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GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AND PROTRACTED CRISES: GLOBAL REVIEW AND LEARNING BRIEF

PART 3:

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Shunhana, 17, and Sheemla, 16, learn in class at their madrasa school, Bangladesh

CONTENTS

List of acronyms	2
I. Introduction	3
II. Recommendations	4
Recommendations for ECW	5
Recommendations for EiE practitioners	6
Recommendations for policy makers	9
Recommendations for donors	10

LIST OF ACRONYMS

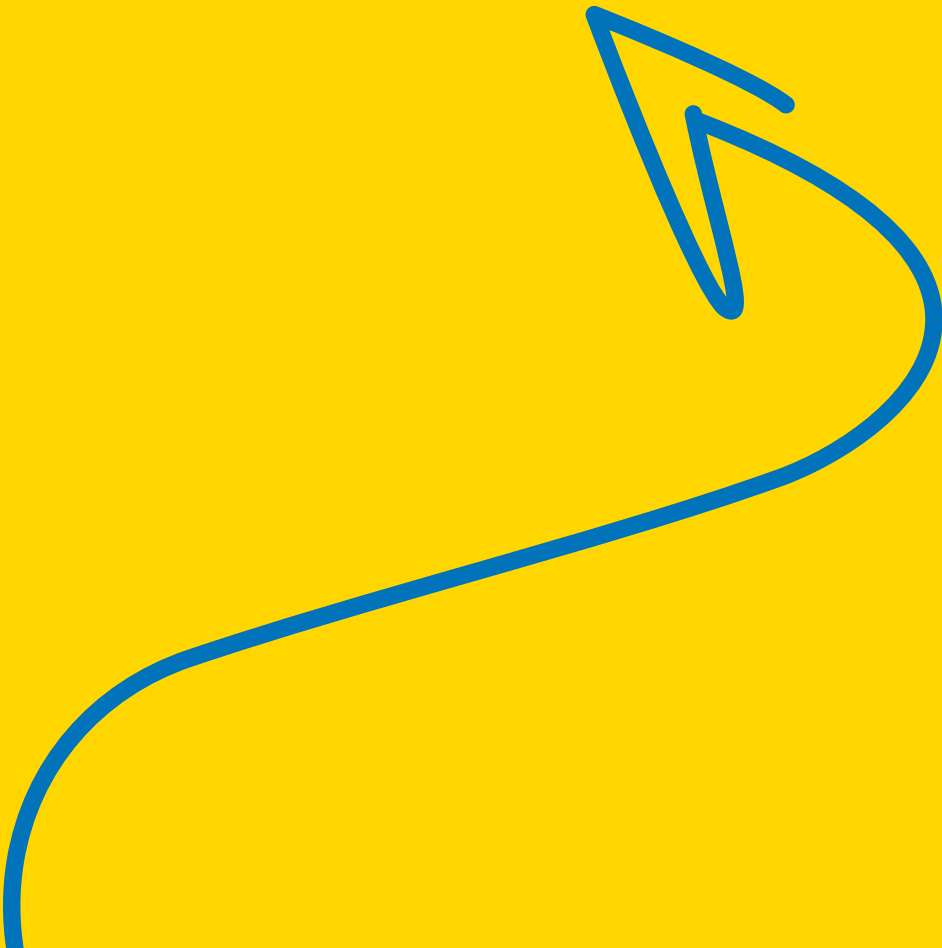
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EiEPC	Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises
GBV	Gender-based violence
GLOs	Gender lead organisations
LWOs	Local women's organisations
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MYRP	Multi-Year Resilience Programme
PGI	Protection, gender and inclusion
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene



I. INTRODUCTION

This document is Part 3 of *Gender Transformative Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises: Global Review and Learning Brief*, developed through a global review of promising practices under the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Gender Acceleration Facility. This part provides strategic recommendations for advancing gender transformative approaches. The recommendations are grounded in evidence and experience from ECW-supported Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs) and are directed at key actors in the EiEPC ecosystem, including ECW, EiE practitioners, policy makers and donors. This document can be used independently or as part of the full Learning Brief package.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECW

