



Building gender and education data communities: Cross-national insights from Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi

UCL Accountability for Gender Equality in Education (AGEE) team and UNESCO

November 2025

Suggested citation: UCL Accountability for Gender Equality in Education (AGEE) team and UNESCO. 2025. *Building gender and education data communities: Cross-national insights from Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi*. London: UCL and Paris: UNESCO.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bridging Accountability for Gender Equality in Education (Bridging AGEE) project is supported by the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE-KIX), a joint endeavour with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.

The project partners comprise University College London (UCL), UNESCO and University of Malawi. The Bridging AGEE project is based in the Centre for Education and International Development (CEID) at UCL, in the UNESCO Section for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO HQ, the UNESCO regional offices in Jakarta, Nairobi and Harare, and at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. Our thanks to all members of the Bridging AGEE research team who have contributed to the development of this report: Linda Assani, Matthias Eck, Cresti Eka Fitriana, Esthery Kunkwenzu, Helen Longlands, Chikondi Maleta, Meaghan Malloy, Tamara Martí Casado, Mercy Mwongeli, Eliza Ngutuku, Virginia Ntheketha, Rosie Peppin Vaughan, Caine Rolleston, Justine Sass, Elaine Unterhalter, and Gunawan Zakki.

Sincere thanks to members of the National Advisory Groups (NAGs) in Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi, who helped organise the national workshops on which this report draws:

Indonesia: Irsyad Zamjani and Nisa Felicia Faridz (Co-Chairs), Ulfah Alifia, Justin Gelatik, Ari Hardianto, Fransisca Nur'aini Krisna, Ubaid Matraji, Ika Maylasari, Misiyah Misi, Nunik Nurjannah, Diana Pakasi, Yeni Rachmawati, Anna Bella Sabilah, Asri Yusrina.

Kenya: Anne Ngatia (Chair), Ann Gachoya, Mary Kangethe, Phyllis Mavind, Faith Mbushi, Ruth Nanjekho, Sam Ngaruiya, Rosy Njiri, Collins Olang, Joseph Wasikhongo.

Malawi: James Namfuko (Chair), Jane Banda, Samuel Chibwana, Joel Kanjunjunju, Shelton Kanyanda, Rodney Kita, Olivia Liwewe, Liviness Mwale.

We appreciate the support given to this project by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education in Kenya, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Malawi.

The data collected for this report was assembled subject to ethical clearance from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), Kenya, the University of Malawi and University College London.

ACRONYMS LIST

AGEE	Accountability for Gender Equality in Education
CEID	Centre for Education and International Development
CSO	Civil society organization
EMIS	Education management information system
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KIX	Knowledge Innovation Exchange
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NAG	National Advisory Group
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSO	National Statistical Office
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
UCL	University College London
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Background: The AGEE project, <i>Bridging AGEE</i> and first year activities	7
Reviewing national workshops	9
1. Building communities of practice	9
1.1 Stakeholder profiles	11
1.2 Gender balance	12
1.3 Overall reflections on participation and engagement	12
2. Reflecting on gender equality in and through education	12
2.1 Approaches and areas of focus in Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi	16
2.2 The context of data ecologies: Challenges, needs, learning and opportunities	17
3. Improving data collection and availability: Ways to enhance data collection and address missing data to inform and sustain policies for gender equality in and through education	18
4. Pathways to scaling	20
Conclusion	22
References	23
Appendix 1: Head, Heart, Hands, and Feet activity	24
Appendix 2: Bridge activity	27

FIGURES

<i>Figure 1: AGEE Framework</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Figure 2 Captions for the bridge activity</i>	<i>27</i>

TABLES

<i>Table 1: Overview of activities in Bridging AGEE, March 2024-March 2025</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Table 2: Numbers of participants who attended the 1st AGEE workshops in January and February 2025</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Table 3: Numbers of total community of practice associated with first national workshop (including NAG members who did not attend the workshop)</i>	<i>11</i>

<i>Table 4: Responses to head, heart, hands and feet activity</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Table 5: Putting the AGEE Framework into practice: Improvements needed in data collection, missing data and good practice</i>	<i>19</i>

INTRODUCTION

Current methods of collecting and using educational data are inadequate for capturing the full extent and complexity of gender inequalities in education, as well as the nuanced realities of local contexts. Misalignments between what data exist and what are needed, and between local conditions and broader policy frameworks, undermine efforts to tackle inequalities through evidence-based action.

The Accountability for Gender Equality in Education (AGEE): Bridging the Local, National and Global (*Bridging AGEE*) project (2024-2027) aims to address some of these misalignments. *Bridging AGEE* seeks to facilitate communication between those with different ways of thinking about gender and the practices associated with global, national and local data generation and use in the fields of education, gender and inclusion. *Bridging AGEE* is funded by the Global Partnership for Education's Knowledge Innovation Exchange (GPE-KIX), a joint endeavour with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. *Bridging AGEE* is led by University College London (UCL) in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the University of Malawi, working in collaboration with government ministries and civil society in Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi.

