

Summary Report on the Training Workshop on Gender Responsive Education (GRE) toolkit held in Ghana for Deans, Teacher Educators, Teachers and Education Experts

23-27 April, 2017
Accra, Ghana



The UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO-IICBA) in collaboration with UNESCO Accra office organized a five-day training workshop for deans, teacher educators, teachers and education experts on utilization of Gender Responsive Education (GRE) Toolkit from 23-27 April, 2018, in Accra, Ghana.

The workshop was attended by 19 (9F/10M) participants that included representatives from the Ghana Education Service (GES), Girls' Education Unit (GEU), National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NACCA), and Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL), principals and teacher educators from three Teacher Training Institutions, and NATCOM representatives.

“The GRE Toolkit is more than just theory, it gives practical tools for use in gender responsive education.”

Ama Serwah Nerquaye-Tetteh, Secretary General, Ghana National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM), Welcome Speech

Overview

In 2015, the UNESCO Ghana Office conducted a baseline and needs assessment¹ to assess the capacity needs of local partners and beneficiaries in promoting girls' education to aid the design and implementation of the UNESCO-Hainan Funds-In-Trust (HFIT) project on girls' and women's Education. Key findings from the study highlighted a lack of a clear gender policy guideline - nationally and in Colleges of Education (CoEs) - and coordination of programmes aimed at promoting girls' education. Further findings showed that Ghana's education system (including physical environment) was not gender responsive in nature, professionals in the education sector had insufficient understanding of gender concepts, and there are no gender mainstreaming tools and assessment criteria for assessing gender responsiveness in education.

Through the support of various development partners, including UNESCO, the government of Ghana has made commendable strides in addressing some of these challenges since 2015. Notable among these interventions are the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) programme that provides professional development services - including gender responsive and inclusive teaching and learning, formulation of CoE policies, and gender assessment tools - in all forty (40) Colleges of Education in Ghana, and the Gender in Education Policy currently being developed with support from UNICEF. There is still a large gap, however, with regards to the level of understanding of gender concepts and responsiveness, and unavailability of a comprehensive gender mainstreaming tool and assessment criteria for gender responsiveness in the education sector and in the CoEs.

Drawing on findings from the baseline and needs assessment in Ghana, and other teacher education needs in the Africa sub-region, UNESCO-IICBA developed a Gender Responsive Education (GRE) Toolkit to address some of these challenges. The tools in the GRE toolkit critically assess the gender dimensions on physical environment, curriculum, pedagogy, policy, and management practices of CoEs, and extends, multi-purposefully, to assess national education policies for gender responsiveness and mainstreaming.

A training workshop on the GRE toolkit utilization was carried out in Ghana for teacher educators and experts in education from 23rd to 27th April, 2018. The training sought to introduce the GRE toolkit as a standard gender responsive and mainstreaming tool, test its efficacy against standard policies, and orient Ghanaian education stakeholders on its utilization. The training was a sequel to address the needs identified in the baseline and needs assessment study.

The five-day workshop was activity-based and thoroughly covered six modules of the toolkit: gender and schooling, understanding students, gender responsive teacher education and school policy and curricula, teacher education and school environment, the classroom situation, and monitoring and evaluation. Participants were given opportunity to further test the tools on their professional and institutional practices. As part of the activities, a thorough analysis was also done on institutional documents such as the 3-year Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) 2014 syllabus, the National Teachers Standards for Ghana guidelines, Standard High School textbooks, and the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework, to prove the efficacy of the GRE toolkit in assessing gender responsiveness.

¹ UNESCO Accra Office (2015): HFIT project baseline and needs assessment, unpublished report



1: Participants in group activity

2: Representative from NACCA giving a contribution

The workshop equipped participants with practical knowledge and skills to develop gender responsive education systems and carry out critical assessment of curriculum and policies in CoEs and beyond. At the end of the workshop, participants committed to playing active roles in reviewing (and improving) their college policies using the GRE toolkit, and organize further trainings in their CoEs on the utilization of the GRE toolkit. To support the process, UNESCO will provide assistance in organizing a platform with relevant national authorities for participants to share their group work assessment with the GRE Toolkit, findings and recommendations for further action.

WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE TESTIMONIALS

“With this workshop, participants have a better understanding of gender mainstreaming. It is very easy to say “I am gender conscious, gender responsive etc” but through the activities, CoEs now have the idea of ‘the doing’ aspect. The tools were very helpful and it is something that I am going to personally use as a T-TEL Project Officer. I particularly like the tools for analyzing curriculum frameworks. I intend to do a review of the curriculum strands that are actually used for writing in the colleges of education and present a report to T-TEL. The toolkit is something we can introduce in our Colleges of Education. There is an ongoing curriculum for the colleges, and with the toolkit colleges can make their own assessment of the curriculum. This is an add-on for T-TEL’s efforts in gender mainstreaming. Colleges of Education can also use the checklists for college policies to support and assess themselves on how gender responsive they are. I like the fact that the training was very activity based; during this short period of time we have done so much practical work ranging from assessment of policy documents, mainstreaming, to review of institutional documents.”

