Terms of Reference for the Task Team on Gender

Education Equity Research Initiative

Introduction

Social, economic, and political inequalities are one of the greatest challenges facing the global community today. Nowhere is the challenge more salient than in education, with its potential to positively shape life outcomes – or further exacerbate societal disparities. Equity is at the heart of the new global development agenda, reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal #5, and in the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration, which states: no target should be considered met unless met by all.

Improved data and evidence will help governments and international actors better address the vital, underlying questions for more equitable education systems: Who is being left behind, both in terms of access and learning? How do contextual factors, such as state fragility, and inputs, such as education financing and resource allocation, shape access and learning outcomes for different groups of children? And, how are programmatic interventions and policy initiatives improving or exacerbating existing disparities?

Launched in March 2016, the Education Equity Research Initiative is a vital forum for bringing collective knowledge and expertise together to address the challenge of equity. It connects researchers, technical experts working in implementing organizations, and decision makers at the policy level around a common goal and framework. As such, the Equity Initiative is a learning entity that generates questions, identifies priorities, and finds experts who can address them, within the same community of practice. Through its work, the Education Equity Research Initiative is building a stronger knowledge and evidence base on root causes and effective solutions for improving equality in educational participation and learning.

Definitions

We think it’s important to clarify what we mean by equality and equity in education – given that these terms are often used interchangeably but do have different meanings. Achieving equality in education is when

- all students are treated equally by authorities responsible for education;
- laws and policies do not discriminate against anyone because they are a girl, boy or young person with a different gender identity;
- all students have equal access to education;
- cultural norms in the school or community do not discriminate against young people because of their gender identity;
- educational authorities do not use their power to disempower or disenfranchise students;
- all students can participate fully in the educational process; and
- the time they have to devote to school is not restricted because of their gender identity.
When we discuss educational equity, we mean that we are trying to compensate for a lack of equality in opportunity or outcomes. For example, some policies may have to be adjusted to favor girls over boys after it has been investigated and determined that girls are at a disadvantage and that we need to improve access, participation and learning achievement in education for girls.

Objectives/Expected Results

The **objective** of the Task Team on Gender is to improve understanding of the different ways that girls, boys and young people of diverse gender identities experience education, both in the classroom/school setting as well as in the family, community and other social institutions where broader social norms around gender and education are developed and reinforced.

What the Task Team means by “experience in education” will have to be fully defined; however, it can be further clarified by stating that it is affected by:

- **Age**, socio-economic status, urban/rural location, religion/language and other geographic contexts
- **Government policies and program**
  - Teaching and learning materials
  - Opportunity to learn
- **Teaching and learning processes**
  - Student-teacher interaction
  - Student-student interaction
  - Opportunity to learn
- **Social interactions**
  - Peer interactions
  - Teacher/student social interactions
  - Gender-based Violence in the school and outside of the school
  - Social expectations and requirements
- **Family expectations and support for education**
- **Individual characteristics**
  - Beliefs and attitudes
  - Agency related to obtaining an education
  - Social and emotional learning competencies

**Guiding research questions** for the Task Team on Gender will include:

- What are the different ways that girls, boys and young people of diverse gender identities experience education in the classroom and school and how does this vary by context?
- What are the ways that social norms shape boys’ and girls’ experiences of education and educational outcomes?
- What government policies and programs can we learn from to better understand what works to
  a) shift attitudes, behaviors and norms in support of gender equity in education;
  b) address gender-specific disparities in how girls, boys and young people of diverse gender identities experience education?

The Task Team on Gender will accomplish this objective through the following **lines of work**: 

---

September 2018
Education Equity Research Initiative
Terms of Reference for the Task Team on Gender

• convening individuals and organizations committed to improving data and evidence in this area;
• synthesizing existing research into a common conceptual framework for “experience in education” to guide inquiry;
• creating and testing tools to improve data and evidence related to the objective and guiding research questions; and
• creating, presenting and disseminating data and evidence related to the objective and guiding research questions.

The Task Team on Gender will present their work products through panel(s) and/or workshop(s) at CIES 2019 and other relevant forums.

Once constituted, the Task Team on Gender will consider these objectives, set priorities and deliverables, and set a timeline and work plan for completion.

Membership, Participation, and Roles and Responsibilities

Membership is open to individuals and organizations with relevant interests and experience who are able to commit to carrying out the work described here.

The Task Team on Gender will be led by two co-chairs who will manage the work of the group, including establishing the membership, finalizing the objectives and work plan, setting meetings and managing the work of the group, maintaining the Task Team on Gender SharePoint page, and working with communications staff of FHI 360 to produce and disseminate the team’s work products.

The term of the task team will be through April 2019 (CIES 2019). Work on the Task Team will include participating in regular meetings (1-2 hours per month) and time necessary to contribute to the completion of specific work products. It is expected the members of the Task Team on Gender will cover all their own expenses.

As members of the Task Team on Gender, members will commit to using and promoting the team’s work products within their own organizations and, as requested, on behalf of the Education Equity Research Initiative to external audiences.

Reporting

The Task Team on Gender is constituted as part of the Work Stream on Learning and Retention and will report on a monthly basis to the Initiative’s Steering Group. The chair of the Working Group on Learning and Retention will provide support and guidance to the Task Team on Disability as needed.