ALiGN Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms

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NURTURING GENDER-EQUITABLE MASCULINITIES

LESSONS FOR TRANSFORMING NORMS THROUGH EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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Acronyms

C3	Centre for Catalyzing Change
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
CSO	Civil society organisation
ECD	Early childhood development
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEMS	Gender Equity Movement in Schools
GUG	Growing Up GREAT!
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
KII	Key informant interview
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (the plus sign represents people with diverse sexual and/or gender who identify using other terms)
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PLC	Professional learning communities
RSE	Relationships and sex education
SEL	Social and emotional learning
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Glossary

Gender-related terms

Dominant masculinities – forms of masculinity that are commonly upheld as the 'right' way to be a man or a boy. In many contexts, these masculinities position men as superior to women and girls – with negative consequences for people of all genders.

Gender-equitable masculinities – forms of masculinity that explicitly involve a commitment to gender equality or equity.

Gender norms – context- and time-specific sets of social norms that define socially acceptable behaviour, roles and entitlements for people who identify (or are identified by others) as male or female.

Gender socialisation – the processes by which children learn expected gendered norms in their society.

Gender-transformative education – seeks to leverage education to address some of the factors underlying gender inequalities, such as unequal gender norms and gender stereotypes.

Masculinities – social norms associated with being a man or boy. Conceptualisations of masculinity vary across social and cultural contexts, and over time.

Misogyny – hatred of or prejudice towards women and girls.

Sexism – prejudice or discrimination against, or stereotyping of, women and girls on the basis of sex.

Social norms – rules, often informal and implicit, that shape people's behaviours under a threat of sanctions or rewards.

Education terms

Gender-responsive pedagogy – recognises differentiated needs of boys and girls in all aspects of teaching and learning, ranging from materials and content to language use and classroom interactions.

Learner-centred pedagogy – emphasises students' interests and objectives, which results in active and participatory learning processes, such as debates and discussions.

Whole-school approach – considers the entire school ecosystem rather than its constitutive parts when working with students and teachers to achieve change, for example towards gender equality.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

> [F]or many younger men in some settings, the case must still be made for why gender equality is urgently needed and has not yet been achieved, which presents a serious challenge for policymakers, activists, and educators alike.
> *(Equimundo, 2022: 26)*

Despite structural shifts towards wider economic, social and political roles for women in many countries, and centuries of campaigning for women's rights and gender equality – misogyny and gender-inequitable attitudes persist. Global surveys show an increasingly progressive trend in women's attitudes towards gender equality issues, with younger generations typically more gender-equitable than their older counterparts. But among men the picture is more complex: as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, some recent surveys have identified a trend towards more gender-inequitable attitudes among adolescent boys and young men (Equimundo, 2022; Betts Razavi, 2024).[1]

Education has long been recognised as a critical space where gender-equitable values may be nurtured among both boys and girls (Stromquist, 2007; Unterhalter, 2019). Indeed, some studies have found that attending school – particularly beyond lower-secondary level – is associated with more gender-equitable attitudes, even without extensive or explicitly gender equality-focused curriculum content (Aslam et al., 2008; Marcus and Page, 2016). A common response to the rise in popularity of misogynistic online influencers is to call for content on gender-equitable values to be included in curricula, with the hope that, by 'catching students young', support for sexist and misogynistic views can be 'nipped in the bud'.[2] But, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, education systems can also reinforce gender stereotypes and inequitable norms.

Given that 250 million children and adolescents (just over half of them boys) are still missing out on education, any discussion of how formal education can contribute to social change must recognise the vital importance of sustained efforts to universalise access to education (UNESCO, 2023a). As rates of participation in formal school-based education have risen over recent decades, so has its potential to reach young people at scale, and over an extended period of up to 12 years.

Furthermore, education is, at its core, not only about acquiring new knowledge, but also about developing new skills and values. As such, education systems hold out the promise of catalysing a generational shift towards more gender-equitable values. Recognising this, recent years have seen a renewed emphasis on what is increasingly termed 'gender-transformative' education: structured and intentional efforts to leverage education to root norms of equality between people of different genders among new generations (Plan International and UNGEI, 2021; Marcus, 2024).

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1 Available evidence does not indicate a clear country- or region-based pattern (Betts Razavi, 2024).

2 For example, at the time of writing, the UK Labour government was considering proposals for tackling misogyny including through action in schools (Oppenheim, 2024). Keddie (2021) also documents such calls in Australia and the United States.

However, 'the devil is in the detail'. This high-level view of the unique potential of education to catalyse gender-equitable norms at scale reflects a clear vision and purpose. But for this potential to be realised it is important to recognise a number of forces at different levels that make this a complex challenge.

Most fundamentally, the idea that education systems should seek to inculcate gender-equitable values is by no means universally accepted. What those values should be and whether they should include commitments to human rights and gender equality remains contested – particularly when they form part of relationships and sex education (RSE). Resistance to schools teaching gender-related content (and particularly against 'gender ideology') has become the focus of increasingly organised and widespread political campaigns (D'Angelo, Marcus et al., 2024), alongside 'everyday' resistance from parents, teachers, school leaders and education sector officials (GPE, 2023).[3]

Further, students' values and attitudes are not something for which education systems and schools are normally held accountable. Instead, their performance is usually judged in terms of success in meeting targets for student learning, and particularly pass rates for national exams. This can mean that intangible, harder to measure, and non-examined content – such as on values, and other aspects of citizenship or relationships education – is often deprioritised in favour of content or skills for passing key exams (Keogh et al., 2021).

At the same time, many education systems recognise values of equality, respect and peaceful social relationships as something they should nurture, often explicitly making commitments to gender equality. Education sector laws, policies and plans capture this vision, as in Chile, Colombia and Rwanda, to name a few examples (Secretaría de Educación del Distrito, 2014; Rwanda Education Board, 2015; CPEIP n.d.). In some countries this has translated into gender equality content being included in national RSE curricula, as, for example, in Argentina, Cuba and Uruguay (Ronconi et al., 2023).[4] A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) survey of 58 countries found that 85% of RSE curricula were reported to have content on gender norms and equality, with just under 60% reporting that the topics were covered extensively (UNESCO et al., 2021).[5] However, just because a curriculum contains certain content this does not mean it is actually taught in full.

The challenges in teaching content perceived as controversial, embarrassing or difficult, such as gender equality-related topics and RSE, are well-documented (Rutgers, 2021; Chavula et al., 2022). They include teachers' under-preparedness to teach such content, discomfort with material that may contradict religious or cultural beliefs, insufficient supportive materials, and challenges related to the nature of student–teacher relationships discussing intimate topics. One approach to strengthening gender equality content in education has thus been to invest in strengthening RSE curricula, and teachers' skills to teach them effectively.

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3 Gender ideology is a term used by some constituencies espousing conservative views of gender and sexuality to discredit feminist and queer views of gender as a social construct (Martínez et al., 2021).

4 This content is under threat since the election of President Javier Milei and the defunding of sexuality education in Argentina (del Bianco, 2024).

5 The proportions were lower in the 24 African countries, where only 35% had extensive or established content on gender (UNESCO et al., 2021).

In parallel, much of the innovation in developing curricula and pedagogies for nurturing gender-equitable values has come from civil society initiatives, often at small scale. Some of these developed as part of efforts to strengthen RSE; others have grown from efforts to prevent gender-based violence. These initiatives often build on pedagogical approaches developed in non-formal settings that are exploratory and non-hierarchical and that aim to inspire deep-seated processes of reflection, critical thinking and commitment to personal and social change. Such approaches do not necessarily sit comfortably within educational cultures that follow a more didactic model, all the more so where overcrowding and under-resourcing create significant challenges for participatory and non-hierarchical approaches to learning.

This raises the question of how far approaches to teaching about gender equality that are learner-centred and emphasise critical thinking can be scaled up in educational environments where other incentives take precedence. Can the promise of gender-transformative education at scale be realised? And what potential does it have to transform sexist and misogynistic gender norms, especially among boys?

1.2 Key questions and scope

Given the context described in Section 1.1, the key area of knowledge and practice to which this report seeks to contribute can be broadly summarised by the following question:

How can formal education more effectively contribute to equitable gender norms, particularly among boys?

To answer this, the report probes the following questions and issues:

1) What approaches to nurturing gender-equitable values with students and teachers have proved effective and why?
2) Are there lessons from broader education for social change with relevance to gender-transformative education?[6]
3) How can education systems better support promising approaches at scale?

The scope of the report is bounded in the following ways:

A focus on formal education. The report focuses on formal education for three reasons. First, formal education has the potential to reach children and adolescents at scale, in a way that very few non-formal initiatives can. Second, learning from initiatives and experiences in formal education is much less well-documented than community-based efforts to nurture gender-equitable masculinities among adolescent boys.[7] Third, implementing initiatives at scale generally requires trade-offs and often means that aspects of positive practices in small-scale pilot initiatives are lost as initiatives are rolled out. The review therefore seeks to understand what gender equality education as practised at scale in schools in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) looks like in practice, and how far it is able to include potentially transformative

6 This refers to human rights and peace education, and equality-focused education, such as anti-racist or LGBTQI-inclusive education.
7 Examples include Marcus et al. (2018) and UNESCO (2022a).

pedagogical practices. Insights from non-formal initiatives are included where relevant to formal education systems, but are otherwise beyond the scope of this report.

A focus on low- and middle-income countries. This report focuses on initiatives in LMICs, which are under-documented and synthesised to date. It seeks to synthesise insights that are relevant to contexts with particularly limited resources. Where relevant, the report also draws on learning from high-income contexts, which are often better documented.

A focus on primary and secondary education. Where available, insights from initiatives working at pre-primary level and technical and vocational education have been included, but focused searches for these two levels were not conducted. Higher education was outside the scope of this review.

Aspects of gender equality and intersectionality. In recent years the concept of gender equality has often been broadened to include people who identify outside a male/female binary. However, the focus of this report is largely on norms related to equality between people who identify – or are identified by others – as male and female. There are several reasons for this, both strategic and practical. The rise in anti-feminist discourse and internet-mediated misogyny, and continued high levels of violence against women and girls mean that galvanising much stronger and more effective action to nurture gender-equitable values through education is an urgent policy priority.[8]

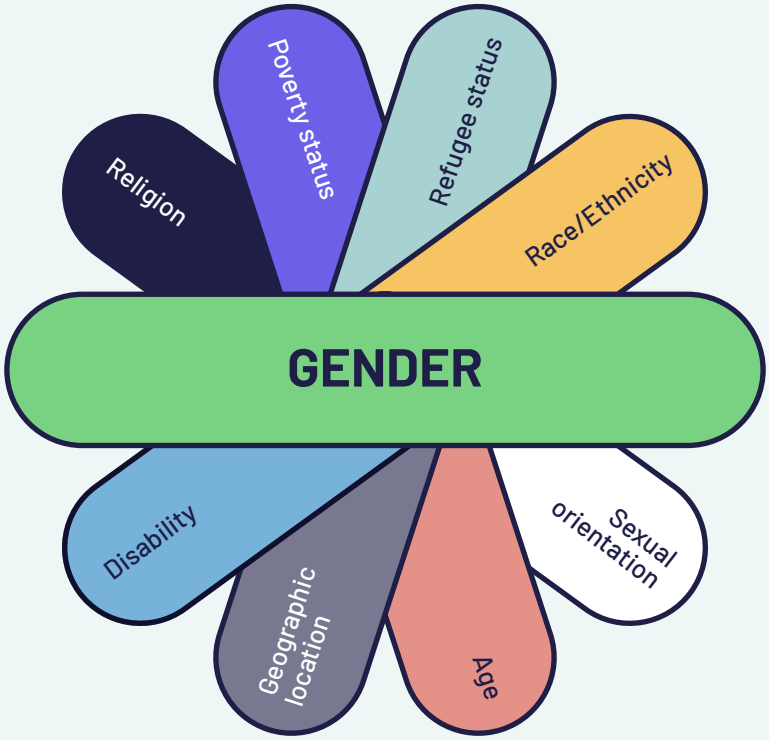
Practically, in the available time and budget for this research, it was not possible to do full justice to both school-based initiatives to reduce misogyny and sexism and those to reduce discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The report therefore focuses largely on approaches that aim to build more equitable attitudes and behaviour among boys towards women and girls, for which the body of evidence is greater. The authors hope that insights will also be relevant to school-based efforts to enhance the inclusion of LGBTQI+ and other marginalised students and that further research will be conducted to fill knowledge gaps about eradicating transphobia and homophobia.

Gender is only ever one element of a person's identity. Figure 1 illustrates some of the many other factors that intersect with norms of masculinity and femininity and form part of people's identities. Intersecting norms affect, for example, how boys from oppressed racial groups, economically disadvantaged backgrounds or GBTQI+ communities experience their gendered lives and what expectations their families and communities place on them. This in turn shapes how these boys experience school curricula and initiatives that may be designed and implemented largely with cis-/heterosexual boys or racially privileged groups as the frame of reference. In practice, few of the studies discussed in Chapters 3–5 reflect on how these differences affect prevailing gender norms in a particular context, or how efforts to shift gender norms through education have incorporated an intersectional understanding.[9]

8 World Health Organization data for the period 2010–2018 indicate that 30% of women and girls have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2024).

9 This may be because evaluations are often undertaken with relatively small and homogenous samples, meaning that fewer intersectional differences arise than at population level.

Figure 1: Intersecting elements of identity that affect children's educational experience and learning



Source: GPE (2023: 14)

1.3 Methodology

The report is based on an extensive review of academic and grey literature over the period March 2023 to May 2024, and eight key informant interviews (KIIs). It draws on Google and Google Scholar searches in English, French and Spanish and on targeted searches of organisations working in this area. Additional references were snowballed from sources reviewed. An online survey in December 2023 and January 2024 resulted in nine further examples.[10]

The research was undertaken in three stages. The first stage focused on identifying initiatives in formal education systems that were working to promote gender-equitable norms and values, and that were not exclusively targeted at girls. The most relevant of these initiatives – and ones for which evaluation evidence was available – are summarised in Annex 1. A wider set are outlined on the spreadsheet that accompanies this report (D'Angelo, 2024).

10 The survey was available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. It sought to capture additional programmatic examples with evidence of impact on boys' attitudes or behaviours.

The second stage involved a review of wider literature on strengthening gender-equitable norms and values through education. This focused on emerging insights in three key areas:

- the design and framing of initiatives working effectively on gender equality with boys (Chapter 3)
- supporting teachers to integrate gender equality principles into their practice (often termed gender-responsive pedagogy), including reflecting on good practice in teacher professional development, and how insights from this broader body of knowledge could strengthen teachers' capacities to teach in a gender-equitable way (Chapter 4)
- developing or strengthening education systems to provide an enabling environment for gender-equitable teaching (Chapter 5).

A third stage reviewed literature synthesising well-established and emerging practice in education for social change more broadly, and from specific studies of human rights, peace and anti-racist education (i.e. without a specific focus on gender equality, though this was sometimes included in more intersectional approaches). These studies focus on how students and teachers can be supported to develop more equitable attitudes and behaviours and, in the case of teachers, to integrate these perspectives into their teaching. Some of this literature is grounded in insights around the psychology of personal transformation and education for social justice. The report aims to integrate insights from these three bodies of literature. In so doing, it goes beyond available reviews, or individual studies of 'what works' to promote gender-transformative change through education and aims instead to deepen thinking around how to achieve sustainable change.

The KIIs aimed to probe insights around deep and long-lasting change processes. The participants were purposefully selected from organisations in the Global South and North that were reviewed in the research or were known to the researchers (see Annex 2 for a full list of participants). The majority of KIIs were undertaken with practitioners working directly with boys in school contexts and focused on harnessing lessons learnt and best practices, for example on preventing resistance and backlash from the boys and effective approaches to integrating programmes into curriculum or developing teachers' skills. One interview focused on scaling up gender-equitable curricula, including strategies to gain buy-in from governments and ways of ensuring teachers are adequately prepared to teach them.

1.3.1 Limitations

Despite efforts to be as comprehensive as possible, this was not a systematic review and relevant studies may have been missed. The focus on explicit efforts to shift gender norms may have led to some insights from initiatives with a broader purpose being excluded, such as some efforts to promote learner-centred pedagogy. Also, the search for rigorous evaluation evidence is likely to have biased the sources found towards smaller-scale initiatives and away from more systemic reforms and processes. In particular, the research team found no studies of the impacts of national (or other large-scale) curriculum reforms to integrate gender equality content.

There are many more evaluations of initiatives working directly with students than of teacher education for gender equality. To partially redress these biases the report draws on related wider literature, where available. Certain regions, particularly the Middle East and North Africa and East and Southeast Asia, are under-represented. This may reflect an absence of studies or the language competencies of the research team.

Lastly, because the research focused on identifying approaches to nurture gender-equitable masculinities, programmes or curricula that defined themselves using other related concepts in English or other languages may not be fully captured in the study. This can include, for example, gender justice, feminist or liberatory pedagogies, which may be the preferred conceptualisation of some academics and practitioners. Several – but not all programmes – described themselves as gender-transformative; others aim to promote gender equality or gender equity, typically using the language most resonant in their context, rather than necessarily drawing on theory-based distinctions between these different concepts. Recognising these diversities and nuances, when referring to a particular programme or organisation, the report uses the terminology of their choice and preference.

2 Background and conceptual framework

2.1 Gender norms and masculinities: key concepts and definitions

Gender norms refer to the informal rules for expected behaviour based on a person's sex. These vary among different social groups and cultural contexts, and intersect with other aspects of identity (such as age, ethnic or religious identity, among many others, Harper et al., 2020). Children are socialised into these gender norms from birth to a greater or lesser degree in different cultural contexts and at different ages (UNICEF and ODI, 2020). This socialisation takes place through multiple social institutions including families, schools and the media (John et al., 2017; Brussino and McBrien, 2022).

Masculinity (or masculinities) refers to societal ideals of what it means to be a man or a boy. Like other gender norms, norms of masculinity vary across cultures and between social groups and evolve over time. For example, they are shaped differently by the salience of race and ethnicity, as well as sexual orientation and gender expression or religion. As a result, ideas about what it means to be a gay boy from an ethnic minority, for example, will be different from the societal ideals of boys and young men who belong to dominant groups. As boys grow from childhood to adolescence and adulthood, they are often faced with heightened pressures to prove their manhood, typically by behaving in ways seen as consistent with men like them in their societies (Verma and Khurana, 2023).

Studies of norms of masculinity among adolescents (drawn mostly from studies in North America and western Europe, but also including Brazil and Mexico) found that young adolescents generally endorsed norms of masculinity related to:

- physical toughness, e.g. showing higher tolerance for pain, engaging in fights, competing in sports
- economic autonomy and responsibility, e.g. being financially independent, protecting and providing for families
- emotional stoicism, e.g. not showing vulnerabilities, dealing with problems on one's own
- heterosexual prowess, e.g. having a girlfriend, having sex with many girls, exercising control over girls in relationships (Kågesten et al., 2016; Amin et al., 2018).

2.2 How education can reinforce dominant masculinities

Within education systems, the curriculum and associated learning materials – the knowledge and ideas to which students are exposed in lessons – are key channels through which gender norms are transmitted, questioned or reinforced.[11] These may be explicitly pro-gender equality (as in the examples discussed in Chapters 3 and 4). However, they often reinforce current or historical norms and stereotypes and implicitly normalise gendered patterns of behaviour and gendered inequalities (Blumberg, 2008; Brussino and McBrien, 2022). For example, learning materials often depict stereotypical gender roles, showing men in public positions of power, as leaders, and as breadwinners and providers in heterosexual families, and/or feature more men and boys than women and girls.[12] Efforts to remove gender stereotypes have typically concentrated on showing women and girls in male-dominated roles, with relatively less attention to how boys and men are depicted.

Potentially even more influential with respect to gender norms is the 'hidden curriculum', defined as 'unspoken or implicit academic, social, and cultural messages that are communicated to students while they are in school' (Glossary of Education Reform, 2015). The hidden curriculum is transmitted consciously or unconsciously by teachers and peers and through institutionalised school practices that are sometimes implicitly or explicitly gendered (such as dress codes and management of space – for example, the allocation of playground time and space). The norms embodied in the hidden curriculum are never only gendered – they also reflect age, class and other social differences relevant in different contexts, such as race or religion, and take on different meaning as boys transition from childhood into adulthood (Banati et al., 2024). Socially approved behaviour for an 8-year-old boy is vastly different to that expected of a 16-year-old, for example.

The role of teachers. As authority figures, teachers play an important role in setting expectations about acceptable (gendered) behaviour, and their own perspectives can have outsized influence. For example, teachers may disagree with curriculum content (from either a pro- or anti-gender equality perspective; see Chapter 4), or replicate gender stereotypes about boys' or girls' capabilities or probable futures (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Oviedo and Spurzem, 2019). Teachers may also indirectly cement models of gender relations, through reference to religious figures or texts, and through the types of questions they raise (and what goes unquestioned) (Namatende-Sakwa, 2019).

In a review of evidence on gender norms in adolescence, 14 studies (largely from Europe and North America) reported schools and teachers reinforcing stereotypical or dominant gender norms (Kågesten et al., 2016). Similar findings are common in other world regions, with examples documented in China, Malawi and Mexico, among other countries (UNESCO, 2020). For example, teachers can uphold unequal and harmful norms by celebrating boys' competitiveness, encouraging assertiveness, tolerating aggression (including sexualised banter or aggression), or punishing expressions of emotions that are understood as feminine (Martino and

11 This section will focus on the processes by which dominant forms of masculinities are reinforced through education. The implications for boys' emotional and social well-being are outside the scope of this report but are discussed in studies such as Rice et al. (2021) and Equimundo, (2022). The report refers to dominant, rather than hegemonic, masculinities, recognising critiques of the latter concept.

12 For example, analysis of 110 national curriculum frameworks in 78 countries found persistent gender biases and stereotypes, particularly in maths and science textbooks, with women highly under-represented in these fields (Chavatzia, 2017, cited in Brussino and McBrien, 2022).

Frank, 2006; Stromquist, 2007; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Wilson et al., 2022). Depending on prevailing gender norms and expectations, they may stereotype boys as more deserving of or requiring greater attention from teachers (Stromquist, 2007).

Teachers may uphold norms and stereotypes consciously, explicitly referencing the behaviour they perceive as appropriate for boys and girls, or unconsciously, through the different ways they respond to boys and girls (Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Stromquist, 2007). For example, they may replicate conscious or unconscious beliefs in boys' greater capability, propensity and desire to lead and thereby contribute to normalising gendered leadership patterns (Gajda et al., 2022). Or they may expect boys to be boisterous or disruptive and either dismiss such behaviour or discipline boys more harshly (Singh and Bipath, 2024).