This report documents national workshops held in Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi in 2025 using tools developed by the *Bridging AGEE* project. It includes reflections on data that exist, are missing and are needed in each country to better consider issues of gender equality in and through education. This synthesis report reviews the key themes emerging in relation to the *Bridging AGEE* research questions and objectives (outlined below), drawing on activities undertaken in each of the three countries during the first year of the project, and highlights comparative dynamics across these themes. These key themes, which comprise sub-sections of this report, are:

- **Building communities of practice:** Provides reflections on expanding and deepening the circle of stakeholders reflecting on gender, education and data in three country contexts.
- **Reflecting on gender equality in and through education:** Outlines emerging concerns, and contentions on rights, data and the AGEE Framework.
- **Suggestions on improving data collection and availability:** Summarises ways to enhance data collection and address missing data to inform and sustain policies for gender equality in and through education.
- **Pathways to scaling:** Reviews suggestions on connections between global, national and local organisations and across government departments to address data concerns, details differing approaches developed in each country to coordinate with neighbourhood communities of practice and considers how scaling plays out differently in each country.

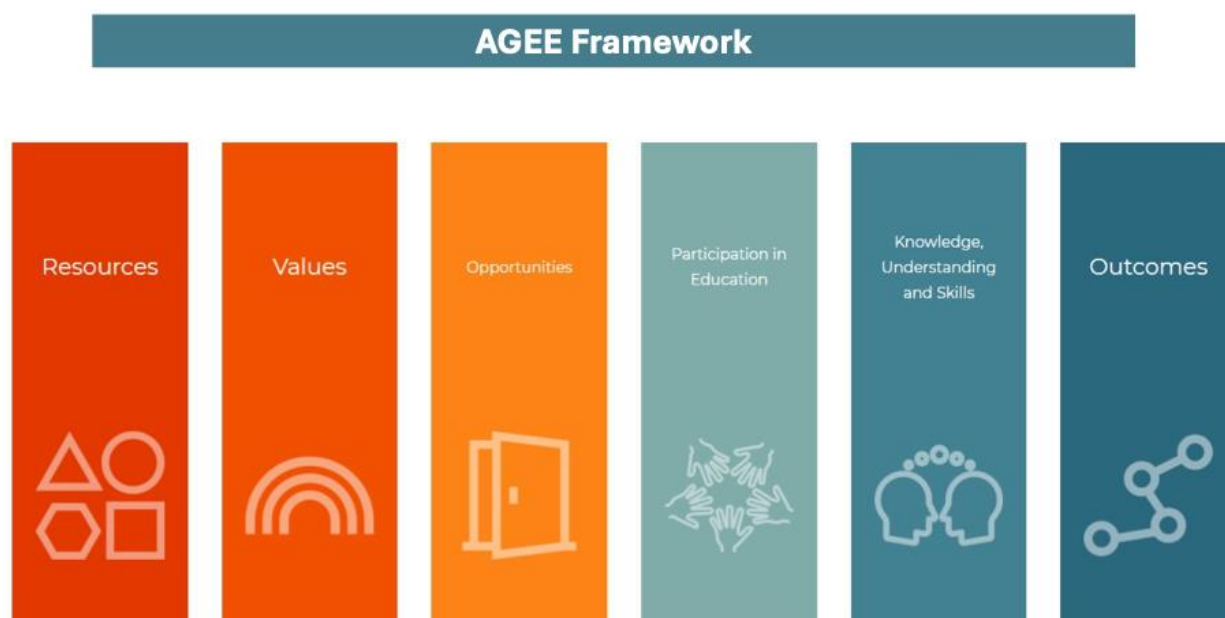
BACKGROUND: THE AGEE PROJECT, *BRIDGING AGEE* AND FIRST YEAR ACTIVITIES

Bridging AGEE draws on tools developed during the first phases of the AGEE project (2018-2023), particularly the AGEE Framework (see **Figure 1**). The AGEE Framework was developed through in-depth participatory consultations with over 200 stakeholders in Malawi, South Africa and internationally. It sought to improve understanding and measurement of gender equality in education beyond gender parity¹.

Launched in 2022 on the AGEE website (www.gendereddata.org), the AGEE Framework sets out six distinct but interconnected domains for measuring gender equality in education in which to capture information about relationships between individuals, institutions and contexts. The domains are i) Resources, ii) Values, iii) Opportunities, iv) Participation in Education, v) Knowledge, Understanding and Skills, and vi) Outcomes. By gathering information across all six AGEE domains, the aim is to provide a richer and more contextually responsive picture of gender equality in an education system, as well as a range of forms of inequality and marginalisation (Unterhalter, Longlands and Peppin Vaughan, 2022).

The project, *Bridging AGEE* – Accountability for Gender Equality in Education: Bridging the Local, National and Global – was launched in 2024, with the aim to put ideas associated with the generation of the AGEE Framework into practice.

Figure 1: AGEE Framework



¹ Gender parity measures the proportion of girls/women to boys/men in different aspects of education, including enrolment, attendance and attainment.

