists at the national level, strengthening their capacity, supporting their community action, and facilitating their engagement with government ministries, promote intergenerational partnership to promote meaningful engagement with young feminist activists in education sector planning and policymaking; support and accompany youth participation in LEGs and Ministry of Education platforms.

ii) Supporting Local Education Groups (LEGs) to convene a dialogue on gender equality in and through education, including civil society gender experts, women's rights organizations and young feminist activists in promoting the inclusion and active participation of civil society gender experts, women's rights organizations and young feminist activists in Local Education Group membership; convening specific Local Education Group meetings on gender in education issues and accompany LEGs to report on gender equality in education activities and actions.

6. KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

For the launch of this GE TAI, UNGEI & IIEP-UNESCO held a planning workshop in each pilot country. A total of 57 participants from both countries assisted at the workshops and contributed to the planning of different activities: for, Côte d'Ivoire 45 participants (34 female and 11 male) and for Chad, there were 12 (5 males and 7 females). Participants included stakeholders from the central and decentralized levels from the Ministry of Education, including finance and gender focal points, civil society actors engaged in education including youth activists. The LEGs were represented at local staffs from UNESCO and UNICEF.

The approach was participatory. For Côte d'Ivoire, the workshop was carried out from 30 September to 2 October 2024. The following technical assistance needs were identified:

- Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders from ministries and civil society on the utilization of clear data and evidence to advance gender equality in and through education.

- Strengthen alliances among key actors to build a strong movement for transformative gender education.
- Promote dialogue between communities, governments, civil society, young feminist activists and local media to transform harmful gender norms and foster social demand for gender equality in and through education
- Contribute to advocacy and social mobilization for more commitment from governments to adopt effective tools for gender-responsive education policy and planning.

This led to the development of a roadmap and explanatory note for the implementation of this technical assistance which will cover a period of two years.

In Chad, the planning workshop took place on 7 and 8 November 2024. Three focus areas were prioritized:

- the presentation of the GPE technical assistance initiative.
- planning of interventions and defining a strategic roadmap for the implementation of this pilot initiative
- aligning stakeholder actions to fully integrate gender equality into and across the education system, while building technical capacity and stimulating sectoral dialogue.

7. CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED & GOOD PRACTICES

A joint roadmap strengthened coordination among GCI implementing partners and supported strategic planning at the country level. A key achievement during the inception phase was the introduction of the Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative through a joint mission by IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI. This mission not only introduced the second phase of the Gender at the Centre Initiative but also provided a valuable opportunity for joint programming, reinforcing the effectiveness of a whole-system approach - one that combines support to both governments and civil society organizations. As a result of the planning workshops organized in Chad and Côte d'Ivoire, IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI developed a comprehensive roadmap that consolidates UNGEI and IIEP-UNESCO planned interventions, ensuring alignment, coherence, and strategic coordination in the implementation of GCI Phase 2.

The Technical Assistance Initiative inception phase played a key role in mobilizing co-funding at the country level for GCI. During the planning workshops, stakeholders in both countries identified extensive capacity development needs that extended beyond the financial resources available under the Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative. To support resource mobilization efforts, the country roadmap outlined both GPE-funded activities and unfunded capacity development activities requiring additional support. This clear distinction served as a strategic tool to engage potential partners and guide fundraising efforts. This strategy has already yielded results, by securing approximately 240,000 USD of co-funding from UNESCO Headquarters, the French Development Agency (AFD), and the UNESCO country office (through an African Development Bank Grant) to support the implementation of unfunded GCI roadmap activities. In Chad GCI has mobilized additional resources from ECW to bring in a crisis and resilience lens in its capacity building and data analysis activities. An additional 200,000 USD from France's contribution to GCI will also serve to

implement some of the roadmap activities in both countries¹. These successful co-funding efforts highlight the importance of clear planning, strategic alignment, and coordinated engagement with development partners – an approach that gains to be replicated during the scale-up phase to attract resources from other development partners at the country level.

Aligning the Technical Assistance Initiative with ongoing reforms strengthened synergies and impact. A key good practice emerging from the inception of the Technical Assistance Initiative is its alignment with ongoing reforms and program interventions in both countries. By complementing existing activities – including those financed or planned under GPE financing – the initiative is expected to foster synergies and maximize the impact of the Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative. This strategic alignment was carefully documented in the narrative notes accompanying the GCI roadmaps, which outlines how Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative activities are integrated with other ongoing government reforms and partners' interventions. Looking ahead, this approach of aligning technical assistance with ongoing interventions should be replicated during the scale-up of the Technical Assistance Initiative.