-Ms. Marjorie Tackie, Gender Expert and Project Officer, T-TEL

“The training is very important since we are trying to make CoEs more gender responsive. It is timely, and it has come to complement the foundation set up by T-TEL. I am on the committee that reviews the college policies; I intend to review each policy, item-by-item to see whether there are biases, and inject gender responsive statements. T-TEL helped us develop 16 policies, we are going to review them again and add the gender component. After, we would empower the mentors and organize an orientation for mentors and staffs. We would add the learning to our training programmes for our students. I am happy that the training didn't just focus on teachers but on college leaders who are the pivot in decision making.”

-Mrs. Juliana Dinko, Teacher Educator, College Policy Review
Committee member, St. Joseph's College of Education.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WORKSHOP

Format of the workshop

The workshop was participatory and activity based –individual and group - and held over a period of 5 days from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and a half-day session (9am - 1pm) on Friday. Participants were provided with resource materials containing the GRE toolkit for the activity sessions.

- **Day 1 – Module 1:** Gender and Schooling
- **Day 2 – Module 2:** Understanding Students adolescence, dealing with adolescence, gender responsive guidance counseling, and assertiveness
- **Day 3 – Module 3:** Gender classification of policies, incorporating gender in policy issues, teacher education policy component, teacher education curriculum
- **Day 4 – Module 4:** Teacher education and school environment: Leadership and Management systems and **Module 5:** The classroom situation: Teaching and Learning Materials
- **Day 5 – Module 6:** Monitoring and evaluation – concepts and steps

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY 1

Sessions in Day 1 explored concepts and activities of Module 1 of the GRE toolkit: Gender and schooling. Participants explored and received clarity/awareness on major gender related concepts and narratives in development discourse, sex and gender roles, social construction of gender inequality and theories that explain them. Individual (personal professional reflections) and group activities using the GRE Toolkit were aimed at identifying the origin of gender misconceptions in institutions and society, understanding the need for improvement in the situation, and possible ways to change/challenge the status quo.

Activities:

Three activities were carried out:

- **Understanding sex roles and gender roles:** Participants completed a table on activities undertaken mostly by men and women in society and discussed the results based on assessment questions on universality, origin of roles, presence of gender equality or inequality and possible ways of changing existing trends.
- **Awareness/knowledge of gender related concepts:** Pair-share activity using the GRE toolkit Tool 1. Participants matched definitions of gender-related concepts to appropriate meanings and discussed explanations in pairs.
- **Reflection on institutions/organizational practices.** Participants were divided into five groups – three colleges of education (St. Francis, St. Joseph, and Ola), GES, and NACCA - and assessed their institutional and personal professional practices to ascertain whether they were gender blind, gender sensitive, or gender responsive.

Outcome

Day 1 concluded with plenary session from the group activity. Discussions, based on activities, overview and assessment with GRE toolkit, exposed that most institutional processes and individual professional practices have elements of gender awareness and gender sensitivity but further action needs to be taken to make them gender responsive. Participants were equipped to do so. (See appendix for group output)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY 2

Sessions in Day 2 explored Module 2; in-depth overview and critical steps in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming of policies, productive and reproductive work, gender dimensions, global frameworks for gender analysis, and understanding students - assertiveness. Participants were taken through the dynamics of the Harvard Analytical Framework, a key tool in the GRE Toolkit. The session aimed at revealing women and men's conditions, needs, access to and control of resources, decision making power and division of labor. It also sought to establish an understanding on the reasoning for carrying out a progressive gender analysis (which should ultimately lead to gender mainstreaming), and facilitate entry points or baseline for designing policies and programs. The end result is to challenge deep-rooted social values that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Activities

Three activities were carried out:

- **Conceptualization and reflection on gender analysis:** Participants individually read through a UNESCO definition of gender analysis and identified key concepts, activities, and purpose. They further gave personal reflections of the concept based on their reorientation on gender analysis.
- **Harvard Analytical Framework tool usage:** Participants were grouped into 4 diverse groups and used checklists in the framework to carry out a comprehensive gender analysis of local communities. The process assessed productive and reproductive activities, decision making, marginalization, bullying, school support, enrolment and performance, access and control of resources in society.
- **Gender mainstreaming process:** Individual activity followed by pair-share discussions. Participants reflected on their understanding of the concept, the steps and made an assessment of their institutional practice using questions provided in the GRE toolkit.