The project objectives for *Bridging AGEE* are:

- Build knowledge concerning gender equality in and through education at national levels by looking at what data exist, what are missing and what are needed to support insights on contextually specific and relevant processes.
- Introduce new measurement tools and platforms for use at national levels to build knowledge on how to expand data systems and improve processes for data collection, uptake and critical reflection regarding gender equality in and through education.
- Reflect on how to begin processes to bridge and strengthen local, national and global perspectives, mobilise and share knowledge on equitable and inclusive processes relating to the expansion of data systems and collection of new data on gender equality in and through education.
- Strengthen capacities of those working in and with Education, Health, Gender/ Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and other social development Ministries, as well as civil society and non-governmental organisations concerned with education, gender and women's rights, to identify strengths and weaknesses of existing data on gender issues in and through education and address the data gaps and systemic issues that need to be changed to allow for data to support an enhancement of women's rights, and gender justice (AGEE, 2024).

These objectives are associated with the project's overarching research questions:

1. How can insights from work on expanding, deepening, and reflecting on issues of scale and good practice using the AGEE Framework in three countries enhance understanding of gender equality and women's rights in and through education?
2. What insights can be mobilised and transferred to support improvements in decisions on data collection, judgements about what data to use at different scales, taking account of local, national and global contexts to formulate and sustain good practice in policy?

The information in this synthesis report draws on three country-specific reports prepared for Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi respectively. Each country report reviewed activities conducted nationally, including National Advisory Group (NAG) meetings and workshops. Executive summaries of these reports can be viewed at www.gendereddata.org.

Table 1 provides an overview of the key activities carried out during the first year of the *Bridging AGEE* project. The table illustrates the initiation of various processes, which we reflect on in this report.

Table 1: Overview of activities in Bridging AGEE, March 2024-March 2025

	Timelines (Year/Month)												
	2024											2025	
Activity	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	01	02	03
Establishing planning documents: ways of working, ethics reviews													
Building the research teams													
Identifying NAGs and holding initial consultations													
Assembling data for cross national dashboards													
Developing briefing papers from cross-national dashboard data; webinars discussing briefing papers													
Preliminary work planning for AI stream of work													
Convening first NAGs and national dashboard meetings; identifying sites for neighbourhood work													
Hosting of in-person full team meeting in London													

REVIEWING NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

1. BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Building communities of practice is a key aim of the *Bridging AGEE* project. Communities of practice play a vital role in strengthening collaboration, fostering shared learning, and ensuring that research and policy initiatives are informed by diverse expertise and experiences and are grounded in local realities. Different approaches were taken in each country to expand and deepen the circle of stakeholders reflecting on gender, education and data. These differences resonate with varied starting points for the project in each country.

Research teams in Indonesia, Kenya, and Malawi have worked to build and strengthen communities of practice through taking two common steps:

- **Establishing NAGs** whose role is to guide *Bridging AGEE* through the various phases of research and dissemination of project outputs, as well as to support scaling efforts.
- **Bringing together key stakeholders** to support the development of an AGEE national indicator dashboard in each country, drawing on the AGEE Framework to review existing data and indicators, identify missing data, and discuss indicators and data that are still needed.

Tables 2 and 3 summarise the establishment of the *Bridging AGEE* communities of practice in each country, outlining the sectoral composition of participants in the NAGs and the first national workshops. *Note: some participants in each country were members of both the NAG and participants in the national workshop. The table excludes team members from UCL, UNESCO, or the University of Malawi who facilitated or attended the workshops.*

Table 2: Numbers of participants who attended the 1st AGEE workshops in January and February 2025

Organisation type	Indonesia		Kenya		Malawi	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ministry of Education	4	1	9		2	2
NSO, or equivalent	2		1		1	2
Other government departments (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection)	3		2			
Women's rights organisations	1		3		1	
CSOs	1	1	2			1
International organisations	3		3		1	
Research organisations/universities	5		2		1	1
Total by sex	19	2	22		6	6

Table 3: Numbers of total community of practice associated with first national workshop (including NAG members who did not attend the workshop)

Organisation type	Indonesia		Kenya		Malawi	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ministry of Education	4	1	9		2	2
NSO, or equivalent	2		1		1	2
Other government departments (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection)	3		2			
Women's rights organisations	2		3		1	
CSOs	1	2	2			1
International organisations	4		3		1	
Research organisations/universities	6		2		1	1
Total by sex	22	3	22		6	6

In each country between January and February 2025, NAG meetings and stakeholder workshops looked in detail at the establishment of a national indicator dashboard. Using the AGEE Framework, workshop participants in each country context examined available indicators and data sources for each of the six Framework domains, identified missing and needed data, and considered practical approaches for using existing data while advocating for the collection and analysis of new data.

1.1 STAKEHOLDER PROFILES

As shown in **Table 2** above, the composition of stakeholders engaged through the first national workshops was slightly different in each country.