Top priorities

- Ensure that gender lead organisations (GLOs) are systematically engaged from the strategy and proposal design stage, with clearly defined roles and dedicated funding throughout programme cycles to guarantee consistent gender integration and technical support.
- Strengthen early and iterative engagement of the ECW Gender Equality team in the MYRP design process, avoiding last-minute revisions and ensuring that transformative elements are embedded from the outset.
- Require gender assessment for EiEPC to be conducted during the design of the MYRPs. Additionally, ensure that a budget is allocated for existing MYRPs for this purpose or when a plan is in place to start a new MYRP to ensure that specific gender barriers are considered in the design of the MYRPs. These assessments should include an intersectional analysis that accounts for disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and other intersecting factors affecting access to education.
- Systematically include gender transformative indicators in MYRP results frameworks and provide support for tracking changes in gender norms, attitudes and empowerment, with a particular focus on outcome-level indicators – such as shifts in agency and decision-making power – to clearly distinguish them from output indicators.
- Allocate specific budget and strengthen local women’s organisations’ engagement in the implementation of MYRPs to ensure that the most marginalised groups and locations are reached under the MYRPs.

Going further: Strengthen ECW’s role

Beyond these priorities, ECW should continue to strengthen its role as a global convener by facilitating a community of practice among GLOs, fostering peer learning and the harmonisation of gender transformative strategies across regions. Youth-led and feminist organisations should be actively engaged in these networks to ensure that diverse voices inform programming and drive intergenerational learning. To improve accountability, ECW should ensure consistent use of the PGI self-assessment and quality assurance checklist across all MYRPs and should monitor its application closely. Further efforts are needed to bridge the gap between global frameworks and local realities by developing simplified implementation tools and providing tailored training for country teams and partners.

Finally, ECW should lead **evidence-based advocacy** to influence global and national education policies, with a view to tackling misconceptions about gender transformative education through targeted campaigns and ensuring that **intersectional perspectives** – including disability and SOGIESC dimensions – are integrated across all initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EIE PRACTITIONERS

Top priorities

- Convene ECW's Gender team and other gender experts to provide technical guidance on gender transformative frameworks before and during proposal development (when designing an MYRP).
- Include local women's organisations (LWOs) as key actors in programme design and implementation, supported by mapping tools, capacity-building and direct funding.
- Develop intervention strategies that engage multiple levels simultaneously – girls, boys, families, communities, schools and institutional actors – integrating the gender domains (norms, agency, diversity, enabling environment, and condition and position).
- Ensure at least 25 per cent of programme budget is dedicated to gender-targeted outputs and establish budget lines for GLO-led initiatives.
- Design and implement capacity-building initiatives for gender focal points and education staff that are practical, contextualised and focused on daily responsibilities.
- Incorporate participatory monitoring and feedback mechanisms into programme cycles, validating assumptions and adapting programmes based on community input.
- Ensure early and meaningful engagement of LWOs in programme design and implementation, supported by mapping tools, capacity-building and direct funding.
- Foster collaboration across education, protection, WASH, nutrition and health to maximise holistic, gender transformative impact.
- Integrate gender-related risks into programme risk matrices and mitigation strategies, particularly addressing cross-sector vulnerabilities.
- Focus on action rather than terminology: *"A lot of people ask me to explain the difference, and honestly, my advice is don't get caught up in new terminology. The objective remains the same: to promote gender equality, empower girls and women, and address the root causes of power imbalances. Spending too much time debating terminology can distract from the actual work that needs to be done."* (Global actor interview)

Going further: Strengthen gender transformative approaches

Beyond these priorities, EiE practitioners should adopt a systematic approach to integrating gender transformative strategies throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation phases of MYRPs.

Design phase

During programme design, cross-sectoral collaboration – including WASH, child protection, MHPSS and GBV actors – should be prioritised to ensure a holistic approach to gender equality. Programmes should begin with a comprehensive gender assessment, applying an intersectional lens to identify overlapping barriers faced by marginalised groups.

Where it is not feasible to conduct a full intersectional needs assessment during the design phase, relevant research and existing studies should be integrated into programme planning to address evidence gaps. At this stage, implementers should also socialise ECW's PGI self-assessment and quality assurance checklist across all partners, embedding these tools throughout proposal development to improve alignment and quality.

Lessons learned from previous MYRP phases or other similar programmes should inform future design choices. Adopting a dual approach is also critical, combining community participation (bottom-up) with government engagement and policy alignment (top-down) from the outset. This fosters both local ownership and systemic change.

Finally, programmes should mainstream gender across all strategies, aligning outputs with the gendered barriers identified during assessments and applying a rights-based programming and budgeting approach supported by ECW's available tools and guidance.