The role of peers. Peer influences with respect to gender norms can include policing others' behaviour through banter, gossip or bullying, in person or online. For example, studies by Govender and Bhana (2023) and Mayeza and Bhana (2021) in South African primary schools show that boys engage in violence, bullying and homophobic acts as a means to live up to expectations of heterosexual masculinities, which are built on physical strength and wealth to attract girlfriends. Homophobic behaviour or its tolerance and tacit acceptance within school peer groups has been a major feature of hegemonic masculine norms in many countries and underlies much bullying and violence (Gough et al., 2021).

Studies in the Caribbean and the United Kingdom (UK), among other contexts, highlight 'laddish' peer discourses and norms that construct schools as feminised spaces, more appropriate for girls and women than boys. These norms can lead boys to behave in disruptive ways, in part for peer approval. Where 'laddish behaviour' does not overly challenge teachers' authority, teachers may tolerate and thereby reinforce these norms (Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Welmond and Gregory, 2021). A related set of discourses also highlight norms among (certain groups of) boys around not appearing to be making an effort academically (Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Jackson and Dempster, 2009; Welmond and Gregory, 2021). Though few studies directly draw out the implications of these norms, they may help reinforce a perception of boys' right to dominate public settings, such as, in this case, classrooms.

Boys and young men may also emulate behaviour and forms of appearance seen as desirable for young people of a particular gender or associated with iconic popular cultural figures (Kesvani, 2023).[13] Alternatively, peer influence may involve rejecting the perceived values of the school, teachers or families, including adopting an explicitly pro- (or anti-)feminist stance. This was seen, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the period of school closures in many countries affected peer socialisation and enforcement of norms. A qualitative study in Canada, for example, suggests that lockdowns allowed some boys to explore alternatives to dominant forms of masculinity because studying from home allowed them more freedom from the public surveillance of their peers (Borduas et al., 2023). Further, a new generation of qualitative studies undertaken with boys in school settings, such as Swain (2024) in the UK and Anderson and McCormack (2018) in the United States (US), have shown stereotypical 'hegemonic' masculinities giving way to 'hybrid' and more egalitarian ways of being a boy.

13 Note, however, that despite media investigations and some academic studies reporting boys emulating misogynistic influencers, the pathways by which any such influence occurs is complex (Koester and Marcus, 2024). Both qualitative and quantitative studies with adolescent boys have often shown relatively low levels of agreement with misogynist influencers' messages (Man Cave, 2023; Smith, 2023; eSafety Commissioner, 2024).

School practices. School practices often reinforce and amplify gender differences, for example through dress codes and organisation of space (such as seating plans or access to recreational facilities) or by implicit or explicit stereotyping of certain subjects as more suitable for girls or boys. The latter commonly leads to greater channelling of boys into technical and scientific subjects, which often lead to better-paid careers, and can reinforce stereotypes about girls' and women's lesser aptitude for these areas of study and work (UNESCO, 2017a; 2022a). It may also result in the stigmatisation of boys and men who choose to pursue subjects or careers that are not deemed to be 'masculine' in particular contexts (e.g., care of young children, nursing and some art forms, Cruickshank et al., 2021; Bhana et al., 2022; Ljunggren and Eidevald, 2023).

In some contexts, competitive and physically demanding collective sports are seen as particularly appropriate boys and a way of cultivating strong, competitive men who display the virtues of team spirit and loyalty (Allen, 2021; Roberts, 2021). Boys are often more subject to harsh (including physical) punishment, in line with norms of stoicism and bearing physical and emotional pain (UNESCO, 2022a). This, in turn, can also strengthen norms that legitimise physical violence.

Some studies of single-sex boys' schools in Australia and the US suggest that they often reinforce narrow, inequitable visions of masculinity (Charles et al., 2023; Howard and Keddie, 2023). Elite institutions often reproduce dominant forms of masculinities, alongside classism and institutional racism. These schools foster behaviours and qualities demonstrated by men in high-income and powerful professions, such as politics or finance. They also maintain networks and connections between students and alumni, thus reinforcing and reproducing privilege (Brehm, n.d.). For example, a study of elite schools in New Zealand highlights boys' sense of entitlement and assurance with regards to future education and employment aspirations being reproduced through their education experience. At the same time, it reveals the pressures some boys experience in terms of expectations to achieve elite masculinity (Sparks, 2018).

Of course, students do not simply passively 'receive' either the formal or the hidden curriculum: as constructivist theories of education point out, students engage, question, rebel (overtly or inwardly) and incorporate some beliefs and ignore, mould or modify others (Reichert and Nelson, 2012; Budde and Rieske, 2023; Govender and Bhana, 2023; Francis, 2024). Boys' engagement with gender norms is thus a result of a complex interplay of individual-level factors, including their own agency and background, as well as structural and systemic issues at the school, community and wider societal level.

2.3 Entry points for nurturing gender-equitable masculinities through education

In recent decades, numerous initiatives that aim to nurture more gender-equitable masculinities through formal education have emerged (D'Angelo, 2024). This explosion of initiatives reflects the energy of an active social justice movement that aims to promote social change through education and to enable all children to live lives less defined and restricted by their sex. While the first such initiatives were founded largely on the premise of combatting sexism to promote girls' and women's well-being, they have also long recognised that dominant forms of masculinity also undermine boys' and men's well-being and educational outcomes

(Morrell, 1998). As discussed in Chapter 3, this set of initiatives have slowly started to move from small-scale pilot initiatives to incorporation in state or national curricula.

Alongside these focused efforts to strengthen gender-equitable values, two other related developments have also influenced educational thinking and practice. The first is an emerging technical consensus that RSE is strengthened by including discussion of gender and power issues (Haberland, 2015). This has led to a greater emphasis on the importance of including time and space in RSE curricula for nurturing gender-equitable values. As noted in Section 2.4, and discussed in further detail in D'Angelo, Marcus et al. (2024), content of this kind is contested by a growing body of campaigns that would like sex education to either 'stick to biological facts of reproduction' or not to be taught at all.

The second development of note is a renewed emphasis on the importance of social and emotional skills, such as empathy, communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving. Social and emotional skills are increasingly identified as critical for the future of work and recent decades have seen strong advocacy for education systems to help students develop these skills more effectively.

In addition to their economic role, social and emotional skills are also argued to be an important building block of more equitable societies (Schlund et al., 2020). Detailed analysis of how social and emotional skills can contribute to social justice, and particularly gender equality, is nascent. However, some pathways include: self-awareness and self-management, which enable people to recognise biased attitudes and behaviour; social awareness and relationship skills, which help build empathy and respectful interactions; and responsible decision-making, which encourages individuals to consider the impacts of their actions on others (Sabato, 2024). For example, social and emotional learning (SEL) has been identified as key for addressing some harmful gendered behaviour, such as homophobic bullying (Amadori et al., 2023).

This has stimulated efforts to integrate opportunities for SEL across the curriculum (Chatterjee Singh and Duraiappah, 2020). Social justice educators, largely working from anti-racist and LGBTQI+ inclusion perspectives, have emphasised the vital importance of SEL enabling students to better understand systems of oppression and power dynamics (e.g. McCall et al., 2023). Without this, there is a risk of perpetuating these systems in a more emotionally engaged way, dubbed 'White supremacy with a hug' (Anderson, 2022).[14] Several of the initiatives in this review have tried to cultivate social and emotional skills from gender equality perspective – for example Discover Learning in Tanzania, Right to Play's peer violence reduction initiative in Pakistan, and the Me and My New World programme in Panama (see Annex 1).

These developments have coincided with a shift in international education policy and thinking, which has advocated for greater attention to gender-equitable learning, as well as gender parity in access. This movement also emphasises the critical importance of strengthening the capacity of education systems to promote gender-equitable values and practices. For example, the Call to Action of the Transforming Education Summit in 2022 called upon governments to:

14 This insight comes from Dena Simmons, founder of LiberatED, an organisation dedicated to centring racial social justice in SEL (Anderson, 2022).

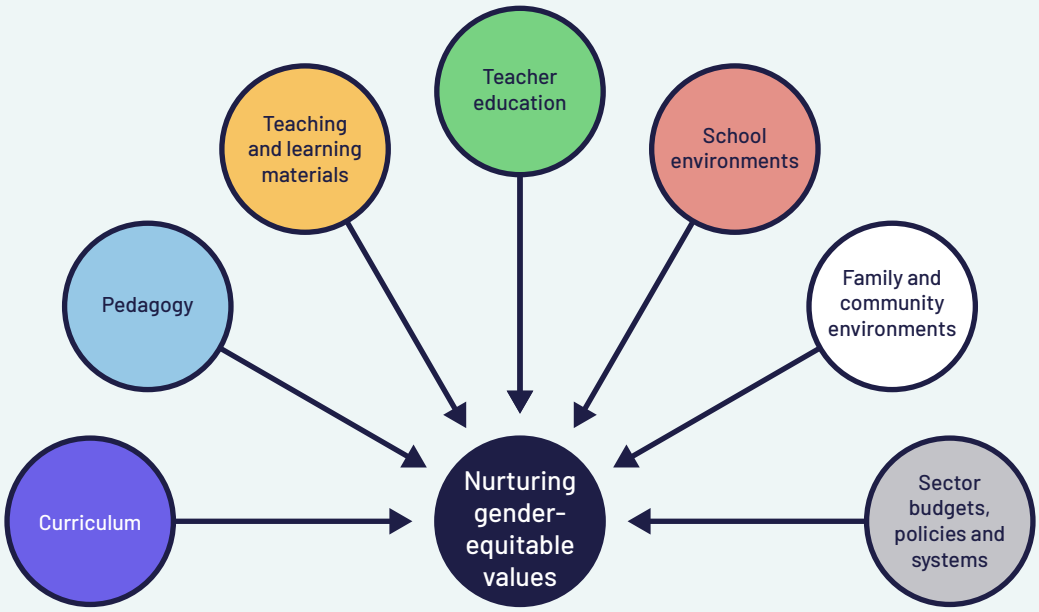
> Put gender equality at the heart of education sector plans, budgets and policies, identifying gender disparities and their underlying factors from the early years and beyond, and including and increasing budgets, strategies and commitments that transform harmful gender norms in pedagogy, build the institutional and human capacity of education sector staff, and advance other context-specific priorities … Remove gender bias and stereotypes from curricula, teaching and learning materials and ensure all teachers and learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to examine, challenge and change harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices, unequal power relations, gender discrimination and wider intersecting inequalities.
> *(UN, 2022).*

In a similar vein, the Freetown Declaration on Gender-Transformative Leadership emphasises signatories' commitment to:

> … transforming our systems, pedagogies, institutions and indeed our own mindsets so that we can end harmful gender norms and stereotypes and help each child achieve the freedom they need to dream and grow without barriers
> *(GPE, 2022).*[15]

Concretely, these lead to the following entry points for efforts to strengthen gender-equitable masculinities through education (depicted in Figure 2): gender-transformative curricula, pedagogy and learning materials (Chapter 3); teacher education to enable teachers to teach these curricula effectively (Chapter 4); supportive school environments (often termed 'whole-school approaches' to gender equality), family and community environments, and education sector budgets, policies and systems (Chapter 5).

Figure 2: Entry points for nurturing gender-equitable masculinities through formal education



15 This declaration was developed at a meeting hosted by Sierra Leone's Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and the Gender at the Centre Initiative.

2.4 Challenges for nurturing gender-equitable masculinities through education

Developments both within and beyond education systems affect the feasibility of efforts to promote gender-equitable masculinities through education. A full analysis is outside the scope of this report. This section highlights four key sets of challenges that emerge as particularly significant in the following chapters or that require more focused attention: education system-related challenges; the economic inequalities that underlie them; the rise of online misogyny and adolescents' increasing access to it; and the significance of both ad hoc and organised resistance.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, there is often a disconnect between the empowering intentions of gender-transformative educational approaches and aspects of education systems that work in the opposite direction. Underfunding, whether the result of decades of austerity policies, or of historically based global inequalities, lead to overcrowded classes and under- or unpaid teachers.[16] These issues, in turn, can limit motivation for new initiatives, especially those requiring additional time, energy and resources (Majhanovich and Malet, 2015).

Further, approaches based on experiential learning and dialogue, which have great potential to catalyse transformative processes, are particularly difficult to implement where physical space is limited. Moreover, education systems in much of the world are characterised by a didactic model that emphasises teachers transmitting information to students that must be reproduced. This is often compounded by high-stakes exams, which leave little space for non-examined content, and/or mean that such learning is considered a lower priority by teachers and students alike (Schweisfurth, 2013).

Turning to influences beyond the education system, some survey-based evidence shows less gender-equitable attitudes among adolescent boys and young men compared to older generations, though this is by no means universal, and the scale of the difference varies considerably by context (UN Women, 2022; Betts Razavi, 2024).[17] Several explanations for these findings are hypothesised, such as young men's discontent related to insecurity and precarity and fears for their futures being misdirected against women, gender equality and LGBTQI+ people, in a context where 'traditional' family life can present an illusion of social stability. These perspectives are easily amplified by conservative and misogynistic voices on social media, who present themselves as an alternative to an elite consensus that denigrates men and masculinity (Equimundo, 2022).

Social media and online misogyny, not least as represented in pornography, are an important part of boys' and young men's social environments. They influence education in multiple ways. For example, they normalise misogynistic views among peers and the wider student body (Regehr et al., 2024). Studies

16 Such as the legacies of colonialism and ongoing neocolonial patterns of trade.

17 Of the six surveys Razavi examined, two found some evidence that attitudes to gender were more inequitable among boys and young men (though this varied by indicator), one identified some gender-inequitable attitudes among 'Generation Z' (young) men and women, one was inconclusive, one found widespread commitment to gender equality among boys and young men, and one found greater commitment to gender equality among young men. These surveys were largely undertaken in middle- and high-income countries. Exceptions were IMAGES, with respondents in Afghanistan and Burkina Faso, and the World Values Survey, with respondents in Rwanda and Yemen.

examining the impact of pornography consumption among young men in Europe, for example, show a connection with negative gender attitudes (Stanley et al., 2018), as pornography tends to promote domination, violence and racism. Such harmful notions of masculinity also influence, for instance, how boys interact with their female teachers or their career and life aspirations.

At the same time, however, the digital world is a space where boys can explore their identities, sexuality and friendships, and which boys approach critically. For example, a study by Australia's eSafety Commissioner (2024) found that young men engage critically with influences like Andrew Tate or pornography. This underscores the need for further research into the complex interplay between boys' online and offline lives (Koester and Marcus, 2024).

While some of this discourse focuses at the level of relationships, family life and workplace experience, organised, vocal backlash against gender equality initiatives is increasingly evident (Edström et al., 2024). Some ad hoc resistance to gender equality initiatives in schools is documented (e.g. GPE, 2023) but is much less examined than such resistance in higher education. To date, organised resistance and backlash at primary and secondary school level is more commonly focused on RSE (and particularly the inclusion of LGBTQI+ content) than on gender equality or positive masculinities initiatives. Analysis of organised campaigns against comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) or LGBTQI-inclusive practices in education, however, shows how quickly resistance can be mobilised (D'Angelo, Marcus et al., 2024). Initiatives that currently attract little attention could easily be undermined by such campaigns if they become the focus of conservative misinformation. For this reason, some programmes (for example, Taaron ki Toli in India; see Box 8) hold regular parents' sessions to share curriculum content with families and communities (Breakthrough, 2023).

The report now turns to discuss insights on effective practice to shift norms of masculinity in formal education. Chapter 3 starts in the classroom, looking at pedagogies and curricula that can help promote gender-equitable values, while Chapter 4 discusses teacher education. Chapter 5 outlines how positive practices can be incorporated into education systems at scale, and key aspects of a supportive policy and institutional environment for large-scale gender equality education. Here there is much to learn from the experience of education systems delivering RSE at scale. Chapter 6 synthesises key insights and recommendations. Annex 1 provides a detailed overview of the initiatives discussed in the report.

3 Teaching to transform gender norms: curriculum and pedagogy

> In Rwanda, parents do not discuss with children sexual reproductive health and rights – not due to a lack of willingness, but due to cultural and the religious beliefs. But in schools, with teachers and students, there are some gender topics that can be well explained.
> *(KII, Rwanda Men's Resource Center)*

Working with students to challenge existing gender norms and foster more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours is at the heart of gender-transformative education. This chapter draws on three key sets of sources with insights into teaching to catalyse gender norm change: evaluations of 19 school-based initiatives with evaluations examining impacts on boys' attitudes or behaviour (details of these initiatives are outlined in Annex 1);[18] insights from 12 systematic reviews which synthesise impacts and process insights; and interviews with eight practitioners.[19]

3.1 Overview of the evaluation evidence: impacts on boys' attitudes and behaviour

Figure 3 summarises visually the main foci of the education initiatives identified and the key modalities through which they were delivered. The 19 initiatives focused at school level examined were largely framed as gender-based violence prevention (7 initiatives) and RSE and life skills (9 initiatives). Two initiatives focused broadly on gender equality and three on social and emotional learning with a gender perspective. Ten of the initiatives examined took place in Asia, eight in Africa, and two in Latin America.[20]

In terms of delivery modalities, six initiatives were integrated into RSE or life skills classes, seven were `stand-alone' curricular modules and six involved extra-curricular activities. While mental health and boys' well-being seems to be an increasingly common entry point to frame masculinities work in high-income countries, few such initiatives in low- or middle-income countries were located, consistent with evidence gaps highlighted in a systematic review (Gwyther et al., 2019).

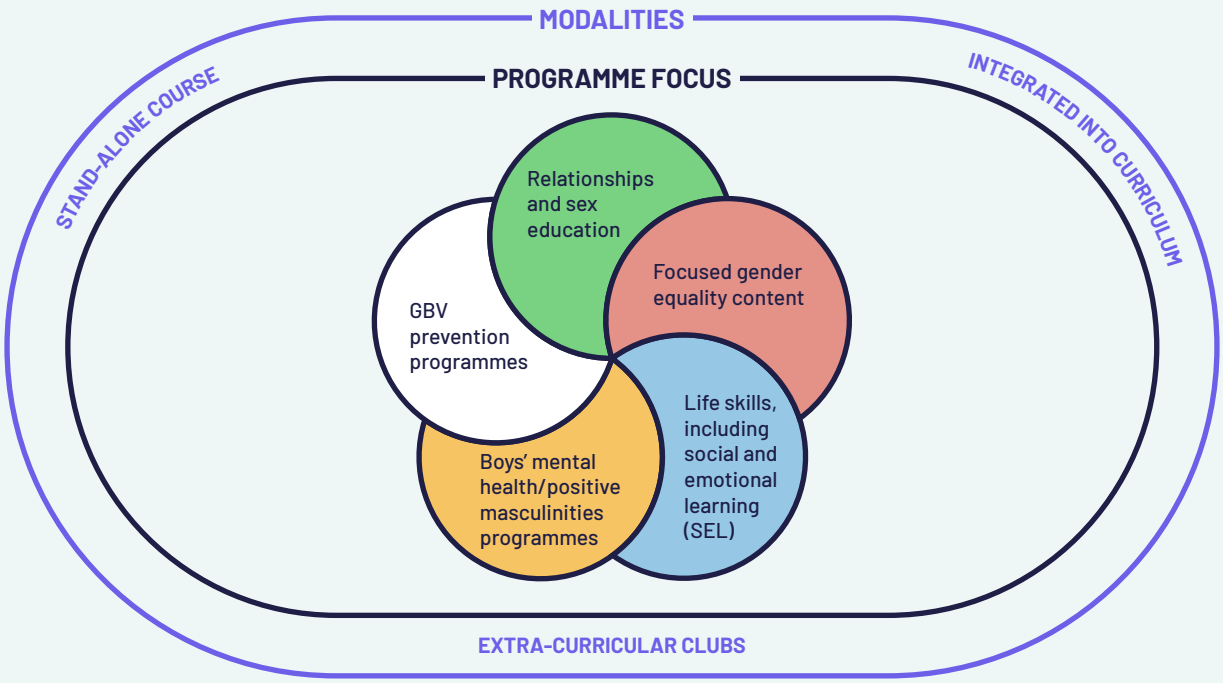
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18 Most of the evaluations used mixed methods, including quasi-experimental designs and randomised controlled trials alongside qualitative methods.

19 These focused on: prevention of gender-based violence (Jewkes et al., 2015; Ligiero et al., 2019; Jewkes et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2023), sex education (Haberland, 2015; Goldfarb and Lieberman, 2021; Sabri et al., 2023), SEL (Cipriano et al., 2023), broader norm change (Levy et al., 2020; Stewart et al., 2021) and shifting norms of masculinities (Ruane-McAteer et al., 2019; 2020).

20 Annex 1 lists 22 initiatives (of which 19 worked directly with students and 3 focused on teacher education). The numbers discussed in this section sometimes exceed 19, where initiatives operated in more than one region or involved more than modality.

Figure 3: Framing and delivery modalities of education initiatives examined



The content and materials used in seven of these initiatives formed part of national/state curricula. Eight also included components that worked with teachers and education systems to strengthen teaching and learning related to gender equality. Insights around working at scale are discussed in Chapter 5. The other initiatives – operating at smaller scale – largely focused on developing good quality pedagogic processes and learning materials with the potential to be scaled up. The chapter now turns to insights from these teaching and learning processes.

3.1.1 Changes in boys' attitudes or behaviours

> When you ask boys whether they are on board with gender equality, they all say yes, yes. But then when you ask them about their ability to give us some of the privileges, then it turns. Mostly everybody, at surface level, is pro-gender equality, but when it comes to do the real work it entails, that's where we are not fully aware of what it takes to encourage boys to do it.
> (KII, Room to Read)

In total, 16 of the 19 evaluations of school-based initiatives examined assessed the impacts of participation on boys' attitudes. Of these, 13 found that participation in a school-based initiative was associated with more gender-equitable attitudes.[21] Three reported the development of more equitable attitudes towards gender equality or views towards masculinity (Cherewick et al., 2021a; b; Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021; UNGEI, 2023).[22] One of the most common changes observed was in boys' attitudes towards gender roles (nine studies). This manifested through boys' perceptions of domestic work or their willingness to take

21 Many of the evaluations reviewed reported a wider set of impacts outside the scope of this report, including on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes, skills development, or improvements in educational outcomes for girls and boys.

22 These include Room to Read's Boys Life Skills for Gender Equality Programme in Cambodia, the Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) in Mumbai and the Discover Learning pilot in Tanzania (see Annex 1).

on more chores to support their sisters and mothers at home (GENDES and GFC, 2018; Hatton and Ridout, 2020; Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021). Boys participating in the life skills curriculum developed by Aahung in Pakistan reportedly became more aware of other household gender inequalities, including unequal distribution of food, prioritising male family members in meals, denying girls their right to education and restricting their mobility (Jahangir and Mankani, 2020). As boys learnt to question their privilege and reconsider interpersonal relationships through a lens of gender equity, they broke away from conventional 'masculine' roles.