The broadest range of participation was achieved in **Indonesia**, with a roughly even distribution between two government ministries – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection – and women's rights and gender advocates, civil society, academics and international organisations. Two representatives from the NSOS were also present.

In **Kenya**, the Ministry of Education was strongly represented, comprising nearly half of all participants. Two other education-related government departments were also present (National Examination Council and the National Commission of Kenya to UNESCO). However,

there was no representation from other sectors including health and gender. Despite this, all other key stakeholder groups were present in the discussions.

In **Malawi**, participation was smaller in scale but broadly representative, including from the Ministry of Education, the NSO, and each major stakeholder group, including a representative from a women's rights and gender organisation.

1.2 GENDER BALANCE

In terms of gender balance, there was an equal number of women and men participating in the **Malawi** meeting. In **Kenya**, there were slightly more women than men, with women and men representing all the constituencies present. In **Indonesia** there were more women than men present, with male representation lowest from government departments and civil society.

1.3 OVERALL REFLECTIONS ON PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Each country adopted a slightly different approach to stakeholder mapping and convening the NAGs and national workshops, reflecting variations in institutional contexts and networks.

In **Indonesia** and **Kenya**, the first formal meetings of the NAGs and stakeholder communities focused on building a national dashboard, which were considerable milestones for the project.

In **Malawi**, where the AGEE initiative had previously been piloted in 2020-2022, attendance at the first national workshop was lower than in Indonesia and Kenya. This was somewhat unexpected and prompted further discussions by the team on the underlying reasons and strategies to enhance participation and engagement moving forward. Further details on these efforts are discussed in Section 5 on scaling pathways.

2. REFLECTING ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

In each country, the project team facilitated a participatory exercise called *Head, Heart, Hands and Feet*, which focused on gender equality in and through education, including consideration of women's and girls' rights, data needs and gaps, and the strategic location of the *Bridging AGEE* project. The aim of this exercise (see **Appendix 1** for detail of the instrument) was to enable participants in the NAG meetings to articulate their views and aspirations about gender equality in and through education, as expressed through i) information, ideas or theories (head), ii) values (heart), iii) practice (hands) and iv) network-building (feet). The exercise was designed as a participatory discussion to enable a range of perspectives to be expressed and for participants to discuss or consider these.

Table 4 summarises the emerging views identified in each country based on the *Head, Heart, Hands and Feet* exercise. Discussions revealed that participants have diverse understandings and experiences with gender and education data, and differing views about gender. Multiple viewpoints on *Bridging AGEE's* objectives and impact, along with concerns related to data identification were also discussed. These are further explored below.

Table 4: Responses to head, heart, hands and feet activity

Key ideas expressed about gender equality in and through education	
Indonesia	<p>Importance of AGEE Framework: the education sector can no longer just focus on gender parity and gender disaggregated data – better understanding of data is needed on gendered aspects of education; must consider nuance, complexity and range of contexts.</p> <p>Teacher attitudes towards girls and textbook content, with impact on girls' health (e.g. obesity) and women's participation in low-wage work.</p> <p>Limited digital skills and internet access among girls.</p> <p>Risks of gender violence towards girls and boys.</p> <p>Child marriage is a key driver of school dropout among girls and boys, particularly at secondary level along with adolescent pregnancy. Affirmative policies are needed to protect victims of child marriage and ensure their continued access to education.</p> <p>Eastern region: inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) creates challenges for girls' menstrual hygiene and regular school attendance.</p> <p>Challenges delivering sexual and reproductive health education to students due to inadequate policies, guidelines, and teacher resources.</p>
Kenya	<p>Ensuring girls access education, and that boys and girls have equal chances and are treated fairly in education.</p> <p>Must build on gains made through policies e.g. 100% transition rate initiative, school re-entry policy for pregnant girls, and targeted support for marginalized persons and communities.</p> <p>Further interventions are needed to achieve gender parity in educational participation across the country. Initiatives noted include the National Government Affirmative Action Fund constituted in line with the provisions of the Kenya Constitution 2010. The main aim of this fund is to empower marginalized groups as outlined in the constitution, including, but not limited to, women, youth, persons with disabilities, orphans, and the elderly, by providing access to financial support and socio-development initiatives.</p>
Malawi	<p>Must be equal opportunities for all girls and boys, men and women to participate and learn in school and be treated with respect and dignity.</p> <p>Remove barriers impeding girls' and boys' participation in education and address gaps in learning outcomes at all levels.</p> <p>Girls disproportionately subjected to all forms of violence at school.</p> <p>Gender inequality is systematic, and change is gradual. Policy implementation is not always at the right level.</p>