Initial policy dialogue required significant investment of time and resources but was crucial to securing stakeholder engagement and support. The introduction of the Technical Assistance Initiative involved extensive engagement with Ministries of Education and Local Education Group members in both countries. This initial phase required significant time and effort from both IIEP-UNESCO and UNGEI to effectively engage stakeholders and foster a clear understanding of the initiative. In Côte d'Ivoire, this engagement led to in-depth dialogue between IIEP-UNESCO, the Ministry of Education, and LEG members regarding the scope and objectives of the initiative, with strong support from the GPE Secretariat. Some LEG members initially expressed concerns that the initiative might introduce parallel efforts disconnected from ongoing program investments. These exchanges underscored the importance of ensuring that technical assistance efforts are fully integrated with ongoing reforms and program interventions to enhance coherence and avoid duplication. At the same time, Ministries of Education in both countries expressed strong support for the initiative, including at the Ministerial level. As new countries are being selected for the scale-up phase, GPE and GCI should jointly introduce and discuss the Technical Assistance Initiative with education authorities and Local Education Group members.

Maintaining momentum in program design is crucial to managing expectations and ensuring timely beginning of implementation. The introduction of the Gender Equality Technical Assistance Initiative created strong expectations at the country level, particularly within Ministries of Education, who were eager to start with the implementation of the initiative. However, there was a time lag between the initiative's announcement in March 2024, its approval by GPE Secretariat in July 2025, the organization of design workshops in September and October 2024, and the actual launch of activities in January 2025. As this was a pilot phase, some delays were understandable given the need to carefully plan the rollout together with the GPE Secretariat, and to conduct initial consultations to ensure alignment with country priorities. As new countries will be selected for the scale-up, it will be important to carefully plan the inception phase together with the GPE Secretariat to ensure a streamlined and cost-effective process.

¹ Beyond the TAI pilot countries the partnership with GPE has been instrumental for GCI to mobilize a limited number of additional resources for its overall program, as demonstrated in new partnerships with NORAD and ECW.

GCI's extensive experience providing technical assistance on gender equality offers a valuable opportunity to strengthen global learning. As a technical assistance platform, GCI has supported numerous governments and civil society organizations across Africa through policy guidance, sector planning, management support, capacity building, and research. Leveraging GCI's extensive experience will be crucial in strengthening learning on gender equality across the GPE partnership. The launch of the Technical Assistance Initiative Scale-up should create opportunities to build the knowledge base and ensure that insights gained through the initiative are effectively captured, shared, and utilized to inform strategic development among donor and technical assistance agencies.

8. FINANCIAL UTILIZATION

In September 2024, UNICEF HQ received the instalment of \$1,000,000 of which \$934,580 was programmable (after reduction of Grant Agent Fees). This amount will be evenly divided between UNGEI and IIEP-UNESCO.

By the 15 January 2025, the programme utilized USD \$13,433.22 (by GCI-UNGEI) of GPE funds.

Due to the ongoing internal allotment process and the transfer from UNICEF to IIEP at the time of the TAI inception, some of the funding for consultation and planning activities was frontloaded using GCI regular resources, and will be reflected in the next reporting cycle in the budget.

9. FUTURE PLANS

The table below indicates key planned intervention for early 2025 and 2026 as follows: see *workplans*

10. EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The GPE Technical assistance initiative enables to strengthening gender equality in Chad and Côte d'Ivoire to respond to the growing need of innovative approaches to tackle inequity. GCI takes this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation to the GPE for their financial contribution and trustful partnership in this process.



Photo 1: Participants to the planning workshop at Cote d'Ivoire, Photo credit @ MENA, Grand Bassam 2024



Photo 2: Cote d'Ivoire planning workshop, opening session, photo credit@ MENA, Grand Bassam 2024



Photo 3: participants to the Chad planning workshop, photo credit @ MENPC, Bakara 2024

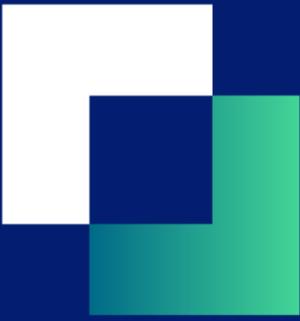


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Students in class at the Nyamachaki Primary School,
Nyeri County
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