Six evaluations also found that participating boys developed more gender-equitable attitudes towards gender-based violence, including physical, psychological or sexual violence.[23] All six of these programmes involved an explicit focus on gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health or gender norms and roles and worked with both boys and girls to develop their life skills through participatory learning strategies and trained teachers. All but one also used a whole-school approach, engaging other school actors and/or parents; they also involved the support of an external organisation for curriculum design or implementation. The one exception to this was the Me and My World project in Panama, a small-scale action research project (Ledezma, 2020). In an evaluation of this initiative, participating boys indicated that the project gave them opportunities to explore diverse perspectives on masculinity and violence that differed from those they had previously encountered. For example, one 15-year-old boy remarked:

> I was told in my family that men have to be strong and violent, that it is our nature as men. But I know now that I do not need to be violent.
> *(ibid: 135)*

Seven evaluations found that participation in school-based gender equality initiatives also resulted in more gender-equitable behaviours among boys. Four described how boys' began to take on domestic work or support girls in household chores, and four noted boys engaging less in violence, including bullying, or even intervening to defend girls.[24] For example, a six-week gender-based violence prevention programme in Kenya, Your Moment of Truth, was highly effective in encouraging gender-equitable attitudes, which persisted even nine months after the course finished (Keller et al., 2017). The same intervention also increased the likelihood of participants intervening to stop a violent incident or threat of harassment. In fact, more gender-equitable attitudes towards women and girls predicted whether participating boys would take action when witnessing violence.

Nevertheless, more gender-equitable attitudes do not always translate into behaviour change, especially when it comes to violence. This is echoed by a systematic literature review on gender-based violence prevention programmes targeting boys and men, which points to some measured attitudinal changes but not necessarily changes in violence perpetration or social norms (Jewkes et al., 2015).

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23 Generation Breakthrough in Bangladesh (Ulziisuren, 2019), Life Skills Based Education in Pakistan (Jahangir and Mankani, 2020), GEMS (Achyut et al., 2017), the Positive Child and Youth Development Programme in Pakistan (Karmaliani et al., 2020), Youth4Change in Rwanda (Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021) and Me and My World in Panama (Ledezma, 2020).

24 Note that one of these studies showed changes in boys' behaviours related to both gender roles (e.g. domestic work/household chores) and gender-based violence (GENDES and GFC, 2018).

The evidence is mixed: few initiatives record positive change on all indicators and some found no impacts. For example, the evaluation of one sex education programme in Uganda found no statistically significant changes in students' attitudes (Kemigisha et al., 2019), while an evaluation of the Udaan curriculum in India found more gender-equitable attitudes in relation to domestic work and reproductive health, but not towards gender-based violence. Likewise, though some violence prevention programmes (e.g., Connect with Respect, in Africa) contributed to behaviour changes such as reduced incidence of physical or psychological violence or increased bystander intervention (see Cahill et al., 2022), others did not (e.g., GEMS, in two Indian states; see Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021). Further, several longitudinal evaluations also point to difficulties in sustaining changes among boys and other participating students (e.g. Ulziisuren, 2019; Visser, 2021). On the other hand, a randomised controlled trial of the Taaron ki Toli (TkT) programme in India found that changes persisted for at least two years after students had 'graduated' from the course (Dhar et al., 2022).

The following sections review insights into what has helped promote gender-equitable values among boys in formal educational contexts. They span pedagogical insights common to social justice-oriented education and insights specific to working with boys on gender equality. Some observations in the studies reviewed also related to the content of curricula; though this is less widely discussed than pedagogy, there is a distinct overlap between what is taught and the way it is taught. None of the studies reviewed compared the impacts of different framings or modalities, and thus this chapter can only draw indicative conclusions about their relative effectiveness, a conclusion also shared by the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative in their analysis of evidence gaps in the education for gender equality field (UNGEI, 2023).

3.2 What underpins effective education for gender equality?

> Don't start with a frontal attack or with gender equality. You have to point out to the boys that we care about them and we want them to thrive. You have to build empathy and show them it's not about boys vs girls, but it is a structural issue. Patriarchy is the villain, not them.
> *(KII, Study Hall Education Foundation)*

3.2.1 Pedagogical approaches

Stimulating critical thinking on gender inequality. Both the studies reviewed and the interviews highlight the importance of creating opportunities for students to reflect critically on patterns of gender, power and patriarchy.[25] Critical discussion and a social justice approach that engages with concepts such as human rights and equality can lead students to challenging power, privilege and structural discrimination (Goldfarb and Lieberman, 2021). Petty and Cacioppo's Elaboration Theory Model (1986, cited in Stewart et al. 2021), suggests that the process of deliberation engages the brain differently and leads to greater long-term change in attitudes and behaviour than those that result from peripheral, or shortcut, mental processing.

25 Critical thinking was mentioned as a key element of eight studies, including a review of SEL programmes (Sell et al., 2023), four evaluations and a systematic review of sex education or gender-based violence prevention programmes (Oxfam, 2006; Haberland, 2015; Jearey-Graham and Macleod, 2017; Le Mat et al., 2019; Cahill et al., 2023), and two gender-transformative projects focusing on girls' empowerment (USAID, 2022) or shifting gender norms more broadly (GENDES and GFC, 2018).

Sell et al.'s (2023) review, which draws on sex education programmes across 15 countries, elaborates on pedagogic strategies for achieving such discussion. This review found that dialogic teaching facilitated students' critical thinking about gender and power relations, contributing to the development of positive teacher and peer relationships and ultimately enhancing students' agency in addressing gender inequality.[26] Many of the initiatives reviewed draw on learner-centred pedagogies and interactive activities, for example, through the use of group work, games, play-based learning, role play, the analysis of case studies, community projects, or other practical and collaborative activities.[27] Non-fiction texts or fictional scenarios, for example, can be helpful tools for students to think critically about situations from the perspective of others (Southworth, 2022; Ging et al., 2024).

As well as stimulating reflection, this experiential learning aims to create opportunities for students to apply new skills and knowledge, develop empathy and build positive relationships with their peers, ultimately leading to greater transformation (Cherewick et al., 2021a; Keddie and Bartel, 2021). Box 1 outlines some participatory activities for critical thinking about masculinities used by SERNiña in Guatemala.

Box 1: SERNiña curriculum examples of activities that help boys reflect on masculinities

In an activity called 'The box in which you live', boys discuss different stereotypes of men that they have heard in their communities or wider society. This includes stereotypes such as men shouldn't cry, men should have multiple women to make them more of a man, or they should hit or control women who disobey or disrespect them. These stereotypes are then used as entry points for critical reflection and group discussion.

Similarly, in the activity called 'The mask that you wear', boys create a mask and write the emotions that they are more likely to express on the outside of the mask and the emotions that they are less likely to show – or more likely to hide – on the inside of the mask. As a group, they then analyse the reasons behind these decisions, why they choose to express some emotions and not others, and how expectations by other people in their lives may impact their decisions. Through this activity, they learn to express themselves in different ways, ultimately breaking away from rigid gender norms.

Source: KII, SERNiña, Guatemala.

These processes of critical thinking aim to help boys and young men develop greater understanding of how they may be affected by or complicit in the reproduction of gender norms and how these affect them, their futures and their relationships with the people around them. In so doing, these activities aim to motivate boys and young men to develop more egalitarian views of masculinity and to take action for change (Haberland, 2015; Sahni, 2018; Jewkes et al., 2021; USAID, 2022). Guided critical thinking is intended to stimulate a temporary state of doubt, personal conflict or discomfort (Zembylas, 2015), in which students use critical reasoning to reflect on a situation or dilemma, resulting in a process of

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26 Dialogic teaching draws on the power of talk to expand students' thinking, learning and problem-solving (Alexander, 2008). It combines whole-class, small group and one-on-one activities, and provides students with ample time to think, reason and engage in different forms of talking (i.e. narration, explanation, speculation, imagination, evaluation, questioning, discussion or argumentation) (Alexander, 2018).

27 Examples include: Kemigisha et al. (2019), Karmaliani et al. (2020), Cahill and Dadvand (2021), USAID (2022) and KIIs, Youth4Change and SERNiña.

transformative learning (Southworth, 2022).[28] This approach is at the core of social justice education (see Box 2; UNESCO, 2023c). As will be discussed next, pedagogies oriented towards critical thinking about social injustice tend to be more effective when also grounded in an understanding of the strong emotions these processes can generate (Keddie, 2022).

Box 2: Critical thinking: a cornerstone of human rights, peace and justice education

Like gender-transformative education, programmes that seek to promote social justice and peace often emphasise the importance of building critical thinking skills (UNESCO, 2014b). School-based programmes and curricula that support peace-building after conflict, democratic strengthening after political transition, or human rights and citizenship suggest that young people need to gain skills to critically reflect both on their positionality, and on the experiences and debates in the society.

For example, Ramírez-Barat and Duthie's (2015: 16) review of education for peace-building shows that to develop such skills teachers need to adopt a student-centric pedagogy and 'more egalitarian and participatory methods that encourage students' critical, independent, and creative thinking'. Similar findings were also identified in Horner et al.'s (2015) review on the role of teachers in peace-building. This review reiterated the importance of participatory methodologies, as group work can help hone key skills such as collaboration and mediation. It also highlighted the importance of making sure all learners were included in an equitable classroom and relevant lesson content, consistent with the values of justice and fairness that these curricula sought to promote.

Building safe and inclusive environments and engaging with students' (and teachers') emotions. Various studies point to the importance of fostering trust and mutual respect between students, as well as between students and teachers, for transformative learning to take place (Haberland, 2015; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2022b; UNGEI, 2023). In classrooms where young people feel safe and respected, they are more likely to open up about their experiences, feelings and vulnerabilities (Sell et al., 2023; KII, SERNiña).

Such openness builds the possibility of fostering shared understanding and can contribute to a classroom environment that values diversity, non-violence and compassion (Zembylas, 2013, cited in Keddie, 2020). To create such safe spaces, however, educators must consider the diverse lived experiences of the boys in the classroom, including feelings of exclusion and othering due to race, ethnicity, class or sexuality, as Claussen et al. (2023) point out in their study with ethnic minority boys in Canada. This must be accompanied by content and approaches that help students to understand the structural nature of gender inequality and their role in perpetuating or challenging these structures. Otherwise there is a risk that difficult emotions may be channelled into aligning with anti-feminist discourses and movements that emphasise men's and boys' victimhood (Keddie, 2020).

Drawing on her work with boys in India, Sahni (2019) describes the importance of a facilitator's orientation towards trust, respect and attentiveness. This resonates with Keddie's work in Australia, which found that fostering more equitable teacher–student relationships, respecting boys' points of view, actively caring for them and showing interest in their lives can lead to gender-transformative change (Keddie, 2006; Mills

28 Some critiques of the limitations of critical pedagogy are summarised in Keddie (2022), some of which may be inherent to the approach, while others reflect its application. These include a tendency towards reductive, binary frameworks, such as oppressor/oppressed, sometimes narrow visions of empowerment, and a failure on the part of educators to recognise their own role in perpetuating inequitable systems.

and Keddie, 2007). Research with vulnerable boys in Northern Ireland (Hamilton et al., 2024) builds on this to emphasise the importance of co-learning among boys and their teachers, where teachers spend time to get to know boys as individuals, share stories of their own lives and experiences, and provide safe spaces for boys to share how they feel. Building positive relationships and connecting with boys emotionally can be particularly helpful in engaging those experiencing compounded disadvantages, who may be relatively disengaged from formal education processes.

These examples show that in conducive circumstances, teachers can develop emotionally engaged, relatively non-hierarchical approaches within a school environment, whether in a classroom or an extra-curricular setting. However, this appears to be relatively rare. As highlighted by practitioners working in gender-transformative education, it may often be easier for an external, trained facilitator to engage with boys using methods and practices that teachers may not be equipped or enabled to use in the majority of their teaching (KII, Beyond Equality). However, this is unlikely to be a sustainable approach in low-income contexts; Sections 4.2.1 and Chapter 5 discuss how education systems can support teachers to use more participatory, emotionally engaged pedagogies.

Teaching and learning are both affective processes whereby 'our thoughts affect the way we feel about stimuli and vice versa' (Demetriou and Wilson, 2008: 938). Practitioners working with boys highlight that boys often feel 'under attack', particularly in structured sessions about gender (Section 3.2.2 discusses insights on effective programme framing in more depth).

Keddie and Bartel (2021) describe the importance of using emotional responses as learning opportunities – for example, by asking boys to think about why they feel these emotions and to recognise how their emotions influence what they say and do. Emotions 'can produce a sense of alienation and resistance but also responsibility and solidarity for activism' (Keddie and Bartel, 2021: 2). As will be discussed in Chapter 4, Andrews (2020) makes a similar argument based on experience in South Africa, noting that resistance can offer considerable pedagogical value as moments for critical reflection. Nevertheless, emotion appears little discussed in the academic literature on effective practice and is rarely a central focus of teacher education and training programmes.

Pushing beyond the status quo. Teachers or facilitators must strike a careful balance between affirming boys' identities, while challenging boys to broaden how they understand and express masculinities. Gender-transformative teachers recognise and respect boys' personal and collective identities (Keddie, 2006, 2008; Mills and Keddie, 2007). At the same time, they support them to question restrictive ways of expressing masculinity, and affirm non-dominant representations of masculinity and ways of behaving or thinking (Keddie, 2006; Mills and Keddie, 2007). By creating opportunities to discuss different ways of defining boyhood or what it means to be a man, teachers and facilitators can help develop attitudes that are more inclusive of difference and diversity (Keddie, 2006; Hamilton et al., 2024). At times this requires explicitly addressing discriminatory or hurtful language or comments made by boys. SERNiña in Guatemala, for example, trains facilitators to use these moments as a teaching opportunity:

> We are very clear in telling them [facilitators] that when they notice a situation of violence [or a] misogynistic comment, they have to stop the workshop. The workshop stops immediately, and it is made visible … and the situation is addressed … You cannot let types of violence pass through the workshop. *(KII, SERNiña)*

Similarly, facilitators at Beyond Equality highlight the need to allow boys to have tough conversations without being shut down but also the importance of ensuring they do so in a way that does not harm others. As one respondent highlighted, if the conversations do harm to others, especially people not in the room, facilitators seek to 'bring a perspective to the boys to challenge it in a constructive way rather than a confrontational way' (KII, Beyond Equality).

Skilled facilitation is needed for students to explore gender hierarchies and power dynamics, without boys feeling blamed or attacked, but rather empowered. The facilitation skills and competencies required to effectively teach for gender equality are recognised across education for social change, including in human rights and anti-racist education. Some of the cross-cutting competencies are summarised in Box 3. Section 4.2.1 discusses in more detail how teachers can be supported to develop or strengthen critical understanding of gender inequalities, and to bring this to their teaching.

Box 3: Good facilitation skills and competencies for social change

Cherewick et al. (2021a: 5) summarise the following six facilitation principles from the Discover programme in Tanzania that were used by facilitators to support the students' socio-emotional learning on gender equality:

1. creating a space for students to learn from experience and from failing safely
2. letting students gain knowledge or skills through experience rather than passive learning
3. withholding judgement or opinions as students go on their own learning journeys
4. valuing and recognising diverse skills that students bring to group work
5. disrupting harmful gender norms that emerge during the process
6. adopting a growth mindset, that encourages attempting, failing and learning as a result.

Similar approaches are also identified by UNESCO's (2023c) guide for teachers on 'preventing atrocity crimes' (such as genocide), and transformative pedagogy for peace-building (UNESCO, 2017b). Additionally, Bickmore (2015, based on research by Radstake and Leeman, 2010) highlights the following competencies for teachers to facilitate students' critical discussions in the classroom in the context of peace education:

1. establishing rules for discussion
2. developing trust with students
3. being knowledgeable of various perspectives on the topic
4. being sensitive and positive towards diverse cultures
5. challenging domination during discussions.

3.2.2 Curriculum/course content and framing

> In our schools, it is rare to have a projector in the classroom, to watch a video or to have tablets. So these are all components that were engaging to the kids. But the kids were also given workbooks, that they take home and review with their peers. This is interesting because they are used to homework which is sometimes boring and not requiring them to engage with their peers or their parents. Here they were given assignments, for example passages to read with their parents and ask them questions.
> *(KII, Camara Tanzania)*

Framing curricula to encourage engagement. Studies from diverse cultural and geographical contexts have pointed to various forms of resistance among students to gender equality teaching. These include an initial reluctance to engage in gender-transformative education, often reflecting misconceptions or misinformation about the purpose or content of these courses. In the Western Balkans, for example, an evaluation of the Young Men Initiative found that boys initially resisted a gender-transformative school and community programme that explicitly addressed masculinity (Namy et al., 2015). Given heavy politicisation of LGBTQI+ rights, some boys feared that the programme was designed to promote homosexuality. This was echoed in a practitioner interview, which highlighted parents' fears that gender-transformative education can 'make boys effeminate' and emphasised the importance of engaging with parents and communities, to minimise resistance (KII, Room to Read). Framing that emphasises values or content widely regarded as valued or useful, such as life skills or respectful relationships, may help reduce rejection based on misunderstandings or misrepresentation of their focus.[29]

These programmes are sometimes perceived as irrelevant and/or misaligned with boys' experiences and priorities. In particular, when boys are required to attend sessions on gender or masculinity when girls are not taking equivalent sessions, this can be seen as blaming boys for issues beyond their control, telling them things they already know or misaligned with many students' actual attitudes or behaviour that also reject misogyny (KII, Beyond Equality). Though students' responses to gender-focused content is under-researched, a study in the US reports student fatigue from repetitive assemblies on topics such as consent in intimate relationships, which may be indicative of wider patterns. Third, students may reject content that they consciously or subconsciously fear may cause them discomfort or which may threaten their position of power (Keddie, 2022). This ultimately stifles change or transformation, as boys and men resist embracing more gender-equitable attitudes or behaviours (Obiagu, 2021).

Enabling boys to recognise how patriarchal norms negatively affect them may help overcome resistance and catalyse change. A representative of SERNiña in Guatemala described how the topic of masculinity must be carefully approached with boys:

29 Such as, respectively, the life skills-based education curriculum initiated by Aahung in Pakistan and taken up by two provincial governments (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024) or the Respectful Relationships curriculum in Victoria state, Australia (Keddie and Ollis, 2019).

> We can't go into a child's community and say 'Look, what you're doing is violent'. But we can go and tell them, 'There are various things that we do that are violent, and we have also received violence from other people'. When they begin to see or understand each type of violence, they begin to think more about their actions.
> *(KII, SERNiña)*

Avoiding presenting boys as oppressors and girls as victims allows for more productive ways of exploring both male vulnerability and solidarity with socially excluded groups (Mills and Keddie, 2007; Namy et al., 2015; Kemigisha et al., 2019; Ging et al., 2024). For example, facilitators of the Beyond Equality school programmes in the UK avoid using terms such as 'toxic masculinity' or framing their workshops as `interventions' that aim to 'fix' boys. Such framings increase boys' resistance and, as an interviewee put it, make it 'harder to build trust and constructive space in which [boys] are open to share'. Indeed, a key part of building trust is to overcome the negative 'baggage' that boys bring to masculinities workshops (KII, Beyond Equality). This can involve helping surface commendable aspects of conventional masculinities, such as male courage, self-reliance and ways of caring, and emphasising strengths over deficits, an approach derived from positive psychology (Kiselica et al., 2008). In addition, aspirational messages that seek to motivate students to recognise their individual and collective power can help encourage boys to become agents of change (Namy et al., 2015; Haberland, 2015).

Grounded and intersectional reflections on power can also help boys understand how patriarchy operates. For example, drawing on experience in South Africa, Ratele (2015) points to the need for gender-transformative work to explicitly address broader issues of power and privilege and to clearly articulate that there is not a hierarchy of inequalities; rather, gender inequality should be explained as intertwined with other inequalities, such as those based on race or socioeconomic status.

Despite the growing body of evidence of ways of reducing resistance, it is also important to have realistic expectations of a gender-transformative curriculum – for a variety of reasons, some students will be less open to change than others (Stewart et al., 2021). The desire for acceptance often reinforces conformity to prevailing gender expectations within students' social circles, which in turn affects how they respond to gender equality courses and workshops. In the Me and My World project in Panama, for example, around 15% of the boys feared losing acceptance among their peers and male family members if they adopted more gender-equal forms of behaviour (Ledezma, 2020). Likewise, a study of the Hero Empathy programme in South Africa found that when fifth-grade boys deviated from the norm (for example, by refusing to be tough or to bully girls), they were isolated and ridiculed by their peers (Mabunda, 2020). But peer influence can also support the adoption of more equitable gender attitudes. One of the core successes of the Connect with Respect model, for example, was explicitly teaching students how to navigate peer pressure (Cahill et al., 2023). Addressing entrenched norms in students' wider environment highlights the importance of outreach to families and communities and whole-school approaches that reinforce gender-equitable values.[30] These points are discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.

30 Studies emphasising this include: York (2014), Chandra-Mouli et al. (2018), Ligiero et al. (2019), Visser (2021), Cherewick et al. (2021b) and USAID (2022).

Meaningful content. Curricula that meaningfully engage boys around gender equality ground learning in students' experiences in and outside of the classroom (Keddie, 2006; Mills and Keddie, 2007; York, 2014; Hamilton et al., 2024). Evaluations capturing boys' perspectives suggest not only that they enjoy learner-centred approaches, but also that they may struggle to understand gender topics if taught too theoretically (Cahill and Dadvand, 2021; UNGEI, 2023). Grounding critical discussion around gender and masculinity in practical examples of how students can take control of their lives may catalyse action. Teachers can encourage boys to be self-reflective by focusing on patriarchal structures in their lives, such as relationships between teachers and students, or dynamics in the playground and in school sports (Keddie, 2006; Mills and Keddie, 2007). For example, in India, the Study Hall Education Foundation focuses on men's responsibility to care for their parents, as well as the pressure associated with being a provider, as key topics of interest for the boys to discuss (KII, Study Hall Education Foundation). Ensuring the curriculum is relevant to participating boys requires continuously updating it to ensure its content and activities are aligned with new developments in the economic and social context (KII, SERNiña).

While curricula with substantial content on gender and power may lead to more transformative change towards gender equality (Haberland, 2015; Sell et al., 2023), it is often the more practical and applicable curriculum content that students seem to value most. In Cahill et al.'s (2023) student-centred evaluation of Connect with Respect, for example, students rated the content on human rights and how to get help for those affected by violence as most useful. These topics enhanced their awareness of inequalities and opened new possibilities for how to behave and treat each other. In the Boys' Life Skills for Gender Equality project in Cambodia, participating boys rated most highly the sessions on topics not just related to 'power and masculinity', but also those such as 'succeeding in school', 'my changing body' and 'time management', since they provided them with opportunities to develop practical skills (UNGEI, 2023).