Values emphasized

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Indonesia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government engagement with gender mainstreaming and affirmative action to promote women's leadership in education.• Influence of Beijing Platform of Action (1995).• Cultural and religious affiliations are important in how and whether gender mainstreaming in education is achieved. |
| Kenya | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural awareness, sensitivity, self-efficacy, inclusion, protecting the dignity of all persons.• Building networks with community experience, professional responsibility reflecting on positionality.• Need to navigate societal expectations and power dynamics which often inhibit progress on gender equality and education, particularly in informal settings, rural and conservative communities.• Need to respond to harmful norms and stereotypes, especially those affecting girls' safety, self-esteem, and career aspirations.• Recognition of the emotional weight and moral responsibility educators carry in promoting equality—highlighting the importance of lived experience and empathy in shaping education spaces. |
| Malawi | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human rights, respecting cultural/religious values.• Equal opportunities, regardless of gender.• Inclusion, empowerment, social justice, and free education. |

Areas of practice to develop

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Indonesia | <p>Collecting data on more areas than school participation to understand gender and education issues.</p> <p>Must attend to complexity and the nuances of what data tell us.</p> <p>Government gender mainstreaming regulations and decrees on the prevention and response to school violence (46/2023) give important foundations to build on.</p> <p>Must understand how bullying and violence affect girls and boys differently (e.g. the National Education Score Card collects information on the school environment).</p> <p>Current data from various sources including Badan Pusat Statistik (National Statistical Agency of Indonesia) or the Ministry of Religious Affairs could potentially be used to better understand how culture and religion intersect with gender equality.</p> <p>Governance complexities associated with schooling under two Ministries (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and Ministry of Religious Affairs) and decentralised processes need consideration.</p> |
|------------------|---|

Kenya	<p>Important knowledge systems and strategic levers for advancing gender equality in and through education exist, but more cross-regional learning needed (e.g. from across Asia).</p> <p>Need to leverage Kenya's education management information system (EMIS), although concerns remain about fragmented data systems.</p> <p>Capacity building and systems strengthening are needed to improve competencies to collect, collate and use data generated by the education sector, particularly gender data.</p> <p>Need for more coordinated work between education, health, youth and gender ministries at the county-level.</p> <p>Need for more actionable frameworks to translate national-level commitments into local-level results responding to local challenges.</p>
Malawi	<p>National gender policy, gender-disaggregated school participation data, readmission policy for pregnant girls.</p> <p>Need to analyse and publicise gender data, including through the media.</p> <p>Need for a more integrated data system.</p>

Networks to be built

Indonesia	<p>The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action introduced the concept of gender mainstreaming to government institutions, notably Indonesia's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Ministry of Religious Affairs. This has been strengthened through enactment of Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 9/2000, which mandated all government agencies to integrate gender considerations into policies, programmes and budgets to achieve gender equality and eliminate discrimination. Periodic efforts to integrate a gender perspective into the education sector include the development of gender-sensitive policies, allocation of budgets for gender-related initiatives, the formation of gender working groups in certain districts, and provision of gender training for some education sector staff (Bappenas, 2013; Immajati, 2016 quoted in INOVASI, 2020).</p> <p>Workshop participants noted further links need to be built to address gender, WASH facilities and adolescents' mental health. Need to involve Ministry of Health and other health-related NGOs.</p> <p>Need to use the robust data system that has been built.</p>
Kenya	<p>Must leverage and build on health policies (e.g. on adolescent health, menstruation and nutrition) that could inform inclusive education frameworks.</p> <p>Connections to be built with Ministries of Gender, Health and Youth.</p> <p>Enthusiasm around creating grassroots feedback mechanisms, including participatory gender dashboards to empower learners and teachers in shaping policy outcomes.</p>
Malawi	<p>Very wide range of stakeholders listed – parents, teachers, parent teacher associations (PTAs), school management committees (SMCs), police, media, Ministry of Gender, community leaders, development partners, NGOs, local assemblies/councils, higher education institutions, church leaders, student and youth leaders, legislators.</p>

2.1 APPROACHES AND AREAS OF FOCUS IN INDONESIA, KENYA AND MALAWI

The results summarised in **Table 4** suggest three approaches and somewhat different areas of focus relating to gender, education and data can be identified, which provide initial insight into how *Bridging AGEE* can contribute to strengthening education systems in context-specific ways in Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi.

- 1. Diversity and system complexity (Indonesia):** Gender mainstreaming across various sectors, particularly education, serves as an important foundation for promoting data analysis and utilization to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in the education sector in Indonesia. The large and diverse participation in the Indonesia workshop generated detailed discussions on the complexity of subnational settings, the nuance and challenge of working across communities with different values on gender and education, and different positionings regarding government engagement. Participants also explored ways to build on and use data already collected.
- 2. Policy design and implementation (Kenya):** Most participants in the Kenya workshop supported the Ministry of Education's activities. Discussions focused on how to enhance the inclusiveness and efficiency of the Ministry's work, reflecting key ideas around gender in and through education articulated during the Head, Heart, Hands and Feet exercise.
- 3. Data sharing and use (Malawi):** Workshop discussions principally centred on education and gender data. Participants noted that there is a lot of data, but data are located in different departments and sectors, not shared across departments and often not integrated into Malawi's EMIS, the main platform for education planning. The *Bridging AGEE* project was seen as a valuable opportunity to identify data, and coordinate and organise fragmented data in one place.