Outcome

Day 2 concluded with plenary session and general discussions on process. T-TEL's Gender Scorecard and gender analytical tools were also identified as complementary analytical framework tools to assess CoEs for gender responsiveness. Discussions highlighted the need to make some incentives available to support CoEs in addition to using the analytical frameworks to ensure that gender responsiveness is more effective, the costly nature of gender responsive implementation, the need to consider gender in education as a sole course of study and the sustainability of the measures established to ensure gender responsiveness. Participants were equipped with knowledge and application of the Harvard Analytical Framework assessment processes, in-depth understanding on gender analysis and process of

attaining and mainstreaming gender responsiveness. (See Appendix for group output)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR DAY 3

Sessions in Day 3 explored a brief continuation of Module 3 section on social modeling and assertiveness before Module 4 was introduced. Deliberation was done on the meaning of policy in education and how to incorporate gender issues into policy and mainstreaming them. Participants received knowledge on how to develop a gender responsive policy and were taken through the six steps of policy formulation: analysis of existing situation, generation of policy options, evaluation of policy options, making policy decisions, planning policy implementation, and policy impact assessment.

Activity

There was one single activity in this session. Participants were distributed into 3 groups.

- **Teacher education document evaluation:** Participants evaluated the 3-year Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) 2014 Syllabus, the National Teachers Standards for Ghana Guidelines, and the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework official documents using the gender responsive education curriculum evaluation check-list tools in the GRE Toolkit.

Outcome

Day 2 concluded with group plenary. Some considerations highlighted in discussions to ensure that education policies are gender responsive (and inclusive) included making gender clauses in policies/curriculum explicit and as cross-cutting themes, carrying out gender disaggregated analysis and feeding data results into policies, and establishing gender review team of college policies which include Gender Champions. The sessions gave participants hands-on experience in policy cycles, gender inclusivity analysis and policy development, identification of gender gaps in official teacher education curriculum and Guidelines documents. Participants also proved the efficacy of the GRE toolkit in education policy assessment, and proffered implementable contributions to policies based on their reorientation on gender inclusivity from the workshop sessions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY 4

Sessions in Day 4 explored Module 4 – Leadership and Management Systems, and Module 5 – Teaching and Learning Materials. Participants were unable to embark on the field visit to school facilities to observe classroom proceedings for some sections of the modules, especially the Physical Environment aspect, because schools in Ghana were on vacation. Overview and discussions centered on gender responsive selection, retention, promotion and management systems, analyzing gender responsive macro-political environment, women representation in educational leadership, and the school and college environment. Gender responsive evaluations were done (using relevant tools in the GRE toolkit) on images in official Junior High School Math

text book and supplementary reading materials, management system processes, classroom interaction and psychological environment.

Activity

There was one activity in this session. Participants were distributed to 3 groups:

- **Evaluation of administration models: selection, promotion, retention and management for principals.** Group one: Principals of St. Francis and St. Josephs' CoE evaluated institutional policies and processes.
- **Evaluation of gender responsive curriculum development processes and teaching and learning materials, and language use.** Group two: NACCA, GES and gender expert from T-TEL.
- **Evaluation of gender responsive macro-political environment, school and college environment, teaching and learning techniques and classroom interaction:** Group three: Teacher educators from Ola, St. Francis, and St. Joseph's CoEs, and gender expert from the GEU.

Outcome

Day 1 concluded with plenary. Discussions from evaluation process highlighted prevalent gender responsive biases at the administration and management level in CoEs, at the national curriculum development level, and at the macro-political level. Discoveries were compelling and stirred critical enquiries (and review) on the identity of curriculum and management policy developers, the process of developing curriculum materials, and the objectivity of the knowledge and ideas of policy and curriculum developers. Participants further declared intention to convey findings to appropriate authorities for implementation. The session equipped participants with skills to develop gender responsive action points and provide critical assessment/review to education curriculum, policies and systems. The evaluation group sessions also provided innovative recommendations to the Ministry of Education and relevant education stakeholders. (See Appendix for Day 3 output)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM DAY 5

Day 5 started with plenary discussions from the previous day's session. The day's activity was theoretical and briefly explored monitoring and evaluation (Module 6) concepts and steps, data collection tools in monitoring and evaluation, and planning and strategy. Participants received overview on what to monitor and how to monitor and evaluate achievements. Contributions highlighted the importance of sharing findings with stakeholders. Monitoring should be incorporated into gender analysis, gender mainstreaming - examining the curriculum, the CoEs management practices and policies.

Way Forward

All the workshop objectives were achieved but the field trip exercise for physical observation in school environment. Participants were appreciative of the new insights and skills from the hands-on capacity building processes.

Action Points

- **Capacity building:** Participants will organize GRE toolkit utilization trainings in their respective schools/institutions to cascade knowledge.
- **Evaluation findings sharing:** UNESCO Accra to provide support to CoEs to organize a platform with appropriate authorities for participants to share group work findings on Ghana's teacher education framework and curriculum materials using the GRE toolkit.
- **CoE policy review:** Participants will play active roles in reviewing their respective college policies using the GRE toolkit.

Day 5 concluded with closing remarks. Participants expressed gratitude to UNESCO and IICBA for their continuous support and capacity building and pledged their availability for subsequent collaborations.