Indeed, enabling boys to feel a sense of empowerment has often been relatively neglected in gender equality programmes. Recognising that dominant masculinities can constrain boys as well as girls, and opening up other possibilities, can contribute towards a sense of agency for change. As a participant in the Me and My New World project in Panama also noted:

> I never had really to think so deep in my life. I believe that I want to know more about who I am and what I can achieve with my life. We learned that we can achieve our dreams, through thinking carefully about our plan and actions. It was cool.
> *(14-year-old boy quoted in Ledezma, 2020: 127)*

Curricula designed to develop social and emotional skills. In some of the programmes examined, strengthening social and emotional skills, such as empathy and communication, was an explicit objective. In others, evaluations suggest this was more of a happy by-product. Whether by accident or design, practising constructive and equitable communications among themselves and with their female peers can help boys build a foundation for gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours (Mills and Keddie, 2007; Sell et al., 2023). However, if not also explicit about gender and power relations, initiatives focusing on topics such as healthy communication or non-violent relationships may not be as effective in developing gender-equitable attitudes, as found in an evaluation of the Hero Empathy programme in South Africa (Visser, 2021). Overall, this review found limited analysis of the ways that a combined social and emotional and social justice approach could nurture more gender-equitable values. This is an important gap for practice.

Including practical components. Practical projects can also help students learn how to put into practice the gender-egalitarian attitudes they develop through critical reflection. For example, in Guatemala, as part of SERNiña's programme, students conduct final community projects in which they select a relevant topic and present it to community leaders and decision-makers, including teachers, school leaders and local authorities (D'Angelo, Rouhani and Villamil Cancino, 2024). These opportunities to teach or lead can help students develop a sense of agency and pride in being able to help their peers and their community (Oxfam, 2006; GENDES and GFC, 2018; USAID, 2022). This may be particularly important for boys, as it can broaden what it means to be a 'good student' beyond academic achievement to include being a positive member of a class, school or community (Mills and Keddie, 2007).

3.2.3 Delivery

As noted at the start of this chapter, no studies compared the relative impacts of courses of different durations. Nor did they examine whether any of the main modalities (stand-alone courses, integrated curricula or extra-curricular activities) were associated with stronger impacts. This section briefly summarises such evidence available from systematic reviews and then turns to the main issue for which evidence was found: on single- or mixed-sex teaching for gender equality.

Systematic reviews of gender-based violence and comprehensive sexuality education programmes suggest that multi-session courses are both more common and more likely to deliver significant change than single-sessions, such as short workshops. For example, Stewart et al. (2021) found that multi-session initiatives were more likely to build rapport between facilitators and students, and between peers. Because students were exposed to content repeatedly through multiple touch points, the depth and retention of learning tended to be greater (Stewart et al., 2021: 11). Sell et al.'s (2023) review of comprehensive sexuality education programmes tackling gender and power also notes that programmes confined to a few classroom-based sections were more likely to leave entrenched norms unchanged.

Mixed or single-sex classes. The initiatives reviewed – though implemented largely in co-educational schools – often work with boys and girls in unique ways: some work only with boys, some with boys and girls together in mixed groups and in single-sex groups. Working with boys and girls in separate groups allows attention to each group's specific needs, and can help create a safe space to discuss sensitive topics among peers. However, bringing boys and girls together in mixed groups has its own benefits. It may help students to challenge rigid gender roles or hierarchies, and learn to value one another's contributions and foster mutual respect (Boost and Rasscornes, 2020; Cherewick et al., 2021b).

For example, the Vumbua Kujifunza programme in Tanzania brought boys and girls together as a way of preventing conflict between them, creating friendships and normalising working together, which they do not commonly experience in a classroom setting (KII, Camara Tanzania). An evaluation of a programme in Cambodia found that boys appreciated mixed-gender classes and discussions on some topics, but felt more comfortable in all-male groups, and with male facilitators, when discussing topics related to sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence (UNGEI, 2023). This suggests a combination of mixed and single-sex sessions may be most effective. SERNiña's three-year violence prevention curriculum in Guatemala exemplifies this combined approach (see Box 4).

Box 4: Combining single-sex and mixed groups for gender-transformative education in Guatemala

SERNiña's curriculum in Guatemala is divided across three yearsof primary school, from Grade 4 to Grade 6. During the first two years, girls and boys are taught separately, and then they move into mixed groups in Grade 6. In the first two years, girls and boys learn about gender, power dynamics, violence and children's human rights in programmes called 'SERNiño' or 'SERNiña' (for Grade 4 boys and girls, respectively) and 'SERLíder' or 'SERLíderesa' (for Grade 5 boys and girls, respectively).

Working with gender-specific groups helps facilitate trust and dialogue among participants, so boys and girls can speak more freely about their fears, dreams and vulnerabilities. In the third year of the programme, 'SER El Cambio' (Be the Change), with Grade 6 adolescents, girls and boys come together to learn about violence in their communities, how it affects their rights and how they as young people can be agents of change. At the end of the programme, boys and girls work together to develop a final project and present it to their community, including school leaders, teachers, families and local government representatives.

Source: KII, SERNiña, Guatemala, and D'Angelo, Rouhani and Villamil Cancino (2024).

This chapter has examined the teaching and facilitation strategies, and classroom or school dynamics, that help foster more gender-equitable attitudes among students, particularly boys. The following chapter turns to teacher education, discussing key insights on how it can be designed and implemented to catalyse changes in teachers' attitudes and behaviours.

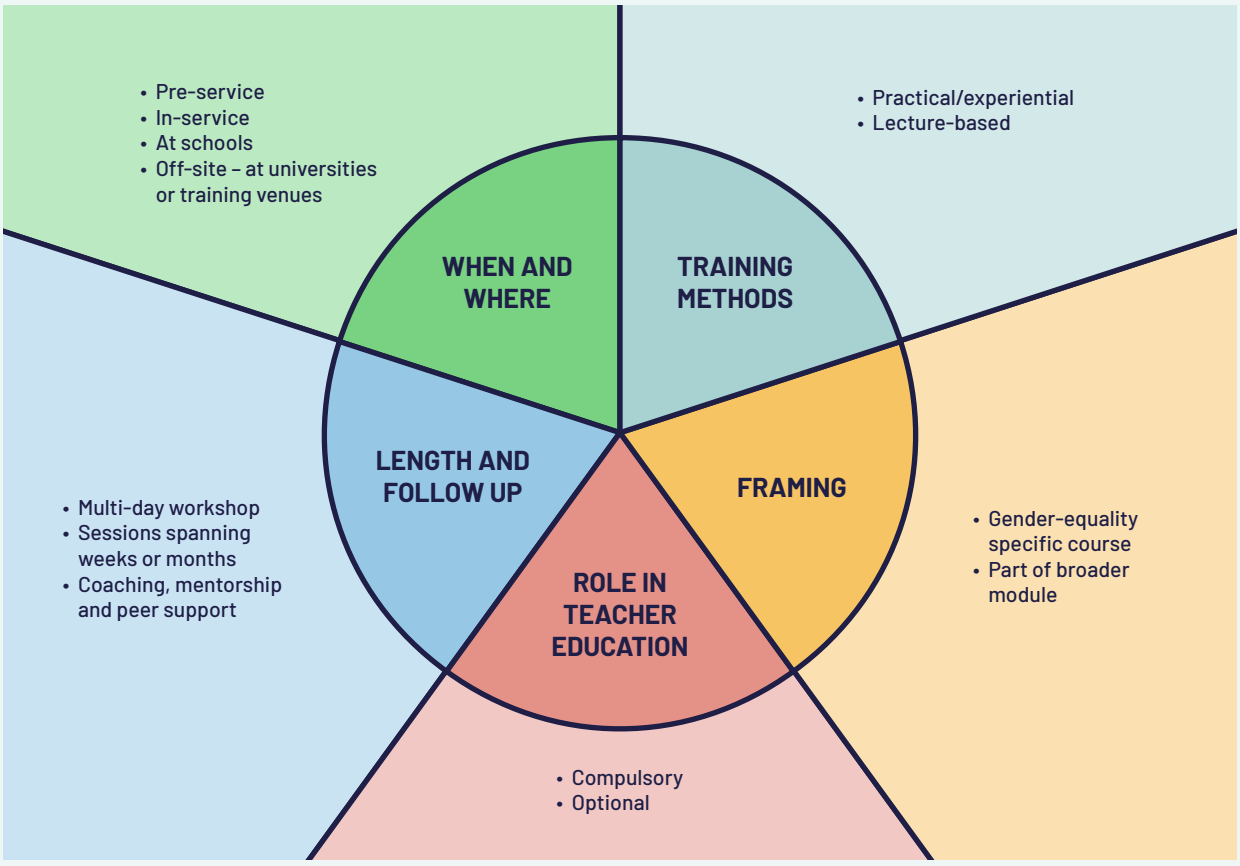
4 Preparing teachers to promote gender-equitable values

4.1 Overview of key approaches

Recognising the pivotal role that teachers play in reinforcing or challenging inequitable gender norms, teacher education for gender equality is receiving increasing attention. Studies have shown, for example, that without focused attention to gender inequalities in their pre- or in-service education, teachers are often reluctant to bring up gender issues with their students (Lumadi and Shongwe, 2010; Massao et al., 2024).

In this context, some governments and other education stakeholders, such as teacher training colleges and universities, have increasingly developed pre-service or in-service teacher education and training initiatives to equip teachers to implement commitments to gender-equitable teaching. How far, and in what ways, education systems are preparing teachers to teach in a gender-equitable way varies greatly. Some key variations in the teacher training approaches reviewed are summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Variations in teacher training in gender equality



As evident in the figure, teacher training models often differ vastly: from pre-service teacher education courses that are sustained throughout an academic calendar year, to in-service training that take place in an off-site venue as one-off workshops (with or without refresher training), to sustained multi-year school-based training sessions. Few studies have evaluated the relative impact of different teacher training models for strengthening teachers' ability to teach in a gender-equitable way, or to teach content on gender equality. However, there is a consensus in the teacher education field that ongoing and school-based support is necessary to stimulate changes in teachers' practices (e.g. Power, 2019; Hennessy et al., 2022; Naylor and Sayed, 2014).

Teacher education for gender equality generally spans two key elements: an approach that has come to be called gender-responsive pedagogy (*how* to teach in gender-equitable ways) and preparing teachers to teach gender equality content (*what* to teach, with a focus on enhancing students' awareness of societal gender inequalities).[31] These are described in more detail in Box 5.

Box 5: Different approaches to gender equality in teacher education

Training teachers on *gender-responsive pedagogy* involves teaching strategies that actively consider and address the different learning needs, experiences and interests of all genders, where these differ. This approach seeks to create an inclusive learning environment by using instructional methods, classroom interactions and curriculum content that are equitable and sensitive to gender differences, and that remove barriers to participation and achievement for all students, particularly those from marginalised gender groups. Often such training involves critical reflection on gender inequalities; however, when translated into practice in the classroom, this element can be lost.

Training teachers to teach about *gender-specific topics* focuses on educating students on issues directly related to gender, such as gender equality, sexism, misogyny, gender diversity or sexuality. It often includes more explicit discussions on gender identity, roles and rights, as well as the impact of gender norms on individuals and society. The latter is frequently an element of 'gender-transformative' approaches, which seek to challenge and change the norms that underpin gender inequalities. In a gender-transformative approach, relationship and sex education, for example, would extend beyond reproductive biology, abstinence or contraception to discuss power dynamics between women and men and how this affects the gendered roles and expectations of individuals.

The two approaches are complementary, and often intertwined (at least in theory), as gender-responsive pedagogy can enhance the effectiveness of teaching to nurture gender equality, by fostering teachers' awareness of structural inequalities and encouraging teachers to avoid gender stereotypes.

The Connect with Respect programme addresses both elements in a sequential and strategic manner. First, teacher training addresses pedagogical topics such as positive discipline or classroom management, which target teachers' gendered ideas and attitudes towards violence or power. Then the training moves to the specific learning activities that will be implemented in classrooms and that teach explicitly about topics such as gender equality, or gender-based violence. This purposeful structuring means that 'by the time you get to that [second] stage, hopefully you will have already garnered champions that see the value of this work in the classroom' (KII, Connect with Respect programme, UNESCO).

31 In different contexts this is variously termed teacher education for gender equality or gender equity, gender-transformative education, or teaching for gender justice. All refer broadly to initiatives that seek to prepare teachers to teach content that promotes gender-equitable values.

The framing of teacher training content for gender equality varies considerably: some curricula address gender equality comprehensively (as in the Connect for Respect and TkT examples discussed in Chapter 5). Others take a more targeted approach on particular topics, such as gender-based violence (for example, in Cambodia: Cabus et al. 2021), sexuality education (for example, in Uruguay: UNFPA, 2017; and Brazil: Wahlström, 2013) or life skills education (Jahangir and Mankan, 2020).

Gender equality training is often premised on a theory of change that presumes that, as teachers gain more knowledge about gender equality topics, their attitudes and behaviours will change, ultimately influencing their students (for example, Cabus et al., 2021). Some studies have identified positive impacts, such as: preventing gender stereotyping, reducing incidence of gender-based violence, improving active classroom participation for both girls and boys, and helping students develop key skills, including life skills, and academic outcomes (Nabbuye, 2018; Cabus et al., 2021; UNGEI, 2023; Wanjama and Njuguna, n.d.). However, it is important to approach this evidence with a critical lens, as findings tend to be mixed, and there is a general lack of robust or rigorous evaluative research.

Indeed, despite increased efforts, the existing evidence suggests that policy commitments to gender-equitable teaching have not fully translated into changes in the classroom. Though evidence is far from comprehensive, studies that have quantified access to gender-focused courses in teacher education indicate that this is very variable in many countries. For example:

- Research in Chile shows that only 27% of teachers surveyed had accessed gender equality training either pre-or in-service (Vidal Velis et al., 2024).[32]
- Analysis of 299 teacher education curriculum documents from 72 public and private universities in Colombia found that 52 referred to diversity, inclusion, social justice, gender or sexuality in their titles, of which 8 were focused on gender (Sánchez et al., 2024).
- A comparative analysis of the curricula of two types of Tanzanian teacher education institutions (a university and a teacher education college) found that gender issues were only integrated to a limited extent. At the university sampled, only 13 of 116 teacher education courses contained any gender equality content; at the teacher training college, only one of 14 courses covered gender equality content, and this was deemed by the researchers to be outdated and largely advocacy-oriented. The teachers interviewed as part of this research recalled some gender-focused content (for example on female genital mutilation and child marriage) but also reported that these topics were not taught in depth: 'We were exposed to topics on gender-related issues in different courses like gender equity, gender discrimination and gender equality. However, these concepts were taught in general form' (Massao et al., 2024).
- Also in Tanzania, another study found that, while 85% of teachers surveyed had had exposure to gender-responsive pedagogy during their pre-service training, only 14% had during in-service education.

Available studies have also shown variable understanding of gender-responsive principles and practices among teachers who have participated in training. Some small-scale studies indicate that some teachers

32 Based on an online survey of 466 teachers throughout the country.

or teacher trainers apply gender-responsive pedagogical practices in their classrooms, for example, in Ethiopia (Abrha et al., 2023), Ghana (Ananga, 2021), Indonesia (Sudrajat et al., 2022), Rwanda (Mukagiahana et al., 2024) and Tanzania (Mhewa et al., 2021; Thabiti et al., 2023). Others highlight more limited application of gender-equitable practices, such as Dorji (2020) in Bhutan, and Fentie (2017) in Ethiopia.

However, implementation of gender-focused teacher training has generally been slow and unsustained (UNGEI, 2023), and there is little evidence examining its impact on student outcomes (Bentaouet Kattan et al., 2023). These findings reflect other systematic literature reviews on gender-responsive pedagogy (Malik et al., 2023) as well as the broader evidence base on teacher professional development where, despite numerous evaluations, outcomes often point to conflicting results (Akyeampong et al., 2023).

In total, only three evaluations of teacher training initiatives that assessed impacts on teachers' gendered attitudes or behaviours were found, all of which were relatively short term (two years or less). These include the Gender Responsive Education and Transformation (GREAT) project in Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda, the Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education project in South Africa, and the Gender Socialization in Schools: Enhancing the Transformative Power of Education for Peacebuilding programme pilot in Uganda (see Annex 1).

This small number reflects the greater likelihood of evaluations being undertaken for relatively short-term, externally financed initiatives. Externally supported initiatives continue to support or provide impetus for expanding gender-focused teacher education content in some low-income countries. However, the sources reviewed for this report and companion studies from Chile and Colombia (Sánchez et al., 2024; Vidal Velis et al., 2024) indicate that many institutions have developed such courses without external financing, because they believe it is important to do so, to respond to demand from students, or in compliance with government policies.

This section therefore also draws on wider studies of teachers' responses to gender equality content encountered in pre- or in-service education, and on the wider literature on effective pre- and in-service teacher education. The majority of the literature reviewed comes from Anglophone Africa and to a lesser extent Latin America; the few studies found from North Africa identified gender-responsive pedagogy as an important gap in teacher training (Karima, 2017; Ennaji, 2018).

Section 4.1.1 describes some of the evidence of how gender equality training can influence teachers' attitudes and behaviours. Section 4.2 then examines insights on how good quality teacher education on gender equality can be designed and implemented.

4.1.1 Impacts on teachers' attitudes or behaviours

Evidence of the impacts of gender equality training on teachers' attitudes or behaviours is mixed. Some evaluations found impacts on some, but not all, attitudes measured. For example:

- Two studies, in Uganda and South Africa, found that teachers developed more equitable attitudes towards gender roles or stereotypes but not towards gender-based violence or gender and sexual diversity (Chinen et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2022).

- Chinen et al. (2016) also found that teachers adopted more gender-equitable attitudes but not behaviour. They argue that the absence of an enabling environment (as discussed in Chapter 5) was one reason for this, since 'people may change their personal beliefs, but their outward behaviours will continue to reflect social expectations for longer, so as not to upset the status quo' (ibid: 66). Several studies note the relatively low level of adoption of practices labelled as 'gender-responsive', such as using gender-neutral language, directing questions equally to girls and boys, ensuring mixed working groups, and giving boys and girls equal opportunities to present to the class (Abrha et al., 2023; Thabiti et al., 2023). This echoes the wider literature, including evidence reviews on disability inclusive education, which found that teachers' attitudes were easier to change than their practices (Mendoza and Heymann, 2022).

The relatively limited adoption of these practices sometimes reflects resistance (Nabbuye, 2018), but it may also reflect a wider challenge, whereby these new pedagogies are introduced in education systems where classroom contexts and institutional cultures do not favour their application (discussed further in Section 4.2, Schweisfurth, 2013). For example, a study of English foreign language teachers in Vietnam found that, even when teachers had knowledge of gender-responsive pedagogies, they had felt they had limited agency to discuss gender-related topics during their lessons, and instead their classroom decision-making was largely shaped by external factors, such as the curriculum and syllabus (Vu and Pham, 2022).

4.2 What makes teacher education for gender equality effective?

4.2.1 Critical thinking, reflection and egalitarian relationships in teacher training

Facilitating teachers' critical reflection around social and gender norms is an essential part of effective training for gender-equitable teaching. Misconceptions, cultural biases and stereotypes held by both teachers and teacher trainers continue to be core challenges that impede the effectiveness of gender equality training (Nascimento et al., 2014; Nabbuye, 2018; Abrha et al., 2023). This was confirmed by the practitioner interviews and by forthcoming primary research in Chile and Colombia (Sánchez et al., 2024; Vidal Velis et al., 2024). But when teachers critically assess and deconstruct deeply entrenched gender norms, they may experience a transformational learning process and formulate new, more progressive, and gender-equitable attitudes (Chapin and Warne, 2020). Transformational learning of this kind underpins education for social justice, both related to gender equality and to other fields including peace and human rights education (e.g. Magro, 2015).

The review found limited research on transformational change in teachers' gender equality attitudes and practices through teacher education programmes in LMICs. Often this was because gender equality was only a partial focus of the studies reviewed. However, Keddie's research in Australia and the US provides important insights about the kinds of knowledge and practices that support teachers to teach for gender justice (Keddie and Mills, 2007), including the difficulties of such work (Keddie, 2021). Gender-transformative teaching requires educators or facilitators to engage in ongoing critical reflexivity to identify and challenge privilege and oppression, and to accept accountability to others – including students – to do so. This reflexivity entails a certain level of vulnerability and openness, so that teachers are enabled to recognise and

question their gendered biases and prejudices and how they may be involved in sustaining inequitable norms (Keddie et al., 2023). As a Grade 6 teacher from Vietnam said:

> We need to gradually erase our mindset of the past: that boys and girls must be in some certain ways. *(Vu and Pham, 2022: 19)*

As discussed in Chapter 3, with respect to catalysing new values and attitudes among students, critical thinking is also an important skill to facilitate shifts in teacher attitudes, not only in relation to gender equality but also broader social justice issues, as described in Box 6.

Box 6: Critical thinking and reflection: key teacher skills for social justice

Studies of teacher education for social justice raise similar issues of good practice to those focused on promoting gender equality. For example, they highlight the importance of teachers' critical skills and abilities to question the curriculum they teach, because of the frequent racial, ethnic and other biases embedded in the curriculum and teaching materials (UNESCO, 2024). Research and practice suggest that teachers should:

- engage with students' lived realities and connect them to historical events
- reflect on their own positionality and views within the broader sociopolitical context (UNESCO, 2014b; 2023c; 2024; Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d).

By including these skills in teacher education programmes, new teachers have an opportunity to develop and strengthen them (Bekerman and Zembylas, 2014).

For example, many teacher training programmes in the US do not actively seek to build racial literacy but instead adopt race-evasive approaches. As a result, they do not imbue racial literacy among the predominantly white teacher candidates (Reagan and Hambacher, 2021). This has negative effects on their students, especially students of colour, as well as other teachers and the education field more broadly (Ott and Kohli, 2023). One of the ways to address this systemic weakness is to ensure that teacher candidates have the space to reflect on their experiences of racism and power during their training (UNESCO, 2014b).

Studies of teacher preparation for peace education also emphasise the importance of teachers having space to reflect on their beliefs and practices (Bellino et al., 2017; Clarke-Habibi, 2018). In situations of recent war or violence, teachers may be hesitant to cover recent history because of a variety of concerns, including the lack of skills to do so, as well as the political context in which they operate (Ramírez-Barat and Duthie, 2015). Two examples highlight how opportunities for critical reflection can be built into preparing teachers to teach peace education:

The Juegos de Paz project was implemented in rural Colombia, in 2006, with the support of the Ministry of Education. Teacher support included training workshops and on-site mentoring. The evaluation highlights four key lessons: the importance of reflective space, some theoretical grounding, support communities for teachers to sustain changes in their practice after completing training and supportive school systems (Diazgranados et al., 2014).