These contrasting experiences highlight the diversity of the communities of practice being established in each country and the uniqueness of each country setting. The different contextual contours and histories mean that although certain core concerns about gender equality in and through education, such as inclusive treatment and dignity, human rights and well-being, women's empowerment, community engagement, and ending harmful practices, are shared across all three countries, political, economic and historical differences and dynamics shape how each community of practice constitutes itself. This diversity highlights that mobilising and transferring insights about data and data use is not a technical 'one-size-fits-all' process but requires the exchange of information, and a nuanced, detailed dialogic process tailored to each context.

2.2 THE CONTEXT OF DATA ECOLOGIES: CHALLENGES, NEEDS, LEARNING AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Head, Heart, Hands and Feet and other workshop discussions in each context highlighted several issues relevant to workshop participants, which prompt reflections on the challenges, needs and opportunities for *Bridging AGEE*.

Across all three countries, participants noted **challenges** relating to **existing data ecologies**:

- In **Indonesia**, participants discussed extensively the implication of decentralised schooling and the administration of education through different Ministries. While this decentralisation allows for richer generation of data, it also presents challenges for analysis, synthesis and reflection. Questions were raised about how to interpret differences related through survey data – such as variations in data on reported happiness, and boys’ and girls’ experiences of violence. Discussions highlighted considerable concern with understanding and documenting data in local contexts.
- In **Kenya**, participants stressed the importance of understanding the specificities of local contexts and the lived experiences of boys and girls. Participants reflected on who defines values associated with gender and education and suggested that, in some communities, past experiences may have resulted in ‘change fatigue’ – a scepticism rooted in prior initiatives that have lacked follow-through. Nonetheless, participants expressed some confidence that improving administrative capacity and resource allocation could help overcome these problems.
- In **Malawi**, there was less discussion on complexities, but participants voiced concern that gender-focused efforts should not overlook the experiences and needs of boys as well as those of girls. Participants also suggested inviting to future workshops more technical personnel, such as data analysts and statisticians who are more familiar with data sources and indicators.

In terms of **needs**:

- In **Indonesia**, where detailed data are collected at the levels of school, district and province, participants highlighted the need for stronger integration of data across a range of sources to enable a deeper interpretation of existing education data and better understanding of gender and intersecting inequalities. Some additional data needs were noted (e.g. on health and violence).
- In **Kenya**, participants acknowledged the value of EMIS data as a considerable resource but emphasized the need for stronger integration with other data systems, particularly those on health and other areas of social development. Participants suggested partners

and stakeholders working in higher education institutions could play a more active role in analysing and publishing more data in this area.

- In **Malawi**, participants noted a range of areas in which gender-disaggregated data are still needed, particularly relating to school participation and dropout. Participants highlighted the need for a more holistic and coordinated approach to data use across sectors.

Across the three countries, the AGEE Framework was seen as a useful learning tool, though for somewhat different purposes.

- In **Indonesia**, the AGEE Framework helped provide a set of organising ideas to bring together data already being collected and highlight some gaps to be addressed. It also strengthened understanding among the community of practice of the different dimensions of gender equality in and through education.
- In **Kenya**, the Ministry of Education has identified revitalising gender in education data as a core priority area. A recent situation analysis in the education sector suggested opportunities for gender-transformative data-driven interventions. *Bridging AGEE* was viewed as potentially one of such interventions that could provide an avenue to generate gender-focussed data in the education sector and promote a wider understanding of gender and education issues.
- In **Malawi**, *Bridging AGEE* is one of several GPE and other donor-supported projects associated with the Ministry of Education. While the strategic implications of the project are still to be defined, the AGEE Framework was seen as a useful tool to complement other initiatives addressing gender and education data and for supporting gender analysis of government decision-making and budgeting.

3. IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION AND AVAILABILITY: WAYS TO ENHANCE DATA COLLECTION AND ADDRESS MISSING DATA TO INFORM AND SUSTAIN POLICIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION

Given the different characteristics of communities of practice emerging in each country during the first national workshops, it follows that different approaches to the collection of data, addressing missing data and supporting good practice were expressed, with different perspectives on the role the AGEE Framework could play. **Table 5** summarises the issues raised in the three different country contexts.

Table 5: Putting the AGEE Framework into practice: Improvements needed in data collection, missing data and good practice

Improvements needed	
Indonesia	Given robust existing data systems (Education Scorecard, national education data system, and national socio-economic surveys), the AGEE Framework can help coordinate discussions between systems , enabling understanding of gender education issues beyond parity , and connecting dots between sectors .
Kenya	Gender-responsive resource allocation, safety metrics in school participation (e.g. distance), extracurricular participation, school transition and completion. The AGEE Framework can help identify indicators for each field linked to comparative work .
Malawi	Gender-responsive allocations and how this is to be understood ; whether or not specific institutions exist to support work on gender and data; gender breakdown of decision makers . More in-depth strategic consideration of the AGEE Framework's use is still to be developed.
Missing data to be addressed	
Indonesia	Monitoring the implementation of policies.
Kenya	Household spending by gender, community perception, participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disaggregated by gender, barriers to school participation, school engagement with current policies (infrastructure, curriculum training), socio-cultural barriers and protections affecting gender and school outcomes.
Malawi	Not yet discussed; to be considered in Y2.
Good practices to be developed	
Indonesia	Co-ordination, cross-sectoral discussions, interpretation of indicators .
Kenya	Grassroots participation in data collection.
Malawi	Include technical personnel in work on building national dashboard . Use AGEE Framework to help bring together fragmented data in many settings.