Implementation phase

During implementation, programme partners should designate gender focal points with the expertise and authority to sustain gender transformative approaches. GLOs should lead capacity needs assessments and provide targeted gender trainings to strengthen staff capabilities.

User-friendly, locally adapted resources – such as infographics, checklists and practical guides – should be co-developed to support gender transformative education. These resources must include tailored content for working with LGBTQI+ youth, children with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

To foster reciprocal learning, education and gender teams should collaborate through cross-training, joint resource development and peer exchange. Integrated programming should also be strengthened by establishing formal partnerships with actors in other sectors, including child protection, GBV, nutrition and health, to deliver cohesive and holistic services.

Finally, programmes should address potential resistance to gender equality by engaging men, boys and community leaders in transformative initiatives and by adapting curricula and training materials to embed gender sensitive elements effectively. Advocacy should be data-driven and based on evidence from needs assessments to ensure credibility and impact.



Hadiza, 14, Nigeria, is now back in school after support from the child help desk

Monitoring and evaluation phase

Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are critical to ensuring that programmes remain responsive and effective. Participatory monitoring mechanisms should be integrated into programme cycles, enabling communities to validate assumptions and inform real-time adaptations.

Programmes should include gender transformative indicators within results frameworks, focusing on outcomes such as shifts in gender norms, empowerment and decision-making power. Standardised data collection tools should be designed to integrate intersectionality and allow for meaningful comparisons across contexts.

Additionally, enumerators must be trained in gender transformative methodologies and ethical data collection practices to ensure inclusivity and quality. Before interventions are finalised, programmes should test their assumptions with communities, ensuring alignment with local priorities and real needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

Top priorities

- Integrate gender transformation into ongoing policy discussions, ensuring alignment with global priorities such as the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, localisation and GBV prevention.
- Institutionalise the consultation of adolescent girls, women and marginalised groups in the development of education and gender policies, ensuring grounded and inclusive decisions. This should include establishing regular institutionalised mechanisms – such as national youth or adolescent girl councils – rather than relying on isolated or one-off consultations.
- Strengthen and fund gender units within Ministries of Education, mandating their role in driving gender transformative approaches in policy and practice.
- Establish cross-ministerial coordination mechanisms linking education, protection, health and gender to address structural barriers to inclusion.
- Facilitate access for LWOs by streamlining institutional and bureaucratic processes, enabling their meaningful participation in national education planning and coordination platforms.
- Integrate PGI training into education sector capacity development strategies to create sustained ownership at national and sub-national levels.



Hellena, 17, attends a primary school in Lakes State, South Sudan which is supported by Plan International

Plan International / Peter Caton

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS

Top priorities

- Provide flexible, multi-year funding that supports the continuity of gender transformative education initiatives, particularly in protracted crises.
- Fund intersectional needs assessments and research studies that generate disaggregated, context-specific evidence to guide programme design and advocacy. Prioritise data collection that disaggregates by gender identity, sexual orientation and disability.
- Adapt compliance and due diligence procedures to support the meaningful inclusion of LWOs, by co-designing lighter and contextually appropriate compliance mechanisms in collaboration with LWOs, rather than merely adapting existing frameworks. This approach recognises LWOs' unique strengths and constraints while ensuring practical and sustainable engagement.
- Prioritise funding for adolescent-led and youth feminist organisations, recognising the growing role of youth leadership in promoting gender equality and social transformation.
- Allocate funds towards gender transformative education and shift beyond parity-focused metrics to support sustainable and systemic change.

Going further: Strengthen donor contributions to gender transformative education

Donors play a critical role in enabling sustainable gender transformation within education in emergencies and protracted crises. Beyond the top priorities, funding strategies should emphasise flexibility, inclusion and alignment with global priorities.

Investing in accessible, practical guidance materials for implementers at all levels is essential. These tools should be simplified, translated into local languages and tailored to diverse contexts to ensure usability and effectiveness. In addition, donors should support the development and adoption of frameworks that measure deeper shifts – such as transformations in social norms, power dynamics and inclusion – to move beyond surface-level parity indicators and to track genuine gender equality progress.

Furthermore, donor funding strategies should link gender transformative education to broader global priorities, including the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and GBV prevention frameworks. Strengthening these connections fosters cross-sectoral synergies and maximises the overall impact of investments.

Finally, donors should acknowledge that not embedding gender transformative education carries a high cost. Funding priorities and advocacy efforts must reflect the long-term consequences of underinvestment, positioning gender equality as a strategic imperative rather than a secondary consideration.



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