The Education for Peace programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, piloted in 2002, provided teachers with training and reflection spaces, including on their experiences of the conflict and their role as educators. The pilot programme – which was later scaled up as part of sector-wide curriculum reform – also provided regular mentoring and consultations. Some educators who participated in the programme reported changes in their practices, as well as more inter-ethnic understanding and communication, not least through students' community-based projects (Clarke-Habibi, 2018).

Initial lack of awareness of – or resistance towards explicit attention to – gender in teaching and learning is not uncommon. Teachers may deny or reject the notion of gender inequality or the existence of gender-based violence in educational institutions, especially if they cannot identify where they have observed or experienced it (Velasco and Tapia, 2023). Others may fear that gender equality content and programmes alienate or discriminate against boys (Cahill et al., 2022; Halkiyo et al., 2023). A common perception is that the topic of gender is only relevant for women; this is reflected in the fact that men are often under-represented in optional gender-focused teacher training courses (for example, as found in Mexico by Velasco and Tapia, 2023). However, as studies of pre-service teacher education programmes in Nigeria and South Africa have shown, resistance also appears in teachers' silence, their unwillingness to engage in gender equality content, or through more overt forms of backlash and retaliation such as interrupting or attempting to derail discussions or through outbursts of anger or laughter (Andrews, 2020; Obiagu, 2021).

Nevertheless, this sort of resistance can be leveraged for transformative change: teacher educators can turn disruptions into productive opportunities for more thoughtful, nuanced and personal debates (Andrews, 2020). This echoes insights from Keddie and Bartel's (2021) work, discussed in Chapter 3, on the importance of capitalising on emotional moments in teaching for gender justice, as personal and emotional connections are key to leveraging social change. Important here is recognising and working with discomfort – discomfort is a necessary part of teaching for social justice because it often involves challenging cherished and deeply held personal values and commitments. Teachers or facilitators of all genders must reflect on how their own intersecting identities (gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, etc.) shape their power and privilege and, in turn, influence the sorts of topics they may be willing or unwilling to engage with and how they approach these topics with boys (Keddie et al., 2023).

Teaching about sensitive topics such as gender and power ultimately requires teachers to invest significant effort that is emotional, political and pedagogical: emotional, as they deal with personal or student distress; political, as they respond to backlash or resistance from other members of the school community; and pedagogical, as they learn to apply new teaching strategies (Cahill et al., 2022). But with opportunities to critically reflect and develop new skills, teachers can learn more productive ways of addressing gender with boys, strategies rooted in care and support that help foster egalitarian relationships and shift gender norms in classrooms and schools (Keddie, 2006; Sahni, 2019; Hamilton et al., 2024).

Teacher reflexivity and the nature of student–teacher relationships deserve further attention in teacher education and training for gender equality. The literature on teacher professional development and learner-centred pedagogy highlights two important issues relevant to developing critical reflections on gender inequality. First, teacher trainers play a vital role in supporting teacher reflection, but to do so effectively they must have the confidence and skills to facilitate critical discussion around sensitive topics such as gender, power and patriarchy. Yet the role of teacher trainers in stimulating these reflective processes receives little attention.

Second, the concept of egalitarian relationships between teachers and students is not new; indeed, it is fundamental to learner-centred pedagogies which have been enthusiastically promoted by international funders in LMICs (Schweisfurth, 2013; Mitchell et al., 2024). However, student–teacher relationships are often hierarchical, reflecting sociocultural norms where children are expected to respect and defer to

adults and school cultures and practices that enforce this deference (ibid; Alexander, 2000). Together with prevailing concepts of how students learn and how teachers should teach, this feeds into a teacher-centred pedagogical model where knowledge is shared in one direction from teacher to student, prevalent in teacher education as well as in schools (Mitchell et al., 2024). This model is often sustained by teachers' 'invisible pedagogical mindsets', which reflect teachers' theories of learning as they relate to specific cultural contexts and educational environments (Qargha and Dyl, 2024).

Moreover, teachers are often required to implement curricula with little autonomy to reflect, adapt or challenge the status quo (e.g. Chale, 2018; Molla et al., 2023). Teachers and teacher educators may not be accustomed to critical thinking or reflection if their prior training and education are rooted in traditional styles of teaching and learning, such as rote learning and memorisation. Drawing on her experiences with a teacher professional development programme in Namibia, O'Sullivan (2002) argues that the use of questions and prompts, such as videos or photographs of classroom teaching, helped scaffold reflection, but that still many teachers struggled to develop deep self-critical inquiry, a process that takes time (Hatton and Smith, 1995), often more than compressed training programmes allow.

Challenges associated with teachers' professional cultures, mindsets and incentives have led some school-based gender-transformative educational programmes bringing in external facilitators, rather than working with teachers. These programmes are provided by external organisations both in classroom time and as extra-curricular provision. SERNiña in Guatemala provides an example:

> We try to ensure that [the facilitators] are men and women who know about diversity, who know about violence, who share the same values of the organisation, who are professionals with these issues … that they have experience in group management, and not group management as they teach us in school, but rather, from love, tenderness, from understanding … That they are not locked in that square box that teachers teach in, and that they are more open to dialogue and understanding that children will not always learn by sitting at a desk.
> *(KII, SERNiña)*

The trade-off between high quality participatory learning processes and institutionalising these approaches at scale in education systems is discussed further in Chapter 5. Box 7 outlines some approaches used in teacher education to promote critical thinking about gender norms and biases.

Box 7: Tools to stimulate critical thinking in teacher education

Various approaches have been used to stimulate critical reflection in teacher education. These include:

Using varied tools and materials to encourage and scaffold teacher inquiry and reflection, such as illustrations or texts that depict gender roles and inequalities, or power dynamics (Chege et al., 2015). The open-source Gender-Responsive Pedagogy For Early Childhood Education toolkit provides pre-primary teachers and school leaders with a set of practical, low-cost instruments that they can use to reflect on their own gender biases (VVOB and FAWE, 2019).[33] In Spain, Diez et al. (2021) used family trees to encourage pre-service teachers to critically reflect on gender norms, such as their female family members' gendered roles, lack of access to education or experiences with violence. A pre-service training initiative in South Africa used stories of LGBTQI+ characters to probe teachers to reflect on how they engage with gender and sexual diversity in their teaching (Andrews, 2024).

Using interactive activities that promote reflection and dialogue, such as: role playing, group work, discussion, debates and storytelling. Teachers have described how participatory activities enhance their understanding of pedagogical theories (GENDES and GFC, 2018). As one of the few online models, Promundo's Gender Equity in Schools Portal in Brazil drew on texts, videos, animations, a final project and ongoing opportunities for participants to engage in dialogue and debates, all characteristics that teacher participants identified as important (Nascimento et al., 2014).

Participatory action research can help develop teachers understanding of gender inequalities in their contexts, and skills in critical reflection and inquiry. Examples include initiatives in Bhutan and Ghana, where groups of teachers conducted gender analyses of their school curricula and practices, and identified areas for change (Levtov, 2014). Likewise in a project in Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, teachers, students and other community stakeholders collect and analyse data on local perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes, to help develop strategies to reduce gender-based violence (Modé and Lizarazo, 2023; Arrunátegui and Lizarazo, 2024).

4.2.2 Quality teaching and learning materials and practical classroom strategies

A major challenge to gender-equitable teaching has been teachers' and teacher trainers' limited access to appropriate teaching and learning materials. Various studies have pointed to the need to revise government-mandated textbooks and develop teachers' guides or training manuals to ensure they are in line with the application of gender-responsive strategies (Ananga, 2021; Abrha et al., 2023). This requires devising materials that are culturally appropriate, both in content and use of language (Jahangir and Mankani, 2020). Yet national teacher training policies, frameworks or curriculum guidance often use the terms gender-responsive education or inclusive education without explaining what these terms mean and how their application might vary in different contexts (Nabbuye, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2024). Teachers are thus often unfamiliar with key terms and concepts (Thabiti et al., 2023). Evaluations drawing on the perceptions of teachers have shown that they value curricula that draw on a human rights perspective and use clear language, as well as materials that are not overly complex, and which can be easily adapted (Van Reeuwijk et al., 2023).

33 This was developed by VVOB and the Forum for African Women Educationalists and endorsed by the African Union and the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.

A wealth of evidence on effective teacher professional development indicates that training opportunities should be grounded in teachers' practice and aligned with the realities in which they work (e.g. Power, 2019; Hennessy et al., 2022). Research has highlighted the gap between theory and practice in teacher education and training efforts, particularly at the pre-service level, where teacher training often takes place in settings that are disconnected from schools (Korthagen, 2010; Phillips and Condy, 2023).

Effective teacher training should be classroom-oriented and provide opportunities for teachers to see new strategies in action, through facilitators that model core practices, opportunities for experiential learning, or opportunities to observe classroom practices either in real time or through videos and other tools (Hennessy et al., 2022). For gender-responsive pedagogies to be widely adopted, teachers need to recognise their potential to help them overcome difficulties they encounter in their daily work (Nascimento et al., 2014), including limited classroom time and issues related to managing student behaviour (Cahill et al., 2023). Yet studies of teacher professional development activities have found that they are often insufficiently tailored – by role, subject, age of students, etc. – to prepare teachers to solve real-time classroom challenges, a finding that is likely also to apply to gender equality modules .

Several studies have found that teachers struggle to integrate gender equality topics into the subjects they teach – for example, in Zambia (Zulu et al., 2019) and Vietnam (Vu and Pham, 2022) – but few have examined how to strengthen the integration of gender equality content in teacher education to enhance teachers' pedagogical content knowledge.[34] Teachers report that they value resources and materials with clear guidance or concrete examples of how to apply different gender-responsive pedagogies in the classroom and tailor these to different subjects. However, available teacher manuals or teaching and learning materials often do not include adequate guidelines and strategies on how to adapt pedagogies across subjects, leaving teachers to default to practices with which they feel comfortable (Nabbuye, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2024).

Effective teacher training involves modelling teaching strategies so that teachers can observe them or experience them firsthand (Stoll et al., 2012). For example, during training to support the implementation of the Connect with Respect curriculum (see Annex 1), teachers participate in the same learning activities they are expected to teach to their students (KII, UNESCO). These materials should be developed as resources that can be used flexibly so that teachers have the agency to tailor them to meet the needs of their students rather than being part of a prescribed or scripted approach to teaching (Rijsdijk et al., 2011; Van Reeuwijk et al., 2023). When materials are overly prescriptive or too complex, teachers may feel less confident, and resort to reading the materials and lecturing to their students (Van Reeuwijk et al., 2023).

Sustained support is vital for changing teachers' practice. Evidence on effective teacher education and training consistently notes that one-off workshops are insufficient, and professional development requires ongoing support, coaching and mentorship (Yoon et al., 2007; Orr et al., 2013). This is particularly the case where teachers are being asked to shift attitudes and practices that may be deep-seated. Evaluations often note the importance of providing continuous support to teachers, and ensuring teachers remain engaged,

34 Exceptions include very small-scale studies, such as Boachie's (2022) study of two teachers in Ghana.

though the effectiveness of specific practices with respect to gender-equitable teaching have rarely been evaluated. Some broadly promising practices include:

Communities of practice/professional learning communities. These provide opportunities to facilitate knowledge exchange and peer support, including on implementing gender-equitable practices. Teachers value peer support and opportunities to collaborate, and when they are encouraged by their colleagues, they may feel more motivated to change their practice (Nabbuye, 2018; Cahill et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2022b).

Examples drawing on communities of practice include Right to Play International's Gender-Responsive Continuum of Teacher Training (UNGEI, 2023; see Annex 1), and a programme supported by VVOB in Vietnam and South Africa (VVOB, n.d.). Forthcoming research in Colombia also highlights the importance of these networks, which often form organically and informally (Sánchez et al., 2024). A review of the evidence on teacher professional development activities in Anglophone Africa suggests that organic, often subject-specific communities that have developed among peers tend to be much more effective than those mandated from above (Mitchell et al., 2024).

Follow-up coaching sessions or peer discussions can help teachers overcome difficulties when attempting to implement the newly learnt pedagogical skills or strategies (Cabus et al., 2021). In some cases, technology – such as SMS messaging or WhatsApp – has been used to serve a similar function (Chinen et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2022). Such messaging can involve coaching sessions or simple reminder messages (Breakthrough, 2023; Koomar, 2024). However, evaluations suggest that face-to-face support may be necessary to effectively catalyse shifts in teachers' attitudes and ability to teach sensitive topics, such as gender norms and violence prevention (Nascimento et al., 2014; Chinen et al., 2016). This support needs to be timed taking into account teacher workloads, including seasonal peaks (Nascimento et al., 2014; Cabus et al., 2021).

5 Moving to scale: supportive education systems and policies

5.1 Background

The previous two chapters have focused largely on how processes of personal transformation – among students and teachers – can be catalysed. Much innovation in this area has taken place on a relatively small scale. It has been concerned with honing curricula that underpin change in specific cultural contexts, developing resources for teachers and creating demonstrable models, both for working with students and for preparing teachers and other facilitators to promote gender-equitable values.

This chapter asks how education systems can better support a commitment to gender-equitable values at scale, focusing on the areas of curriculum reform and teacher professional development. It recognises that there are likely to be trade-offs and challenges associated with trying to provide courses that challenge prevailing gender norms and encourage students to develop more equitable values as part of national or state/provincial curricula and associated whole-school approaches. Despite the challenges, however, it has been done – for example, through the scale-up of programmes formerly led by civil society organisations (CSOs) in India, the Western Balkans and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to mention some well-documented examples (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018; Galonja, 2020; Center on Gender Equity and Health, 2022).[35] RSE has also been scaled up through the roll-out of (revised) national or state-level programmes (Chau et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2023b).

After briefly outlining the nature of the challenge, this chapter will present examples of effectively providing gender equality education at scale in formal educational contexts. Following this, it will discuss how the wider 'ecosystem' of education systems can better support teaching for gender equality.

5.2 Providing gender-transformative education at scale: challenges and trade-offs

Providing any new curriculum at scale is challenging. Learning materials need to be developed, teachers trained, and support structures put in place (such as periodic in-service training). When scaling up gender equality courses, additional considerations arise. Though not unique to gender equality and RSE courses, they are certainly heightened in this context. This section focuses on two: pedagogical approaches and the watering down of gender equality content.

35 The Western Balkans programme included Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia.

As Chapter 3 showed, an emerging consensus suggests that processes of critical thinking about gender inequalities and norms, and a commitment to change, are more likely to be catalysed in learning environments that feel safe to learners, that are relatively non-hierarchical and that emphasise exploration, rather than those where students are expected to produce the 'right answers'. Several of the initiatives discussed in Chapter 3 were collaborations between schools and CSOs, which provided external facilitators. This was often a deliberate choice, recognising the challenges of expecting teachers to teach in a very different style than they are accustomed to, in professional cultures and systems where most incentives skew toward delivery of curriculum content. However, in resource-poor environments, bringing in external facilitators is unlikely to be a sustainable model in the long term. Thus there is a strong motivation to bring these initiatives within education systems and for teachers to take over their delivery.

The other area where scaling up presents a challenge is in relation to the content itself. External facilitators for school-based courses and extra-curricular activities are often recruited, in part because of their commitment to gender equality and social justice. They also typically receive full orientation, including preparation workshops that require them to challenge their own unacknowledged biases and perspectives on gender issues. Together these can mean they feel greater responsibility to deliver the full content of a course and are less likely to skip parts they find challenging. By contrast, teachers fulfil a broader purpose and may be less invested in, willing or able to deliver the whole course as intended. Selective implementation of this kind is often termed 'loss of fidelity' in implementation science literature. It matters because – especially where curricula and learning materials have been honed over a period of years to maximise relevance and effectiveness – reduced fidelity can reduce learning.[36] Why programme implementers, including teachers, make the decisions that they do about which content to include or cut has not been well-studied with respect to gender equality and RSE curricula.[37]

5.3 Learning from effective large-scale gender equality curricula implementation

Studies of how to enhance learning frequently identify skilled, motivated teachers as one of the most critical ingredients of success (Education Commission, 2016; World Bank et al., 2022). The evidence discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 similarly highlighted that effectively nurturing gender equality requires a cadre of teachers who understand the issue and curriculum content, share the values that underpin it and have skills to teach it effectively. This section therefore focuses on learning from processes of integrating new content on gender equality and/or RSE into teacher education systems. It outlines some of the emerging approaches and evidence on what has facilitated effective uptake.

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36 A recent simulation of educational research trials found that for every 5% loss of fidelity, the effect size (impact) also fell by 5% (University of Cambridge, 2022).

37 An ongoing evaluation of Connect with Respect is examining the fidelity of implementation to identify what topics and activities are being taught, to whom, and how and why teachers select topics. This will help inform future implementation, with the aim of developing a more standardised approach to delivery (KII, UNESCO).

5.3.1 Integrating new content into teacher education systems

Institutionalising gender equality or RSE content into teacher education systems requires reaching both pre-service and in-service teachers. The examples reviewed show evolving models to respond to the challenge of reaching large numbers of teachers with high quality training that prepares them effectively to teach new content. A growing body of evidence indicates that 'cascade' models, whereby small numbers of teachers are trained in a new approach or new content and are tasked to share this learning with colleagues, are often ineffective for teachers at 'lower' levels, who are trained by people less familiar with the content.[38] Further, unless specifically designed to do so, time for reflective processes, so critical for gender equality and RSE education, is often squeezed out.

Recognising the limitations of a 'pure' cascade model, several of the scaling-up processes examined have developed alternative models that provide more intensive support to teachers. These usually involve a focused (sometimes residential) training workshop, which covers curriculum content and effective methods. To maximise the likelihood of teachers adopting the values underlying new curricula, some also involve reflective or values clarification components. For example, as part of the scale-up of TkT in India within 30,000 government schools in the states of Punjab and Odisha, Breakthrough has provided five-day gender-sensitisation workshops to teachers who will be delivering the new curriculum (Bedi and Sanpathy, 2023). Breakthrough also strengthens teachers' facilitation capacity through refresher courses, both online and residential, to deliver scaled-up curricula in a participatory manner by using interactive activities during teacher training sessions. However, as curricula are scaled up beyond government school systems, similar training of private schools teachers using the new curriculum is largely outside its scope (KII, Breakthrough).

Emerging models also involve strengthening ongoing support. For example, in Zambia, five teacher training colleges have been tasked to serve as 'centres of excellence' with master trainers providing ongoing support to schools on the RSE curriculum (KII, UNESCO); in the scale-up of the Udaan curriculum in Jharkhand, over 2,000 nodal teachers, with responsibility to support other teachers, have been trained (Rutgers, 2021). These systems are intended to enable teachers to access timely support, and to be sustainable with available public sector resources. Both have involved partnerships with CSOs (discussed in Section 5.4).

The literature reviewed provides a few examples of mainstreaming gender equality or RSE content into pre-service teacher education. For example, in 2009, once in-service training of teachers in the Udaan curriculum had successfully been established, it was introduced in selected Bachelor of Education colleges in Jharkhand, thereby reaching pre-service teachers (Rutgers, 2021). Similarly, the Growing Up GREAT! (GUG) curriculum in the Democratic Republic of Congo, developed through a partnership between a donor and a non-governmental organisation (NGO), has now been integrated into pre-service teacher education (Center on Gender Equity and Health, 2022). In their analysis of the scale-up of RSE programmes in six countries or states over a 20–30 year period, Chandra-Mouli et al. (2024) note that though NGOs often facilitated the integration of RSE content into pre-service teacher training curricula in government-run

38 Examples include: Naylor and Sayed (2014), Power (2019), UNESCO (2023b) and Mitchell et al. (2024).

institutions, once this was done, these institutions took ownership of this training. No more systemic analysis was found, indicating an important knowledge gap.

5.3.2 Scaling up curricula and learning materials

Three key factors emerge from the studies reviewed as particularly important for scaling up gender equality curricula and learning materials. First, in the case of programmes or curricula originated by CSOs, is the alignment with national or state curricula. For example, GUG materials have been fully integrated into the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ministry of Education's Family Life Education programme, including in all pre- and in-service training documents, and teaching and learning materials (Center on Gender Equity and Health, 2022). The studies reviewed provide little guidance as to the relative ease of scaling up stand-alone and integrated curricula, though analysis of scaling up of RSE shows that integration into other subjects can be more complex (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024).

Achieving alignment may require making compromises on the inclusion of certain content – for political reasons (see Section 5.4) or for reasons of practicality. Feedback on the use of the Connect with Respect curriculum in East and Southern Africa suggests that even after reducing the length of the course and the number of activities, teachers do not teach the entire curriculum (KII, UNESCO). Analysis of the national scale-up of the RSE curriculum in Nigeria in the early 2010s highlighted the importance of keeping materials simple in facilitating teachers to grasp new concepts and integrate them into their teaching (Huaynoca et al., 2014).

Second, it is important that curricula can be adapted or modularised for relevance in particular contexts. For example, in the scale-up of TkT in India (see Box 8), additional content on child marriage has been added to the gender equality curriculum in Odisha State (Bedi and Sanpathy, 2023). Teachers interviewed by Keogh et al. (2018) in Kenya highlighted the importance of tailoring content to address regionally specific challenges, such as female genital mutilation or high rates of HIV prevalence.

Third, it is essential that teachers are aware of resource materials and know how to access them. One way to ensure this is through familiarisation with support materials during pre- or in-service training, a strategy used during the institutionalisation of GUG into the public (and parts of the private) education system in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Center on Gender Equity and Health, 2022). To support the roll-out of the national sexuality education curriculum in Uruguay, resource centres with teaching and learning materials were established at the district level. However, an evaluation found that only 25% of teachers were aware of these resource centres. Among those who were, they were popular: 70% of teachers who knew of these resources reported using them (UNFPA, 2017).[39]

39 The evaluation did not include teachers from rural or remote areas who may have faced more challenges in accessing resource centres and thus may overstate the level of access (Power, 2019).

Box 8: Scaling up Taaron ki Toli in India

The Taaron ki Toli (TkT) programme in India was initially developed in Haryana state in 2013–2014. Facilitators from the originating organisation, Breakthrough, provided a gender equality course, delivered through one 45-minute session every three weeks during school hours (for more detail, see Annex 1). Over a period of two and a half years, Breakthrough-funded facilitators reached 18,000 girls and boys aged 11–15 in government schools in four districts. A rigorous evaluation found the programme had contributed to significantly more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviour among both girls and boys (Dhar et al., 2022).

Building on this success, the TkT curriculum has been scaled up in the state education systems of Punjab and Odisha, where it is known as Chanan Rishman and Barnali, respectively. This scale-up is designed to impact 66,000 teachers and 4 million students, with the aim of over 1.6 million students demonstrating gender-equitable attitudes and school dropout rates reducing by 7 percentage points in Punjab and 4 percentage points in Odisha. The curriculum was designed so it could be adapted to different social and cultural contexts and for different year groups. Breakthrough worked with both state governments to tailor the original 28-session curriculum to the specific needs of each state. In Punjab, it was integrated into the English and Social Science curricula for the academic year 2023–2024; in Odisha it was delivered through supplementary textbooks for the first year and has been adapted to cover locally important issues, such as child marriage and cyclone relief. The curriculum has also been adopted by private schools.