As shown, different approaches are being suggested to review data collection and availability in each country. In summary, in **Indonesia**, the *Bridging AGEE* project appears a stepping stone to assist the coordination of practices already underway. The AGEE Framework has been used to help build a national dashboard and identify where data that already exist can be featured. In **Kenya**, *Bridging AGEE* has the potential to guide the gender and education initiatives prioritised

by the Ministry of Education, assisting discussions with local communities. In **Malawi**, *Bridging AGEE* will be aligned with national and community needs and, building on previous work undertaken between 2020 and 2022 under the AGEE initiative, will offer a dedicated space to reflect on long-term sustainable funding and implementation processes, including strategies for scaling.

4. PATHWAYS TO SCALING

The three different approaches discussed above to launching *Bridging AGEE* through the first national workshops, highlights the distinctive dynamics of participatory discussions in each country and different pathways to scaling. Several academic articles written by members of the research team have used the AGEE project as an example of a means for analysing gender and education described as ‘What Connects?’ This perspective emphasises exploring how different constituencies are or are not connected on the issue and the reasons for these connections or disconnections (Unterhalter, 2023, 2025a, 2025b; Unterhalter, Longlands and Peppin Vaughan, 2022).

In this synthesis report, this analysis is extended to not only see *how* constituencies connect, but *why* they should connect, identifying the goals and objectives of strengthening links between different government departments and civil society, and between national, sub-national and global levels, as well as the consequences of these connections. This suggests different pathways to scaling are emerging from different contexts.

- In **Indonesia**, the community of practice’s answer to *why connect* entails building links across different social development departments, and between gender and data NGOs and government. If the goal of *Bridging AGEE* is to enhance coordination, the national workshop both aimed and succeeded in laying the groundwork for this. Discussions also identified additional government departments to involve in future discussions, while approaches to working with NGOs at the local level are under review.
- In **Kenya**, connection between the Ministry of Education and county-level structures was emphasised, with attention paid to how the complexity of local contexts could be considered in building participatory discussions at the local level. Addressing resource and other constraints at the community level is a key aspect of the *why connect* approach. These issues were introduced at the first national workshop and continued to be a focus in subsequent NAG discussions.
- In **Malawi**, the pathway for *why connect* is still being developed. Local workshops and consultations conducted during the second year of the project will help guide the development and finalisation of *Bridging AGEE*’s role in linking gender, equality and data in the country. A central focus will be ensuring engagement and sustainability.

The three different emerging communities of practice reveal several interesting insights for thinking about scaling, which is a key focus of *Bridging AGEE*. In setting up the first national workshops, it was initially assumed that participants would raise many local contextual issues that would help situate their work with the AGEE Framework. However, the national workshops showcased that the AGEE Framework itself can shift in purpose depending on the context: supporting coordination in **Indonesia**, efficiency in **Kenya**, and fostering strategic consultation in **Malawi**. Thus, different pathways to scaling emerged.

The exchange of data and insights across the three countries highlights that mobilising knowledge and practices is not merely a technical exercise in transferring information. Instead, it involves a dialogical process where understanding local contexts is imperative. Continuous engagement with local communities ensures that interventions remain relevant and effective, which is critical to impactful scaling.

While core ideas about gender equality and education are shared across the three countries, the way each community of practice evolves is deeply rooted in local and national histories and dynamics. A successful scaling of the AGEE Framework requires not only adapting the content to fit local needs but also fostering ongoing dialogue that respects and incorporates community perspectives. By acknowledging these differences, stakeholders can better navigate the complexities of implementing appropriate and effective gender equality initiatives in and through education.

Reflecting on challenges in building and sustaining the communities of practice, the project team noted that in Malawi there was no follow-up to previous AGEE-initiated meetings held in 2022, so that the meeting organised in Malawi in February was essentially an introductory and familiarisation event. This provides insight for all three country teams that ‘one off’ meetings are not sufficient to build and develop a community of practice and that further engagement through events, publications and project updates are necessary.

During the *Bridging AGEE* Team Meeting held in London in March 2025, the research team conducted an exercise trying to visualise what sort of ‘bridge’ the AGEE project represents. This exercise generated some very useful team discussion, and a version of this exercise (**Appendix 2**) is being adapted for the local level meetings to think about forms of connections between the local, the district and the national when thinking about data needs. Another version of this exercise will also be considered for the second national workshops in 2026 to think about bridging between the global, the national and the local. The implications of these different approaches to thinking about bridging and how ideas move at different scales will be a feature of data collection in neighbourhood workshops in 2025-26.

