



Gender thematic group

Notes from 16th May 2013

Introduction

The Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda is a national coalition of civil society organisations working to bring about education rights in Uganda. This document outlines notes made at the meeting on 16th May 2013

Notes from meeting

Feedback from gender taskforce meeting

The group started the meeting by discussing some of the issues raised at the most recent gender taskforce meeting:

Ensuring gender position paper is presented at next ESSR

Last year the gender position paper was not presented at the ESSR due to timetabling changes. This year the gender taskforce will be writing a paper on affirmative action, examining the 1.5 entry point for girls at university. The group agreed that it was important that the position is presented this year. FENU agreed to push this when it is discussed at the ESCC meeting.

Gender eye

The Gender eye is an e-newsletter that the Gender Unit send out quarterly. It is also printed and disseminated to key decision makers. FENU members are encouraged to write articles that can be included in the newsletter. FENU secretariat will circulate this invitation to members before the deadline for the next newsletter.

Airtime on UBC

The MoES has half an hour of airtime on UBC radio and TV every Thursday at 7:30. This is rarely used, which is a shame. The Gender Parity thematic group can work with the Gender Unit to make better use of this airtime.

It was agreed that the group would try to make use of this half hour at least three times over the remainder of the year. Ideas for how this could be used included a visit to the Pader Girls Academy, a launch of the new national strategy for girls education on the day of the girl child in October and a programme on something to do with gender and boys.

Policy on re-entry of child mothers into school

A study was done by FAWEU in 2011 on this and the findings were disseminated. SPM has recommended that a policy may be possible, but a wider study and consultation needs to be conducted first. There is no money currently available for this.

Members also discussed the need for dialoge with religious institutions on this issue. Foundation bodies run 70% of schools in Uganda, so their input is key if there is to be development on this policy.

The group agreed that it would be good to organise some small meetings with key religious and community leaders to discuss the issue of re-entry of child mothers into schools. It was felt that if possible it might be good to have a young woman whose life had been affected by the lack of policy at the meeting. She could then tell her story which would help demonstrate why a policy is needed.

Gender Unit become a working group

Rosette from the Gender Unit reported to the group that it now looks likely that the Gender Unit will become a full working group at the MoES.

Following the participatory audit of the MoES, recommendations were made that gender mainstreaming needed to be institutionalised throughout the ministry. The Gender Unit presented its recommendations on this to the Sector Policy Management (SPM) working group in May. SPM has endorsed the formation of a Gender Working Group in MoES and has recommended top management allocate a budget for this. There will be a further meeting about this in August 2013.

The group congratulated the Gender Unit on this important achievement and for all their hard work in keeping gender issues high on the agenda over the years.

Gender in education policy

The gender in education policy is due to be reviewed this year, and UNICEF have agreed to fund this. The Gender Unit have drafted the TORs.

The Strategic Plan for Gender in Education is also due to be reviewed and the National Strategy for Girls Education is currently being reviewed.

There was concern raised at the meeting that it is regrettable that the Gender in education policy will be reviewed after the review of the National Strategy for Girls Education. Members agreed that ideally a policy should be reviewed before a strategy. Questions were also raised as to why there are two separate strategies; the National Strategy for Girls Education and the strategic plan for Gender in Education.

Discussion on National Strategy for Girls Education

Members of the group welcomed Anna Ninsiima, who is one of the consultants for the review of the National Strategy for Girls Education. Members discussed three key questions:

- Have members used the current strategy?
- What should be included in the new strategy?
- How can the new strategy be better circulated?

Members felt that the old National Strategy for Girls Education had not been well used, and was not longer very relevant to the current policy environment. It was felt that a strategy should highlight the

key issues that are important for girls' education, identify priority action and who is responsible for taking that action.

Members were also unclear how this strategy would link to the Gender in Education Strategy which is also due to be reviewed.

The group came up with a list of key priority issues that the National Strategy for Girls Education should cover. For each issue, action should be highlighted at four key levels:

1. Girl
2. Family and community,
3. School
4. Government (local and national)

The key priority issues highlighted by the group were:

- Dropout rates
- Sanitation/menstruation management
- Pregnancy, child mothers, reproduction health, sexual maturation management .
- Life skills
- Role models
- Female teachers
- Access + travel to and from school
- School environment
- Child labour
- Emergencies and conflict
- Violence against children/gender based violence and defilement.
- Cultural and religious practices and attitudes

Teachers and advocacy

The group had a brief discussion on the action that could be taken to encourage more female teachers and improve gender mainstreaming in schools. The Gender Unit agreed to share their study on female teachers. They pointed out that retention was a bigger problem than recruitment.

Actions that came out of this meeting

Action points	Responsible person/ organization
Push for the gender position paper to be included on the timetable for the next ESSR	Anya, FENU and Rosette, Gender Unit
Send Gender eye to media in future and send contribution invitation to FENU for circulation before each edition	Rosette, Gender Unit
Plan a series of meetings with religious and cultural leaders on re-	

entry of child mothers into school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide testimonies - Research which leaders - help with policy preparation 	Florence, GEM Anya, FENU Josephine, FAWEU
Ask UNICEF, Save the Children and Plan if they would consider funding a visit to Pader girls academy for ½ hour TV show on UBC	Anya, FENU
Circulate draft of National Strategy for Girls Education for comments once a draft has been completed	Anya, FENU
Share study on female teachers	Rosette, Gender Unit

Next meeting

The group agreed that the next meeting would take place at FOWODE on 15th August 2013