The scale-up model involves Breakthrough and evaluation partner J-PAL South Asia working with state education departments as part of expert technical committees to provide ongoing technical support, monitor the delivery of the curriculum and advise on necessary revisions. In both states memorandums of understanding outline cooperation arrangements and Breakthrough's role.

Sources: Bedi and Sanpathy (2023), Breakthrough (2023) and KII, Breakthrough.

These examples all highlight the importance of working with and/or strengthening a supportive ecosystem, the subject of the next section.

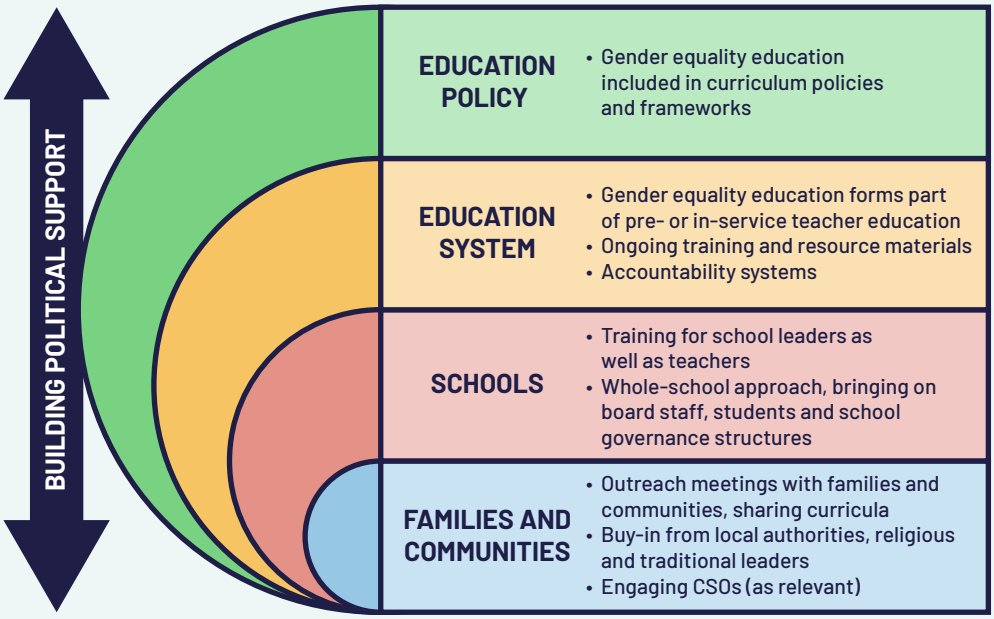
5.4 A supportive 'ecosystem' for sustainable gender equality teaching within formal education systems

> Parents were engaged early on, even before the start of the project. They were aware of what was happening and the expected outcomes of the programme. Because the programme was done in a community where boys and girls usually do not interact, the parents were not ready to let their children participate at the beginning. Some even pulled them out. But then we showed them the content of the episodes and they can also access them online. This helped to clear any concerns or worries.
> *(KII, Camara)*

Chapters 3 and 4 flagged the frequent misalignment between the pedagogies that have proven particularly effective in catalysing lasting shifts in gender norms, on one hand, and classroom conditions, teachers' often deep-rooted pedagogical mindsets (Qargha and Dyl, 2024) and professional incentives, on the other. As both the 'gender transformation' and education systems literatures recognise, lasting change is more likely if different elements of systems are aligned towards a common goal (Silberstein and Spivack, 2023). Moreover, teachers' and students' attitudes and behaviours are more likely to change when the people around them are accepting or supportive of such change (UNESCO, 2014b; Chinen et al., 2016; UNGEI, 2020).

Many areas of public policy have embraced the socio-ecological framework, initially developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), using it to distinguish actions and norms at different levels that support one another and increase the likelihood of policies and initiatives achieving their aim. This section will focus on complementary action at four levels to support effective large-scale programming: families and communities, schools; education system, and policy levels (some examples at each level are outlined in Figure 5). As Figure 5 highlights, strengthening supportive ecosystems requires engaging with the politics, and potential opposition, at each level.

Figure 5: Entry points for strengthening supportive education 'ecosystems'



5.4.1 Families and communities

Families and households can reinforce gender-transformative education by supporting gender-equitable behaviours, such as boys' participation in domestic chores. They can also undermine it by adhering to traditional gender norms that conflict with the messages taught in schools. Engaging parents and caregivers to support learning and foster equitable gender norms is thus often a key complement to school-based gender equality education. Ensuring teachers or facilitators are known and trusted by parents can help increase the credibility of gender-transformative education, as found in the scale-up of the Udaan curriculum in Jharkhand. Parent-facing activities, including regular meetings, clubs, festivals and other events, helped ensure families stay engage and promoted transparency among key stakeholders (Rutgers, 2021).

Misunderstandings (or deliberate misinformation) about the content of gender equality or RSE curricula can also be reduced or prevented through effective parent engagement. For example, when a new sexuality education curriculum was rolled out in South Africa, district-level meetings explained the rationale and content of the curriculum to parents, before teaching it to students. The Department of Basic Education

first published the materials online, reassuring parents and others who had misconceptions about the content of the curriculum (UNESCO, 2023b). Similar efforts have been undertaken by Room to Read. Recognising that in many communities where they work, gender work can be quite divisive, staff teams therefore take extra effort to engage parents and minimise resistance (KII, Room to Read).

Because norms are largely influenced by culture and religion, engaging **cultural and religious leaders** can help prevent backlash against content perceived as controversial or counter to cultural and religious values (Keogh et al., 2018; D'Angelo, Marcus et al., 2024). To garner support from religious and cultural leaders, various initiatives have engaged them as allies, including early in the design of curricula. For example, in Nigeria, Advisory and Advocacy Committees, consisting of religious leaders, school administrators, representatives of teachers' unions and parents' associations, were established to support the scaling up of a sexuality education curriculum (UNESCO 2010, cited in Huaynoca et al., 2014). In Pakistan, a long-term process of engagement between a CSO, Aahung, education sector officials, faith and community leaders and families has led to the integration of life skills curricula with content on preventing child abuse into the public education system in two provinces (Jahangir and Mankani, 2020; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024).

5.4.2 Schools

School leaders, including principals and administrators, play a crucial role in fostering an enabling school environment for gender-equitable education and embedding gender equality into school policies, routines and systems (USAID et al., 2023). Buy-in from school principals is particularly important in decentralised contexts, where school leaders and management have autonomy over the curriculum and make decisions about what is taught (UNESCO, 2020; Van Reeuwijk et al., 2023). But even where school systems are more centralised, the commitment (or otherwise) of school principals can be a decisive factor in the extent to which schools reinforce gender-equitable values. This highlights the importance of training and support for school management (Cabus et al., 2021; Wanjama and Njuguna, n.d.).

Though studies examining support for school leadership to oversee the implementation of gender equality curricula were not found, analogous examples from training on RSE curricula provide some insights. For example, through the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) programme in Lesotho, school principals were trained to mentor and supervise teachers to implement the RSE curriculum. As a result, they developed a more supportive attitude towards the programme, ultimately helping to allocate time to strengthen teachers' capacity to deliver it (UNESCO, 2023b). Similarly the training programme that underpinned the scale-up of Udaan included training for school principals (Rutgers, 2021).

Whole-school approaches, involving all school staff, school leaders and structures, such as school management committees and parent–teacher associations (where these exist), to implement commitments to values such as gender equality are widely recognised as an important ingredient of transformative education.[40] Box 9 illustrates this with insights from social justice education. Commitments to a gender-equitable school ethos on the part of school leadership can help generate a sense of ownership, which, in turn, can help make the most of available school budgets, resources, personnel and relationships

40 Studies drawing this conclusion include: Nascimento et al. (2014), Ismail et al. (2022), Halkiyo et al. (2023), Malik et al. (2023), UNESCO (2023b) and UNGEI (2023).

(Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016). For example, the evaluation of Connect to Respect identified support from school administration and leadership, and collaborative working relationships with colleagues, as important factors underpinning its success (Cahill et al., 2022).

Box 9: The importance of a supportive school environment: insights from social justice education

School leaders play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for teachers to deliver transformative curriculum. This is recognised, for example, in the UNESCO guidance for the Teaching Respect for All initiative – a five-country pilot which introduced a curriculum promoting tolerance and respect across various forms of diversity for 8–16-year-olds. The guidance suggests several practical steps for leaders, such as students need to experience respect in their daily lives in the school to embrace the respect curriculum. This requires schools to consider a variety of systemic practices, such as responses to bullying, and thus to adopt a whole-school approach (UNESCO, 2014b). It also entails participatory engagement with the school community and stakeholders, creating and communicating a shared vision and evaluating progress.

Similarly, studies that examine how new and pre-service teachers approach social justice teaching highlight the importance of school context. Reagan and Hambacher's (2021) review of 125 studies in the US and Canada found that school culture and context sometimes limited the teachers' abilities to use the skills and insights for social justice gained in their training. Some teachers had established peer support groups to enable them to push social justice agendas but this was not widespread.

School management committees and parent–teacher associations are intended help oversee school processes and serve as a link between the school, students' families and the wider community. Where these structures exist, they can be leveraged to support the institutionalisation of gender-transformative education. Parent–teacher associations have provided both moral and/or financial support to school RSE programmes, for example in Togo (Rutgers, 2021), Ghana (Keogh et al., 2018) and Nigeria (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024). In the latter, parents' associations formed part of Advisory and Advocacy Committees that built on existing networks and relationships to help generate support and counter resistance. In the TkT programme in India, both sets of structures have been important in outreach to parents; this has been part of a strategy to help parents understand what their children are learning, the benefits of doing so and to emphasise their role in creating a similar enabling environment at home and in school (KII, Breakthrough).

5.4.3 Effective delivery systems, supportive policies and leadership

Studies of effective scale-up processes point to several sets of actions and approaches to implementation that have contributed to effective scale-up and national/state-level implementation of RSE and gender equality curricula.

Building strong delivery mechanisms requires that stakeholders in all parts of the education system that contribute to implementation are trained and have sufficient resources to fulfil their allocated functions. Ongoing training tailored to specific functions (for example, district officials and head teachers) and emerging, sometimes specialised needs (for example, examinations officers) have been identified as contributing to effective institutionalisation of Udaan. In this programme, specialised training was provided to officials responsible for overseeing the programme, as well as their support staff. A supporting CSO, the Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3), was contracted to provide this ongoing specialised support, with many of its functions being taken over by government staff over time (Rutgers,

2021; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024). Likewise as Zambia's RSE programme was scaled up, provincial, district and examination staff were trained in their responsibilities (UNESCO, 2020). Breakthrough's experience in India also highlights the importance of working with district officials, to build understanding of and commitment to new curricula. These officials are less prone to rotation than those at higher levels, and their engagement with and ability to support and oversee a gender equity curriculum can be a key factor in sustaining change (KII, Breakthrough).

Effective coordination and clear delineation of responsibilities has also been identified as an important factor contributing to effective implementation of gender equality and RSE curricula at scale (Keogh et al., 2018; Chavula et al., 2022; KII, UNESCO). For example, when Senegal's family life education curriculum was scaled up in the 1990s, different entities were allocated responsibility for roles such as: in-service training for monitoring delivery of school-based family life education activities; assessing teacher training needs; and overseeing actions to improve the quality of family life education teaching (Chau et al., 2016).[41]

Formal partnerships between CSOs and governments have enabled CSOs to provide ongoing training on curricula that they have originated, to help ensure fidelity to key elements and approaches. Examples include partnerships between Breakthrough and state governments in India for the implementation and scale-up of TkT (see Box 8), and the training provided over a 15-year period by C3 to government institutions in Jharkhand to support the scale-up and institutionalisation of the Udaan curriculum. These partnerships have clearly delineated government responsibilities and the changing role of CSOs as curricula are embedded. Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Ministry of Education developed a protocol specifying how school-based clubs developed as part of the agreement for mainstreaming GUG into the Family Life Education programme (Center on Gender Equity and Health, 2022).

Well-planned and phased approach over a sustained period. Effective scale-up typically requires a number of years for new systems to bed in. The examples examined further show that the systems and structures to support implementation have often been developed over a period of years and rolled out gradually. For example, the scale-up of Udaan took 15 years, with different support structures being built over time and responsibility progressively being handed over from the originating CSO, C3, to government. Extended processes of implementation have also enabled curricula to be tailored progressively to different school year groups (Rutgers, 2021). Finding ways to work with existing structures has also contributed to successful embedding of programmes at scale. For example, in Rwanda, Youth4Change clubs were integrated into the formal extra-curricular programme of all public and private secondary schools (Hatton and Ridout, 2022).

Long-term support and mobilisation of resources. Several of the scale-up examples examined took place in middle-income countries and were largely funded from domestic resources. In low- and lower-middle income countries, sustained external funding has played an important role, including in enabling ongoing technical support from originating CSOs to enhance the quality of implementation (Rutgers, 2021; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024). This highlights the vital importance of reversing the trend towards decreasing funding

41 For both of these functions the General Inspectorate of Education also played a supporting role. It was also responsible for coordination of extra-curricular family life education clubs (Chau et al., 2016).

for education: education budgets have been reduced in the last four years in half of lower-income countries, while aid to education declined by $2 billion between 2020 and 2021 (GPE, 2024).[42]

Systems for implementation monitoring and quality assurance. Chandra-Mouli et al.'s (2024) review of the scale-up of six RSE programmes highlights the importance of effective management and monitoring systems to track and report on progress in implementation. For example, in Jharkhand, data collected via the management information system was analysed in the monthly meetings of district education officers, who oversaw the Udaan implementation as part of their broader portfolio of responsibilities (Rutgers, 2021). In the scale-up of Zambia's RSE programme, monitoring the quality of training delivered to teachers and teaching of students was contracted out to an independent monitoring organisation (UNESCO et al., 2021). Accountability for delivering gender equality and RSE curricula can also be strengthened by including them in teachers' and school leaders' competency frameworks, as in Côte d'Ivoire under the auspices of the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) programme (UNESCO, 2023b).

Supportive overall policy and leadership. The effective scale-up or roll-out of gender equality and RSE curricula requires strong leadership and guidance at national, state, district or local policy level (depending on how decentralised the education system is in a particular context). Policies and plans that provide the framework for roll-out and implementation can be helpful in galvanising commitment, but equally important is committed political leadership (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024). For example, the roll-out of the gender curriculum in the state of Punjab, India, was launched by the Chief Minister, with a series of media stories to communicate high-level support (KII, Breakthrough).

5.4.4 Taking the political context into account

Social justice education – be it human rights, gender equality or anti-racism education – aims to increase students' understanding of the systems of power that shape their lives and those of others (UNESCO, 2024). The political context is one part of these systems of power, and thus shapes how teachers implement these curricula and programmes. For example, in their review of human rights education programmes, the Danish Institute for Human Rights (2021) found that fear of political pressures may affect how far teachers deliver human rights curricula. The same is true of gender equality and RSE curricula (D'Angelo, Marcus et al., 2024).

Like other education systems reforms, RSE curricula require 'political support and social consensus [that] is not always present and may be variable over time' (UNESCO, 2014a: 24). The support needed reflects both the politics of teaching issues related to gender and RSE, and around education reform more generally. Though gender equality curricula are not always as polarising as RSE curricula, they are (a) often embedded within RSE/life skills courses and (b) easily misrepresented, and as such can become the focus of discontent and mobilisation (D'Angelo, Marcus et al., 2024).

Beyond the politics around specific curriculum content, scale-up efforts are also affected by the broader sociopolitical situation in a given context and can be impeded – for example by teachers' low levels of trust in government institutions or by the abilities and intentions of various government agencies and representatives. Teachers and school leaders can experience reform fatigue if education system changes

42 'Lower-income' is not defined in this source.

are perceived to occur haphazardly or too frequently. Building political support for change – at school, community and national levels – is thus an essential element of institutionalising gender equality curricula at scale. One way Breakthrough has sought to boost teachers' commitment is through a series of teacher awards, recognising excellence and commitment in teaching gender equity curricula (KII, Breakthrough).

The literature reviewed and interviews undertaken highlight three key elements. First, it is important to proactively communicate programmes and their content to families and community stakeholders and through the media; where relevant, they should be engaged in delivery (Ramírez-Barat and Duthie, 2015; Chandra-Mouli et al., 2024).

Second, compromise may be necessary on the inclusion of certain elements or how they are taught. For example, during the adaptation and scale-up of the Connect with Respect curriculum, topics deemed controversial by key stakeholders in some countries (for example, sexual orientation, gender identity and same-sex relationships) were removed, though they are covered in the training of master trainers so they can prepare teachers to respond if these issues arise in the classroom (KII, UNESCO). Though sometimes expedient, such compromises are not without consequences. Forgoing such content in the curriculum can deny young people, especially LGBTQI+ and other vulnerable groups, access to information that may be important for their health and well-being. Exclusion of 'controversial' content should therefore not be undertaken lightly, especially in contexts where young people might not have access to other sources of information outside of formal schooling.

Finally, intelligent framing, particularly with respect to the purpose of the programme, has also helped increased the acceptance of gender equality and RSE curricula. Showing that a programme contributes to established policy priorities and social concerns may help reduce potential resistance or backlash. For example, in contexts where high levels of gender-based violence are a public concern and/or a policy priority, this has proved an important hook for demonstrating the relevance of the Connect with Respect curriculum (KII, UNESCO). In India, one of the reasons that the states of Punjab and Odisha have adopted gender equity curricula was their clear alignment with state education plans (which are tied to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals) and their contribution to reducing school dropout (KII, Breakthrough).

6 Conclusions

This report set out to understand how formal education systems, especially in LMICs, can more effectively promote gender-equitable values, particularly among boys. This is an urgent priority: attitude surveys show reduced support for gender equality among boys and young men in some contexts, compared with older generations (Betts Razavi, 2024). The growing presence of misogynistic content in the digital sphere, including on social media platforms used by young people, amplifies young people's exposure. And organised anti-feminist movements continue to promote patriarchal visions and values, both within the education sector (D'Angelo, Marcus et al., 2024) and beyond (Khan et al., 2023).

Yet formal education remains one of the key sectors through which equitable socialisation of young people can be promoted and lasting transformation of unequal gender norms can be achieved. Despite continuing inequalities in access, formal education reaches young people at scale and is at its heart a space intended to support students to develop new knowledge, skills and values. Education therefore holds the promise of catalysing a generational shift towards more gender-equitable values. The evidence presented in this report shows that this is not just a promise, but that there are actual, evaluated examples of initiatives that transform education systems to strengthen gender-equitable attitudes and behaviour.

This is all the more impressive given that a constellation of forces both within and outside education systems make this a challenging task. Systemic underfunding of education means that classes are often overcrowded and teachers underpaid and demotivated. Particularly at secondary school level, pressures to prepare students for high-stakes exams can reduce curriculum time available and teachers' and students' motivations for non-examinable subjects. Teachers' 'invisible pedagogical mindsets' often favour a more teacher-centred 'transmission' model of learning (Qargha and Dyl, 2024). On top of this, gender equality education can provoke resistance from teachers, students and the wider community.

Given this often challenging context, the report has tried to identify what has proven to be effective to promote gender-equitable values through formal education. It has sought to extend existing evidence on gender-transformative education through focusing on: evidence on how to work more effectively with boys to transform masculinities; insights from the broader literatures on education for social justice and on teacher professional development; and formal education and system transformation. It is organised around three key entry points – work with students, particularly boys; teacher education and training; and systems-level and policy reform – and examines the evidence for key actions and approaches at each level.

6.1 Key insights

Curricula and pedagogy to promote gender-equitable values

The insights reviewed can be divided into two main groups: those related to curriculum content and those focused on classroom practice.

Curriculum content

- **Time and space for critical reflection on gender norms**. The importance of creating space in the curriculum for regular, and deep, reflection on gender norms and stereotypes cannot be overstated. This needs to be interspersed with more factual content.
- **Balance of practical information and skills, and reflective space**. While curricula that include content on gender and power may lead to more transformative change, it is often the more practical and applicable curriculum content that students seem to value most. The studies reviewed found that students particularly appreciated factual content on their changing bodies, sex and relationships, and opportunities to plan for their future or practise communication skills. In contexts where masculinity increasingly carries 'negative connotations', positive masculinities workshops provide space to reflect on students' own values and those of high-profile public figures such as influencers, musicians and sports stars. Though not as overtly practical, such workshops nevertheless respond to a need to discuss and process issues that boys may be grappling with.
- **Content that is contextualised and relevant to young people's lives**. In 2024 this should not need saying. However, and particularly in low-income contexts, transplantation of materials without sufficient adaptation to context, remains common. While it makes good sense to build on materials that have been tried, tested and refined, often over several years, adapting them to different contexts is equally important, as shown in the experience of TkT in different Indian states.

Classroom practice

- **Importance of engaging emotions**. Processes of personal transformation of this kind may be emotionally charged and teachers/facilitators need to be attentive to the powerful emotions that can arise. Engaging emotions is often a necessary part of change processes, which may be more likely to stick than processes that solely engage students cognitively (for example, by providing information or how-to tips).
- **Careful framing of tone and overt and underlying messages**. Facilitators need to balance affirming boys' identities as (different groups of) young men, who – as a result of their upbringing and environment – may hold inequitable gender norms while challenging them to think differently about masculinities and gender. This requires facilitators to walk a careful line between accepting participants as they are while challenging misogynistic or other discriminatory content.
- **Skilled facilitation** is required to build a space that is safe enough to both engage with new emotions and thoughts and confront beliefs and prejudices that may be deeply held, and to relate these new insights to the patterns they observe in their homes, schools and communities.
- **Managing resistance**. The interviews suggest that resistance and disengagement can usually be reduced through participatory activities and through respectful engagement of participants. Helping boys recognise how patriarchal norms negatively affect them, as well as girls and women, may help bring them on board and can catalyse their commitment to change.

- **Mixed or separate gender groups**. Mixed-gender groups can help foster egalitarian relationships between girls and boys, but it is also important that boys have opportunities to discuss sensitive topics in same-sex/gender settings.[43] Some schools (and non-formal initiatives) separate students by sex (or gender) for specific topics, and then bring them together to share perspectives. Where students in mixed schools attend gender-specific sessions, it is important that both groups are offered broadly similar activities and content. For example, offering girls career development activities (or other aspiration/future-focused activities) while boys attend masculinities workshops can breed resentment as well as reinforcing perceptions of boys or masculinities as 'problems to be fixed'.
- **Participatory approaches can help foster positive peer relationships and develop more equitable norms among peer groups**, whose members can encourage each other to put new norms into practice. Role-play and group discussions provide opportunities for students to practise gender-equitable and respectful communication, which they can use in family life and intimate relationships. These approaches are likely to engage students more, and thus make the content more memorable. This is particularly important in a context where learning at school is competing with messages from online influencers presented in a more entertaining and youth-oriented way.

Preparing teachers to nurture gender-equitable values

Despite the critical importance of skilled teachers and facilitators, evaluation evidence of effective processes specifically for preparing teachers to nurture gender-equitable values is scant. It is clear that the proportion of teachers who are exposed to content on gender equality or gender-equitable teaching as part of their professional training and development is very variable, as is the depth and content of this training. Strengthening access to teacher education on gender equality as part of pre- or in-service education is thus a high priority. Though very little research has explored how this is most effectively delivered (for example, as part of a broad module on social justice, or a focused module on gender equality), and what content would be most useful in different contexts, the following promising approaches and enabling factors stand out:

- **Creating space for teachers to reflect critically on social and gender norms** is an essential part of preparing teachers to teach content on gender equality. Without this, teachers often struggle to maintain commitment and to put values into practice. Lessons from human rights and peace education highlight the importance of teachers having a good understanding of different perspectives, and working through difficulties and disagreements they may have with the content, before they are required to teach it.
- **Sufficient time must be allowed for this process of personal transformation**, before moving to tips, tools and resources for putting values into practice. In longer processes (e.g. courses that run over several months), action research can help teachers understand gender dynamics in their schools and local environments and see challenges 'with new eyes' from students' perspectives.
- **Sustained support to teachers is required**, for example, through peer support networks/communities of practice, in-service 'top up' or refresher training, and good quality readily available resources.

43 Depending on context.

Building systems for gender-transformative education at scale

With important exceptions in India, most of the gender equality curricula for which evidence was found have been implemented at a small scale. These innovations provide inspiration, and are a testing ground for good practices. However, the ultimate goal is to integrate these approaches at scale. As well as learning from small-scale initiatives, the report therefore draws on learning from experiences of scaling up innovative RSE curricula, which are both more numerous and better documented at scale.

Studies of institutionalising gender equality curricula at scale highlight the following ingredients of success:

- **Designing gender equality curricula to enable them to be included more easily into existing subjects** and lesson plans can enhance their use and relevance. This may mean shortening or simplifying some tried-and-tested approaches.
- **Adapting materials for relevance to their state/subnational context** facilitates uptake. This is aided by curricula that are designed so that modules can be replaced and new materials added, where necessary. Engagement with key stakeholders, including young people, is an important part of this process. Equally, ensuring resource materials are easily accessible to teachers is essential.
- **Integrating gender equality curricula and accompanying resource materials** into both pre-service and in-service maximises the numbers of teachers who are equipped to teach them. This integration may require a phased approach over several years.
- **'Cascade' models of in-service education (where selected teachers receive training which they must share with colleagues) have often proved ineffective**. The effectiveness of emerging models such as regional hubs and resource centres providing ongoing support should be explored.

Supportive education ecosystems

Education systems do not work in isolation from their social context. Developing a supportive ecosystem for gender-transformative education requires actions with stakeholders at multiple different levels. These include:

- **At family and community level**. Working with families, and community stakeholders (which may include religious leaders) to promote shared values, encourage more gender-equitable practices, ensure families are informed as to what their children are learning, and pre-empt resistance and backlash, related in part to misinformation about curriculum content. Positive examples include Aahung's work in Pakistan, and Breakthrough's work and the Udaan curriculum in India.
- **At school level**. School leadership plays a critical role in establishing and nurturing gender-equitable values, and setting the expectation that teachers and other staff will do so. Experience both in gender equality and broader social justice education highlights the importance of whole-school approaches that mainstream equitable values into school practices, and emphasise them as a core element of the school environment. This can help counter the sexist and misogynistic values that may be transmitted through schools' hidden curricula, both by staff and peers. This points to the importance of training for school leaders as well as teachers tasked with teaching gender equality curricula.

- **At education system and policy level**. Alongside actions related to curriculum and teacher education outlined above, some key actions to strengthen education system capacity include: building effective delivery systems through training, clear roles and systems for monitoring implementation and for quality assurance. Implementing and sustaining these systems requires political leadership, and commitment to mobilising and sustaining resources over a long-term period of 10–15 years or longer. For low-income countries, this implies the need for enhanced and long-term funding commitments from international donors.

Policies and plans that provide the framework for roll-out and implementation can be helpful in galvanising commitment, but are no substitute for committed political leadership at all levels. Alongside community level engagement and media outreach, positive public endorsement and clarification of the value of gender equality curricula can help counter misinformation and mobilisation by gender-restrictive actors. Complementary actions in other sectors, such as regulation of misogynistic social media content, also have a vital role to play.

6.2 Pointers for future directions

Promoting critical thinking about gender norms and inequalities, and using participatory learning methods to do so, is undoubtedly challenging, particularly in systems where the incentives run in different directions, and in contexts where societal support can be limited. However, it has been and can be done. This section suggests some of the areas where knowledge is limited and where further implementation research could provide insights about effective practice:

Curricula and pedagogy

- Understanding the relative impact of gender equality courses or initiatives of different lengths and depths, and what types of follow-up activities help consolidate learning; understanding the potential of integrated SEL and gender equality programmes to nurture more gender-equitable values.
- Exploring whether integration of gender equality content into formal assessments would help raise the level of priority it receives.[44] It is important to recognise that values/norms are not readily examinable and that examining factual content may or may not lead to shifts in norms.
- Understanding more fully how different groups of children and adolescents (both boys and girls) in diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts experience gender equality education, what aspects resonate, which do not, and the implications for more effective approaches. This would help give greater weight to students' voices, and thereby help design initiatives that respond more fully to their lived experiences.
- Understanding the potential or limitations of digital approaches to nurturing more gender-equitable values, as a broad pedagogical tool or for certain groups of students. It is notable that very few of the initiatives examined in this report involved a digital component, which may reflect the limitations of digital environments for processes that appear most effective in group settings. However, it would be worth probing whether, for certain groups of students, an online approach

44 Initial evidence from Breakthrough's experience in Punjab and Odisha states in India suggests this may be the case (KII, Breakthrough).

may hold promise, as part of a broader range of pedagogical tools, given the amount of time young people in many contexts spend online.
- Understanding how better to support student-led gender equality initiatives in school contexts. Topics with little evidence include learning from experiences of boys acting as agents of change towards more gender-equitable masculinities among their peers, as well as mixed-gender student activism for gender equality.

Teacher education

- Understanding the relative impacts, or promising combinations of different models of teacher education (both pre- and in-service), comparing the impacts of residential workshops, regular on-site sessions, peer support networks/professional learning communities, resource hubs, digital platforms and support, etc. on teachers' ability to teach gender equality content in a transformative way.
- Understanding the relative benefits of focused gender equality training compared with integrating gender into broader inclusive education training.
- Exploring how gender-related learning can be accredited as part of teachers' continuous professional development, both for classroom teachers and for school leaders.
- Understanding whether, and if so, how, promising practices, such as teachers' informal support networks and communities of practice, can effectively be assisted.

System strengthening

- Understanding how accountability mechanisms for gender-transformative education can be strengthened at different levels, such as the role of school inspectors (or other relevant bodies, such as district education authorities), or periodic monitoring and review processes for curriculum implementation.
- It would also be valuable to understand whether or under what circumstances the reporting required for international commitments and obligations, such as Sustainable Development Goals reporting, helps catalyse political commitment to gender-transformative education.
- Understanding the long-term impacts of reforms that institutionalise gender equality education on attitudes and behaviours, both of students and teachers.

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Annex 1: Table of evaluated programmes

The following table summarises evaluated programme examples discussed in the text. It focuses on changes in gender-equitable attitudes and/or behaviours among students (especially boys), teachers and/or other stakeholders. The table does not include impacts specific to girls, unless compared with those of boys.

Legend

Green shading indicates changes towards greater gender equality.	**Yellow** indicates mixed changes.	**Red** indicates no change or changes away from gender equality.

Table A1: Evaluated programmes discussed in the report

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
1. Boys' Life Skills for Gender Equality in Cambodia (2022–present) **Focus**: gender equality **Modality**: stand-alone course	Primary, secondary (Grades 7–8)	• Aims to help boys examine and challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes; complementary to a school-based girls' life skills education programme (Grades 7–9) in the same schools. • Includes 34 sessions under six thematic areas: gender roles and division of household roles; gender norms, masculinity, and relationships; puberty, sexuality, and health; addressing conflict and harassment in my school and community; succeeding in school and life; and mental health and emotional disclosure. • Additional activities: mixed gender study group; a monthly facilitated discussion on topics chosen with boys; home visits and meetings with parents; school management, teacher and facilitator trainings; and a training for parents on gender-equitable parenting practices in selected schools. • Implemented by Room to Read, who partnered with Equimundo for the formative research instruments and curricula, with technical support from Gender and Development for Cambodia.	**Boys' attitudes**: significant increase in gender knowledge and more gender-equitable attitudes among boys on gender-based roles, GBV and perception of masculinity. **Boys' behaviours**: promising shifts in gender norms and behaviours; boys reported taking on additional chores.	Quantitative midline evaluation drawing on pre/post tests (from January to October 2022) and mixed methods study drawing on monthly discussions with boys in pilot programme (386 boys across 4 schools in the districts of Mongkol Borey and Preah Net Preah in Banteay Meanchey province participated in the pilot) (UNGEI, 2023).
2. CSE in Uganda (2016–April 2017) **Focus**: RSE/life skills **Modality**: integrated into curriculum	Primary (ages 9–12)	• Curriculum based on UNESCO's International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, covering topics such as sexuality and gender, knowing one's rights, relationships, emotions, decision-making, self-esteem, reporting of physical and sexual violence, and the media. • Employed diverse classroom activities including role playing, group discussions, dissecting case studies, individual written activities and traditional lectures. • Nine-month intervention, delivered over 8 school visits; 11 lessons (1–2 hours) facilitated by 22 trained volunteer university students (13 female, 9 male); monitored by observers including teachers, lecturers and postgraduate students from Mbarara University. • Community Advisory Board consisting of eight educational, religious or cultural leaders helped provide insight into the cultural and religious appropriateness of content delivered.	**Student attitudes**: quantitative data shows no statistically significant differences in changes of gender-equitable norms, body image, or self-esteem scores between the intervention and control; qualitative data shows mixed or erratic reports on gender and equitable norms during pupil's interviews – although students made statements suggesting they understood the importance of gender equality in the context of the CSE lessons (for example, pregnancy being the responsibility of both boys and girls), students did not explicitly discuss how the lessons influenced their attitudes around gender.	Cluster randomised trial evaluation of students in 15 intervention schools (mostly public), drawing on pre/post surveys (June/July 2016 to 2017) with 476 participating students, as well as interviews and focus groups with 50 students, teachers and parents (Kemigisha et al., 2019).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
3. Connect with Respect in Thailand, Timor-Leste, Eswatini, Tanzania and Zambia (2019–present) **Focus**: GBV prevention **Modality**: integrated across multiple subjects	Primary and secondary (lower) (ages 12–15); 24 schools in Zambia (17 primary and 7 secondary), 18 secondary schools in Eswatini, and 50 schools in Tanzania (20 primary and 30 secondary); only two schools participated in Thailand, and the number of schools in Timor-Leste was not provided	• GBV prevention programme designed to assist teachers in building knowledge and awareness on gender equality, social cohesion and respectful relationships among young people. • Curriculum includes learning activities grouped into seven key topic areas addressing gender norms, human rights, positive cultural role models, understanding of the types and impacts of peer-perpetrated GBV, communication skills for respectful relationships, peer support skills for bystanders witnessing forms of peer-perpetrated GBV, and help-seeking knowledge and skills, as well as additional activities that contribute to a whole-school approach. • Includes a learning tool for teachers and more than 30 learning activities teachers can use to increase knowledge, positive attitudes and skills among students, by integrating them into a range of subjects, including literacy, social studies, civics, citizenship education, health, life skills and sexuality education. • With support from UNESCO and the various Ministries of Education in the participating countries, a 5-day teacher training was provided for all teachers. • Note: There were varying levels of programme implementation across participating countries. Most teachers in Zambia (around 90%) and Tanzania (80–90%) delivered all learning activities in the seven topic areas either in full or in part. However, while most teachers in Eswatini delivered all learning activities within Topic One (74%), due to implementation challenges in relation to late timing in the school year, less than a third provided all activities for Topics Two (28%) and Topic Three (26%), and only 4% provided activities within Topic Four. There was no provision of Topics Five to Seven.	**Student attitudes**: more students with gender-equitable attitudes after intervention. For example, increase in proportion of students who believed chores should be shared and decrease in proportion of students who found it acceptable to use physical violence against women at home – however, around 40% still considered it acceptable (Cahill et al., 2022). The student-centred evaluation (Cahill et al., 2023) found that students believed the focus on gender equality and human rights contributed to more gender-equitable attitudes. **Student behaviours**: increased students' skills related to gender equality. For example, the programme resulted in a reduction in the proportion of students who reported that they heard boys make sexual comments about girls every day or most days in the previous week. However, unlike in Tanzania, Zambia and Eswatini, data from Thailand and Timor-Leste shows a gendered pattern of responses with a lower portion of boys reporting that the programme helped improve their relationship skills (Cahill et al., 2022). **Student behaviours**: Some boys acknowledged that although the lessons had helped raise their awareness of inequality, this kind of fairness was still difficult for them to put into practice (Cahill et al., 2023). Likewise, some girls observed there remained some boys who did not wish to do 'domestic' chores and were challenged in accepting those who were gay (ibid).	Mixed methods evaluation drawing on pre- (n=9,089) and post- (n=9,090) implementation surveys with students and focus group discussions with students participating in the programme in 2019–2020 in Tanzania (n=468), Zambia (n=384), Eswatini (n=217), Thailand (n=64) and Timor-Leste (n=18–24), and a programme monitoring survey with teachers (n = 286) (Cahill et al., 2022); student-centred evaluation that expands upon these results in the context of three countries (Eswatini, Tanzania and Zambia) (Cahill et al., 2023).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
4. Discover Learning in Tanzania (2016–Present) **Focus**: SEL **Modality**: extra-curricular	Primary (4 schools)	• After-school SEL intervention to foster gender equity, growth mindset, identity development, curiosity and effective social and individual learning. • Includes a series of two-hour sessions, where young adolescents (ages 10–11) work in small or large mixed-gender groups. • Uses team building, group work, laptop-based learning activities with Ubongo videos, experiential learning and time for reflection. • Covers four main themes: transformation of gender norms, beliefs, and behaviour; novelty, motivational learning, and mastery of technology; extending learning, practice, and reflection outside the classroom; and demonstrating SEL skills. • Evolved from a similar project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and which had positive results for older adolescents (ages 15–19). • Implemented by Berkeley University's Institute of Human Development with local partners, including Ubongo Kids, Camara Education of Tanzania and Save the Children, and with support from various ministries of the Tanzanian Government. • Community facilitators trained with support from master trainers over 8 days on 6 facilitation principles: (1) scaffolded learning, (2) withholding judgement and encouraging youth to take risks and learn from their mistakes and failures, (3) encouraging teamwork and positive group dynamics, (4) transformation of gender norms, beliefs and behaviours by challenging common practices, such as boys taking credit for girls' actions or ideas, (5) encouraging a growth mindset and recognising mastery of tasks achieved, and (6) emphasis on experiential learning over acquisition of knowledge and skills.	**Student attitudes**: quantitative data points to significant changes in more gender-equitable attitudes towards gender norms, beliefs and behaviours among students participating in all groups from baseline to endline; changes were largest for Group C, then Group B, then Group A. Qualitative data also found more gender-equitable attitudes among boys and girls. Parents described examples of changes in their children's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours around gender. For example, they described the importance of gender equity in job aspirations. **Student behaviours**: students demonstrated and practised their shifting beliefs around gender. The most common example was that household chores were no longer as gendered. Many students self-initiated taking on chores that were previously reserved for the opposite gender.	Comparative effectiveness trial of 528 adolescents randomly assigned to one of three groups – Group A (6 after-school, large group sessions); Group B (6 after-school, mixed-gender, peer-guided group reflective discussions with only 4–5 participants); Group C (18 after-school sessions over 6 weeks with mixed-gender, peer-guided group reflective discussions with only 4–5 participants) – engagement with parents/caregivers and the community (Cherewick et al., 2021b), qualitative study drawing on 22 focus group discussions with adolescents (n=117), interviews with adolescents (n=102) and parents (n=60), and 54 participant observations (Cherewick et al., 2021a).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
5. Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) in Bangladesh, India and Vietnam (2008–Present) **Focus**: GBV prevention **Modality**: stand-alone course	Secondary girls and boys (ages 11–14); reached 280,000 students in Bangladesh, and 4,000+ students in India and Vietnam	• Aims to promote gender equality and combat GBV in schools. • Provides students with life skills classes, extra-curricular activities, role playing and games; facilitated by teachers trained to question their own perceptions of gender roles. • Additional activities to support safe school environments: school orientation meetings held with teachers and principals, parent and community outreach (for example, campaigns, activating forums or school-based platforms like school clubs, parent-teacher association, and school management committees). • Adapted from Promundo's Programme H curriculum. • Implemented by International Center for Research on Women in collaboration with governments in India (2008–2014; ongoing), Vietnam (2012–2015), and Bangladesh (2016-2019; this is the Generation Breakthrough project, see entry 9 in this table)	**Student attitudes**: significant changes in students' attitudes around gender and violence, including increased opposition to gender discrimination (Achyut et al., 2017); increased support for gender-equitable attitudes among boys and girls in both intervention groups (Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021). **Student behaviours**: greater male involvement in household work (Achyut et al., 2017); increased self-reported positive reactions to incidents of physical violence in combined intervention group; increased intention to take action against sexual harassment in both intervention groups; mixed results in self-reported use of physical violence at school (increase in combined intervention arm at first follow-up, but decrease at second follow-up) (Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021).	Mixed methods independent evaluations in Bangladesh, India (Jharkhand) and Vietnam (Achyut et al., 2017). Mixed methods independent evaluations in India (Jharkhand) and Vietnam (Achyut et al., 2017), and of the 2008–2010 Mumbai programme, which compared a control group with two intervention groups (one participated in group education and a school-based campaign, the other participated only in campaign) (Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021).
6. Gender Responsive Education and Transformation (GREAT) in Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda (2018–Present) **Focus**: teacher-education **Modality**: in-service and pre-service training	Primary (Grades 1–6), reaching 368 school, 4,077 teachers and 235,324 students across the three countries	• Promotes adoption of gender-responsive play-based learning, through Right to Play's gender-responsive continuum of teacher training, building the capacity of teachers to apply child-centred gender-responsive play-based learning methodologies and create positive learning environments. • Teachers, school leaders and school management committees trained. • Adapted to each context and national curriculum in collaboration with government partners, including at district level. • Integrated into national teacher training frameworks in Ghana and Mozambique.	**Teacher behaviours**: 81% of teachers (70% in Mozambique, 78% in Rwanda and 95% in Ghana) demonstrated more gender-responsive approaches; for example, they reduced gender biases in the classroom, helped foster positive gender norms among their students and were more supportive of the diverse needs of all children. In all three countries girls and boys reported a more supportive and equal learning environment.	Quantitative quasi-experimental midline evaluation (UNGEI, 2023).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
7. Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education in South Africa (2020–2021) **Focus**: teacher-education **Modality**: in-service training	Pre-primary; implemented in 103 early childhood development (ECD) centres, reaching 165 teachers	• Aims for teachers and school leaders to understand gendered realities in which children and parents/caregivers live. • Contextualised toolkit for teachers and continuous professional development for teachers through training and support from professional learning communities (PLCs). • Through training, teachers are encouraged to reflect on their gender beliefs and how these influence their teaching practices, to create a gender-responsive learning environment. • Training consisted of a three-day workshop and additional follow-up support through PLCs via site visits and WhatsApp support. WhatsApp/PLC groups were formed based on existing clusters. Twice per month, each WhatsApp group participant received a message on how to incorporate GRP in daily activities with learners. Such messages were followed up with questions to instil reflection and discussion on the theme in the WhatsApp group. Each centre was also visited twice. During these visits, a monitoring tool was used to assess practitioners' progress and implementation of GRP after the training and to identify needs for further support. Additional support was offered through cluster meetings with practitioners from the ECD centres. Training was conducted in isiZulu, making use of English training materials. • Leaders from participating centres received a one-day orientation session to expose them to the content of the teachers' guide and to reflect on their role to support a gender-responsive teaching and learning environment. Six months after the orientation session, centre leaders joined a cluster meeting to reflect on their support to teachers. • Implemented by VVOB, the South African Department of Basic Education and the South African Council for Educators; pilot project implemented in 84 ECD centres.	**Teacher attitudes**: participating teachers significantly changed their attitudes to more gender-equitable views on gender roles (for example, their views changed on statements such as 'There are some jobs that only men or women should do' and 'A boy should not behave like a girl'), when compared to control teachers. **Teacher attitudes**: Teachers hardly changed their opinion about the statement 'A person's gender is determined by nature (or birth)'. **Teacher behaviours**: participating teachers used more gender-equitable practices; for example, children were encouraged to choose whatever clothing they liked and were no longer taught what different sexes should wear; stories and rhymes were adapted to be more gender neutral; disciplining strategies used were free of gender stereotypes; teachers promoted gender-neutral language and behaviour; children were not grouped according to sex; classroom chores were assigned at random to the groups rather than by gender; and grouping strategies assisted in providing children with chances to play in all areas and not to dominate any particular play-space. **Student behaviours**: participating teachers perceived that children increasingly overcome gender stereotypes. More teachers and school management teams encouraged children to play in a range of play areas and engage with varied learning materials and toys. However, there may not have been sufficient time between the baseline and endline to identify major changes in children's behaviour.	Quasi-experimental treatment–control group research design using pre/post-intervention survey with 230 ECD teachers in Kwa-Zulu Natal province, and qualitative insights from a random selection of 15 teacher and 6 school management teams in the treatment group as well as 183 site observations with control and treatment centres (96 and 87, respectively) (Ismail et al., 2022).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
8. Gender Socialization in Schools: Enhancing the Transformative Power of Education for Peacebuilding programme pilot in Uganda (March–November 2015) **Focus**: teacher education **Modality**: in-service training	Primary, reaching a total of 1,000 teachers in five districts of Karamoja	• Eight-month intervention, supported by the government and UNICEF and implemented with the Forum for African Women Educationalists and Development Research and Training. • Aimed to empower teachers to promote positive masculinity and femininity; redress teachers' gender biases and engage in social norm questioning; create awareness of alternative norms and practices related to gender equality; build skills to engage pupils in constructive dialogue; and promote gender-sensitive practices. • Used a training of trainers model targeting coordinating centre tutors, district inspectors of schools and Ministry of Education personnel. • Provided 276 teachers with SMS messaging to reinforce good practices.	**Teacher attitudes**: programme succeeded in increasing teachers' support for gender equality issues in the short term. **Teacher practices**: limited evidence was found to demonstrate that the programme influenced overall teacher practices (at least in the short term); limited positive complementary effects of the SMS component on teachers' practices.	RCT (March–November 2015) using a mixed methods approach (survey, focus groups/KIIs and SMS messages) for 916 teachers across 105 schools from eight coordinating centre tutors. A third of schools received training and text messages, a third received training only and a third were control (Chinen et al., 2016).
9. Generation Breakthrough in Bangladesh (2016–2019) **Focus**: gender equality **Modality**: integrated into life skills curriculum	Primary and secondary (ages 10–19), in 350 schools and madrasahs (and 150 community clubs)	• Aimed to develop adolescents into responsible, non-violent and healthy adults, as future (sexual) partners, fathers, mothers and caregivers, with gender-equitable attitudes and practices. • Classroom-based educational and life skills development sessions based on GEMS curriculum. • Delivered by trained teachers. • Implemented by the United Nations Population Fund with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and Plan International. • Includes a component on raising awareness on key GBV and SRHR issues among adolescents and community members, using varied modes of media and communication.	**Student attitudes**: statistically significant increase in the proportion of students with gender-equitable attitudes. By endline, approximately 90% of participating students disagreed with the majority of stereotypical gender norms; those in the control arm still agreed with them. The proportion of students who agreed with the statement 'A husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one reason' fell to 3% from baseline to endline, but increased among control group students. **Student behaviours**: by endline, statistically significant increase in the proportion of students with non-violent and responsible behaviour and with 'skills in alternatives to GBV', from both intervention groups. **Teacher attitudes**: teachers from both intervention arms espoused more gender-equitable attitudes, with slightly greater change among GEMS teachers than Generation Breakthrough teachers for 15 of 20 statements. Limited or negative change in attitudes among control arm teachers.	Mixed methods evaluation comparing three arms: Generation Breakthrough (schools and madrasahs with complete intervention), GEMS (schools only with GEMS for young adolescents), and control group, drawing on baseline (2015), midline (2018) and endline (2019) surveys with 3,063 adolescents (1,638 girls and 1,425 boys) of classes 8 and 9 (ages 13–17 years) and 306 teachers in 102 target schools and madrasahs across four districts, and qualitative data with 74 other key stakeholders, including government officials, NGOs, service providers, parents/caregivers, as well as in-depth interviews with 28 girls and boys (Ulziisuren, 2019).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
10. Growing Up GREAT! (GUG) in Democratic Republic of Congo (2017–2018) **Focus**: RSE **Modality**: integrated into curriculum, and extra-curricular activities	Primary, secondary (ages 10–14)	• Aims to increase puberty and reproductive health knowledge, gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours, and self-efficacy of girls and boys and the adults in their lives. • Delivered through school-based clubs (25 weekly meetings) and teacher-led classroom lessons using the GUG Toolkit over the course of the school year. Each school club of 25–30 adolescents nominated 6 members to attend a half-day orientation, and then to lead club meetings with assistance from trained, participating teachers. • The GUG Toolkit contains story books, activity cards, a game, a set of CycleBeads for menstruation tracking, and take-home puberty booklets for adolescents. • Teachers receive training on the GUG Toolkit and learn how to integrate it into classroom lessons of the Family Life Education programme, as well how to support school-based clubs. • Aligned with the Ministry of Education's Life Skills curriculum and Family Life Education programme, including in all pre- and in-service training documents, teaching aids and other strategy documents; included in the National Program for Adolescent Health's three-year strategic plan, as the flagship approach for engaging and supporting adolescent SRH. • Parents, caregivers, teachers, health providers and other influential community members are trained to support adolescents through puberty.	**Boys' behaviours**: evaluation results found some changes; for example, boys were bullying others less frequently and girls were expecting more gender-equal sharing of household chores. Results did not indicate significant differences between in-school and out-of-school status.	Quasi-experimental quantitative evaluation drawing on baseline (2017, n=2,842) and endline (2018, n=2,519) survey with participating adolescents, as well as subsequent rounds of data collection in 2019, 2020 and 2022 to assess long-term impact; qualitative youth-led evaluation also conducted, drawing on perspectives of over 50 adolescent and adult participants (Center on Gender Equity and Health, 2022).
11. Hero Empathy Programme in South Africa (2018) **Focus**: GBV prevention **Modality**: stand-alone course	Primary (Grade 5, ages 10–12); implemented in 10 primary schools	• GBV prevention and bystander training programme that aims to provide young boys an alternative perspective on masculinities and gender relationships based on respect towards women. • 12 sessions spanning two phases of six one-hour sessions, each presented over a six-week period (over a two-year period). • Delivered by trained assistants.	**Boys' attitudes**: quantitative data from Phase 1 shows that boys' gender perception scores became significantly more equal. Qualitative data also shows that boys questioned some gender stereotypes (for example, that only girls should engage in domestic work), learnt to express their emotions, and learnt to interact with girls as equals and with respect. However, quantitative data shows no significant change in gender perceptions in Phase 2, where sessions focused on non-violent relationships and healthy communication, and not specifically gender perceptions.	Mixed methods evaluation drawing on pre/post test of participating boys (n=549) and focus group discussions (n=100). Boys completed measures on gender perceptions, self-esteem and family relationships pre- and post-intervention (Visser, 2021).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
12. Life Skills Based Education programme in Pakistan (2020–present) **Focus**: life skills **Modality**: integrated into school life skills curriculum	Primary, secondary	• Life skills curriculum, beginning in the primary years and spanning across the spheres of critical SRH information, prevention of GBV, and other life skills; strong emphasis on issues of gender and power. • Designed and implemented by Aahung, a Karachi-based SRH CSO. • Primarily operates through school systems within which administrative decision-makers, teachers and the school community, including parents, are sensitised about the need for promoting the well-being of young people. • Began focused on girls; then expanded to include boys' schools.	**Student attitudes**: more gender-equitable attitudes among boys in relation to gender and violence, as well as improved communication skills, all of which may contribute to positive relationships and communication in the future for girls and families. Boys and girls became aware of household gender inequalities in daily life, including unequal distribution of food, denying girls their right to education, and restricting their mobility.	Mixed methods monitoring data collected through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and quantitative data sources from parents, teachers and students in implementing schools (Jahangir and Mankani, 2020).
13. Me and My New World in Panama (2014) **Focus**: gender equality and SEL **Modality**: stand-alone module	Lower secondary (ages 12–15), reaching 55 students in total (26 girls and 29 boys)	• SEL programme aiming to promote equal personal relationships between boys and girls. • Curriculum involves 14 90-minute lessons delivered over four months during regular school hours. • Uses active and participatory learning methods to teach SEL competency areas, including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible and ethical decisions. • Teachers receive 40 hours of training before implementation • Implemented as a small-scale action research project.	**Student attitudes**: half of the participating boys agreed the programme allowed them to explore new views on masculinities and the use of violence; around 15% of boys did not think it was possible to change current cultural and socially accepted gender norms. They expressed rigid views on masculinity and femininity, especially due to fear of losing acceptance among their peers and male family members if they behaved in more gender-equal ways. Around 10% of girls stated their intention to behave in line with existing social norms (for example, gender roles at home or in relationships), following their parents' teachings and their religious beliefs.	Mixed-methods case study, drawing on in-depth interviews with teachers and parents (n=6 total) and 12 focus group discussions with students (n=48), as well as a self-administered questionnaire for teachers (sample size not indicated) (Ledezma, 2020).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
14. Our Lives, Our Rights, Our Future (O3) in 33 countries in Africa (2018–present) **Focus**: RSE **Modality**: varies by country: integrated into curriculum and stand-alone courses	Primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training (TVET)	• Aims to reach four outputs through the national roll out of CSE: (1) strong political commitment and support for adolescents and young people's access to CSE and SRH services across sub-Saharan Africa is secured and sustained; (2) young people have access to accurate, rights-based and good quality CSE programmes that provide knowledge, attitudes and skills essential for safer behaviours, reduced adolescent pregnancy and gender equality; (3) schools and community environments are safer, healthier and more inclusive for all young people; (4) evidence based on CSE and safer school environments is strengthened. • Implemented Connect with Respect tool for preventing school-related GBV. • Supported by UNESCO; of the 33 participating countries, 7 were programme acceleration countries, 16 were focus countries, and 10 were networking countries.	**Student attitudes**: some evidence of CSE resulting in more gender-equitable attitudes among adolescent and youth participants. Results from the pilot showed increased knowledge and understanding of gender and social norms, and more gender-equitable attitudes. The programme was also found to be impactful in shifting some of the gendered expectations about the share of household duties. **Student behaviours**: the pilot established that Connect with Respect activities had positively impacted learners' connectedness and collaboration, although undesirable behaviours such as bullying had persisted in some pilot schools. Another study found a reduction in sexual harassment by peers and in negative bystander responses. For example, in Tanzania, young people were more able to have respectful relationships and support their friends who had experienced GBV after participating in Connect with Respect activities.	Mixed methods final evaluation drawing on multiple studies across implementing countries; impacts reported from an evaluation on the experiences and outcomes related to a pilot Connect with Respect programme conducted between 2019 and 2021 in five countries (UNESCO, 2023b). No studies explicitly examined teachers' attitudes, though several revealed shortcomings with teachers' skills, teachers being shy or embarrassed to teach certain subjects and that teachers' beliefs often conflicted with the topics of the CSE curriculum.

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
15. Parivartan (Transformation) in India (2008–2012) **Focus**: GBV prevention **Modality**: extra-curricular (sports)	Secondary; pilot programme reached 26 school coaches; participating boy athletes were ages 10–16 (most were 13–14)	• Based on the Coaching Boys Into Men model; International Center for Research on Women engaged cricket coaches and mentors in schools and the community to: raise awareness about abusive and disrespectful behaviour; promote gender-equitable, non-violent attitudes; and teach skills to speak up and intervene when witnessing harmful and disrespectful behaviours. The success of the programme in India led to its expansion to include adolescent girls. • Provided cricket coaches with resources to promote positive attitudes and behaviours among athletes and to help prevent GBV. Most group sessions took place on school grounds before practice. • Curriculum consisted of training on how to model respect and promote healthy relationships, and to integrate themes of teamwork, fair play, integrity and respect into athletes' day-to-day habits and choices. • Training for school coaches lasted 12 days over a period of four months. On average, all coaches participated in at least 6 days of the training programme, while half of them attended all 12 days of the training. • Adapted for 10 countries: Australia, South Africa, Angola, Brazil, India, Ivory Coast, Japan, Mexico, Norway and Trinidad.	**Boys' attitudes**: positive shift in gender attitudes in relation to masculinity and manhood, as well as girls' and women's roles. In some cases, changes were only observed among some boys (for example, about a fifth still believed that girls like to be teased by boys and more than 50% said the way a girl dresses may be a justification for teasing). Less change was seen in relation to boys' perceptions about their right to control girls' behaviour or physical abuse towards girls, except when posed with hypothetical situations. **Boys' behaviours**: no significant changes in the bystander intervention behaviours. **Coaches' attitudes**: school coaches demonstrated increased support for more equitable gender roles and relationships; they were less likely to justify the use of violence against their wife, or a man's right to control his wife's behaviour (for example, letting his wife go outside alone, telling her what she can or cannot do, etc.).	Quasi-experimental evaluation, drawing on pre/post-surveys (one year after implementation) with 168 athletes in the intervention schools and 141 in the comparison schools, as well as six in-depth interviews with coaches (Das et al., 2012).
16. Positive Child and Youth Development Programme in Pakistan (2015-2018) **Focus**: GBV **Modality**: extra-curricular	Secondary (Grade 6; ages 12–14)	• Play-based, life skills intervention to decrease peer violence and depression and promote gender equality in government schools. • Biweekly structured games led by a coach, and followed by critical reflection and discussion for 30 minutes. • Teacher training addresses positive youth development and child protection provided by coaches. • Parental involvement through sports tournaments and 3-monthly awareness sessions around child rights and gender equality. • Implemented for two years by Right to Play; implementation quality monitored by NGO staff and research partner, Aga Khan University, through monthly lesson observations and recording the number of sessions delivered.	**Student attitudes**: gender attitudes changed significantly for boys and girls, becoming less patriarchal in the intervention arm than the control arm; the reduction in scores was greater for girls than boys (18% vs. 14%, respectively). **Student behaviours**: significant decreases in self-reported peer violence victimisation and perpetration. Peer violence victimisation reduced by 33.3% for boys and 58.5% for girls in the intervention arm (compared to 27.8% and 21.3%, respectively, for those in the control arms). Peer violence perpetration reduced by 25.3% for boys and 55.6% for girls in the intervention arm (compared to 11.1% and 27.6%, respectively, for those in the control arms).	Cluster randomised control trial of 40 single-sex public schools split across two study arms (20 per arm; 10 of each sex), including a total of 1,752 Grade 6 students (929 from intervention and 823 from control schools) (Karmaliani et al., 2020; Harte and Barry, 2024).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
17. Project Nam in Vietnam (2007–2011) **Focus**: RSE **Modality**: extra-curricular activities	TVET	• Implemented by Save the Children in cooperation with the General Directorate of Vocational Training of the Vietnamese Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs. • Trained teachers and peer educators to conduct small-group gender-transformative education sessions in primarily male public vocational schools to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent the spread of HIV (Promundo and UNFPA, 2016).	**Boys' attitudes**: significantly more gender-equitable attitudes observed in young men participating in vocational schools; changes were greater among young men who participated in the group education extra-curricular sessions.	Mixed methods evaluations (Promundo and UNFPA, 2016; Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021) drawing on pre/post tests with 900 young men (aged 15–24) who participated in vocational training schools and universities.
18. Promoting Youth Leadership for Gender Justice in Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico (2018–present) **Focus**: GBV prevention **Modality**: stand-alone workshops and extra-curricular activities	Primary, secondary	• Aims to encourage boys and young men to modify their attitudes and behaviours towards supporting the greater empowerment of girls and young women in order to build equitable and healthy gender relations. • Partnership between Global Fund for Children, the Summit Foundation and the Kendeda Fund; builds on the Global Fund for Children's Changing Gender Attitudes, Empowering Girls initiative; implemented by six community organisations that work to deconstruct machismo and reduce GBV. • Activities include: creating safe spaces for boys to explore their emotions and develop strategies for addressing harmful behaviours and practices; developing culturally based programmes that address the unique context of gender inequalities in their communities; implementing sexuality education.	Results varied by region and by implementing partner, but in general the programme led to positive changes in both attitudes and behaviours. **Boys' attitudes**: more gender-equitable attitudes in relation to gender roles or stereotypes that discount, devalue or violate women. **Boys' behaviours**: higher levels of participation in domestic tasks and in SRH, stronger commitment to being agents of change in their communities, and in some cases defending girls or young women from harassment and bullying in public and private spaces.	Qualitative participatory external evaluation, drawing on the perspectives of operational and management staff across 6 partner organisations, the adolescents participating in their programmes and projects, their relatives and community actors with whom they have collaborated (GENDES and GFC, 2018).

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19. Taaron Ki Toli in India (2014–2016), followed by scale-up in Haryana, Punjab and Odisha states **Focus**: gender equality **Modality**: initially stand-alone course, now integrated in state school curricula	Secondary (Grades 6–8), reaching 500,000 boys and girls (ages 11–14) as of 2022	• Aims to create awareness of gender-based discrimination, change dominant gendered perceptions, promote gender-equitable attitudes, raise girls' aspirations, and provide tools to participants to translate attitude change and greater aspirations into behaviour change. • Curriculum emphasises both human rights and instrumental reasons for giving girls and women more opportunities. • Delivered through a total of 27 classroom sessions, each 45 minutes long, led by a Breakthrough facilitator. The regular teacher could stay for the sessions or leave the classroom and have a break. Breakthrough hired 15 facilitators, 13 of whom were male, to cover the 150 participating schools. The facilitator visited each school roughly once every three weeks. • Sessions involved interactive, open and safe discussions, using games, songs, drawing and other activities to address topics such as gender stereotypes, gender roles at home, girls' education, women's employment outside the home and harassment. • Run for over two and a half years; one cohort participated in the programme in Grades 7, 8, and half of Grade 9, and the other in Grades 8, 9, and half of Grade 10. • Implemented in collaboration with the government. • Other elements of the programme included a one-time training for one teacher per school, optional youth clubs and school-wide activities, such as street theatre performances, held about once a year.	**Student attitudes**: more gender-equitable attitudes among participating boys and girls (for example, whether women should work outside the home, the appropriate age of marriage for girls, etc.). At the first endline, changes were greater for boys than girls, but not statistically significant. By the second endline, the effect on attitudes was significantly larger for boys. **Student behaviours**: behaviour change was significantly more pronounced among boys in both the short and medium run. For example, boys reported doing more chores, but girls did not report doing fewer, and only boys reported an increase in how much they encourage their older sisters to pursue a college education. This may reflect girls facing more constraints on their behaviour.	Randomised controlled trial (RCT) covering 14,000 adolescents across 314 schools in the state of Haryana, drawing on a participant survey administered at baseline (between August 2013 and January 2014), first endline (between November 2016 and April 2017) and second endline (January–July 2019) (J-PAL, 2021; Dhar et al., 2022). See also UNGEI (2023).

Initiative name, location, years, focus and modality	Level of education system	Key objectives and activities	Impacts	Evaluation methodology and reference
20. Udaan curriculum in India (2006–unclear) **Focus**: RSE and life skills **Modality**: integrated into life skills curriculum	Primary, secondary, reaching over 900,000 students in more than 1,700 schools by training more than 2,686 'nodal teachers'	• Life skills and sexuality education curricula to promote healthy development for primary and secondary adolescents. • Includes 13 modules covering life skills, goal-setting, growing up, relationships, GBV, SRHR, substance abuse and more, and using participatory tools, such as games, stories, case studies and quizzes. • Delivered by 'nodal teachers' who are trained by a cadre of master trainers. • Institutionalised by the Department of Education, which formally included the programme in the school timetable, with a dedicated period for classes 4 and 6, and, later, classes 5, 7 and 8. • Implemented as a 3–4 week summer camp (in first year) and then throughout regular academic year in subsequent years, wherein students participated in weekly sessions.	**Student attitudes**: more gender-equitable attitudes among participating boys and girls: 70% of students believed that household work should be shared; 60% of students believed that reproductive decisions should be joint; only 35% of students found no justification for GBV (no pre-test data provided); authors argue that the short duration of implementation for the 3–4 week 'camp' mode approach led to the limited influence on attitudes in the first two evaluations.	Study examining how Udaan was successfully scaled up from 2006 to 2017, drawing on five mixed methods evaluations (2007 to 2010), including a quasi-experimental post-intervention impact evaluation (n= 6,498) and a pre/post impact evaluation (n=2,580), both of which drew on focus group discussions with students (Bhat et al., 2015, cited in Chandra-Mouli et al., 2018; Hatton and Ridout, 2020; Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021).
21. Your Moment of Truth in Kenya (January–February 2013) **Focus**: GBV **Modality**: stand-alone module	Secondary (boys ages 15–22, Form 1– 4); total of 36 schools in Nairobi	• Curriculum that aims to promote gender equality and the development of positive masculinity, by teaching boys how to safely and effectively intervene in GBV. • Sessions were delivered weekly for six weeks immediately after school; two-hour refresher courses were held at four and a half and nine months post-intervention. • All instructors were male (ages 20–34) from the local region; all had two years of experience as advocates to reduce GBV. Facilitator training involved a minimum of 250 hours of instruction by expert facilitators, and participation in mock interviews and field training exercises conducted outside of the study area. Average instructor to student ratio was 1:18. • Curriculum developed by researchers and Kenyan staff working in Nairobi, and adapted to specific needs of boys in Nairobi; Ministry of Education in Kenya approved the curriculum before implementation.	**Boys' attitudes**: participants had significantly higher scores for more gender-equitable attitudes toward women at follow-up, whereas scores for the control group declined. **Boys' behaviours**: more positive attitudes towards women predicted whether boys in the intervention group would intervene successfully when witnessing violence. The percentage of boys in the intervention group who successfully intervened when witnessing violence was 78% for verbal harassment, 75% for physical threat and 74% for physical or sexual assault, compared with 38%, 33% and 26%, respectively, in the control group.	Comparison intervention study (n= 1,543 adolescents, including 1,250 boys who received six two-hour sessions of the intervention; 293 boys comprised the control group). Data on attitudes towards women were collected anonymously at baseline and nine months after intervention (Keller et al., 2017).

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22. Youth4Change in Rwanda (2016–2020) **Focus**: RSE **Modality**: extra-curricular activity	Secondary and TVET (ages 13–23), reaching 63 secondary schools and one vocational school	• Curriculum adapted from Equimundo's Program H, focusing on SRHR and targeting young men and women. • Teaches eight themes with 21 activities delivered through 23 weekly one-hour meetings in afterschool clubs of 30 young people; all students were required to participate in at least one club; teachers were trained to facilitate clubs. • Included three components: after school extra-curricular clubs and group education sessions, school campaigns, and teacher and school leadership training. • Implemented by the government with the support of Rwanda Men's Resource Centre and Equimundo. Gender-transformative training provided to local education authorities to ensure adequate buy-in and support.	**Student attitudes**: results of the evaluation of group education (there was no campaign or control group) found positive changes in young men's and young women's gender attitudes between baseline and endline, despite the post-test being conducted prior to the completion of the curriculum. Young men and women who participated in Youth4Change clubs reported lower acceptance of intimate partner violence after participating.	Mixed methods evaluation of the Prevention+ phase (Phase 2; 2016–2020), drawing on pre/post survey (n = 296,279) and focus group discussions with young men and women (13–23 years) participating in the Youth4Change clubs, as well as teachers (Hatton and Ridout, 2020; Doyle and Kato-Wallace, 2021).

Annex 2: List of people and organisations interviewed

Jamie Bale, Beyond Equality, UK
Ben Hurst, Beyond Equality, UK
Sumita Menon, Breakthrough, India
Dayani Mbowe, Camara Education, Tanzania
Fernanda Gándara, Room to Read, Global Office
Gimu Shyikiro, Rwanda Men's Resource Center, Rwanda
Luis Erick Rachón Romero, SERNiña, Guatemala
Urvashi Sahni, Study Hall Education Foundation, India
Remmy Shawa, UNESCO East and Southern Africa Regional Office

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ALIGN is a digital platform and programme of work that supports a global community of researchers, practitioners and activists, all committed to gender justice and equality. It provides new research, insights from practice, and grants for initiatives that increase our understanding of – and work to change – patriarchal gender norms.

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