CONCLUSION

The achievements of the first year of *Bridging AGEE* include the successful establishment and strengthening of national communities of practice, initial responses to the overall research questions, and the identification of next steps for building national dashboards. The first national workshops also highlighted how considerations of scale are closely linked to purpose, which in turn shapes how work on gender equality in and through education is understood.

At the same time, the first year also revealed the complexity of the processes involved, including understanding the need for careful and sustained efforts to build and support communities of practice which respond to local-level dynamics. Mobilising insights about what data to collect and how to build connections depends centrally on what is driving the purpose of the bridging and the use of the data. Clear elements of good practice and policy require transparency about why and how approaches to gender equality in and through education are formulated. This involves judgements about what data to use at different scales, taking account of local, national and global contexts, the existence of data gaps, and the potential for advocacy to improve data shortcomings.

The next steps for building national dashboards in each country are:

- **Indonesia:** Consolidate information on existing indicators into a dashboard prototype and plan a validation process.
- **Kenya:** Hold further workshops to identify indicators across all six AGEE Framework domains.
- **Malawi:** Convene additional meetings with technical experts to enhance the national dashboard planning, with a focus on enhanced sustainability and engagement.

REFERENCES

- AGEE. (2024). *Accountability for Gender Equality in Education: Bridging the global, national and the local*. Ottawa: IDRC <https://www.gpekix.org/project/accountability-gender-equality-education-agee-bridging-local-national-and-global>
- INOVASI (2020). *Gender and Education. Studies of Gender in the implementation of INOVASI's pilot programs to improve students learning outcomes*. Accessed on April 16 2025 and accessible through: <https://www.inovasi.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Gender-theamatic-study.pdf>.
- Unterhalter, E. (2023). 'An answer to everything? Four framings of girls' schooling and gender equality in education.' *Comparative Education*, 59(2), 145-168.
- Unterhalter, E., Longlands, H., & Peppin Vaughan, R. (2022). 'Gender and intersecting inequalities in education: Reflections on a framework for measurement.' *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 23(4), 509-538.
- Unterhalter, E. (2025a). 'Disarticulated networks and neoliberal agendas: how insights from GAD theory became disconnected from work on gender, girls' education and international development.' *Third World Quarterly*, 1-19.
- Unterhalter, E. (2025b). 'Cumulative, collective or conservative? A review of seven decades of writing about women, gender, sex, sexuality and intersectionality in international and comparative education.' *International Review of Education*, 1-24.

APPENDIX 1: HEAD, HEART, HANDS, AND FEET ACTIVITY

Group Activity (40 Minutes)

Objectives:

1. Capture participants' perspectives on gender and education data as well as gender equality issues in education within their country.
2. Identify opportunities, challenges, and existing initiatives to inform future project activities.

This activity loosely adapts the “Head, Heart, Hands” model developed by the Regional Office for UN Women Arab States.² The model explores participants’ **knowledge** (head), **values** (heart), **actions** (hands) and **prospective partners** (feet) related to gender equality in education, setting the stage for future engagement with NAG members.

Energy Level:

Calm and reflective

Materials Needed:

- 1 facilitator (preferably someone who is not in government and not a NAG member)
- 4 large poster papers
- Markers and pencils/ pens
- Post-it notes
- Worksheets

Facilitation:

This activity should be facilitated by someone who is not in government and not a NAG member.

Preparation:

1. Prepare the four posters by writing one of the following questions on each:

² See “Head, Heart, Hands” model in the UN Women (2018) Evaluation Tool for Training for Gender Equality, available at: https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/RESOURCES_LIBRARY/Resources_Centre/Evaluation%20Tool_Training%20Gender%20Equality_26-06-2019%20LBA.pdf.

- What comes to mind when you think about gender equality in education in [country]? What progress has been made in the past 10 years? What challenges persist?
[Designate this the “head” poster by drawing a head in the top left corner]
- What values do you associate with gender equality in education in your country?
[Designate this the “heart” poster by drawing a heart in the top left corner]
- What current activities or policies on gender and education data exist? How can these be strengthened or built upon?
[Designate this the “hands” poster by drawing a hand in the top left corner]
- Which key stakeholders do you think need to be involved in processes to deepen and sustain work on gender equality in and through education?
[Designate this the “feet” poster by drawing a foot in the top left corner]

2. Print one worksheet (see attached) for each participant.
3. Display the posters around the meeting room.

Steps:

1. **Individual Reflection (15 minutes):** Distribute the worksheets and ask participants to respond individually to the three questions. During this time, the facilitator should ensure the posters are placed around the room if not already prepared. See worksheet below.
2. **Pair Discussion (10 minutes):** Ask participants to pair up and discuss their responses. Each pair should write key points or ideas on post-it notes corresponding to each question.
3. **Group Contribution (5 minutes):** Participants stick their post-it notes on the corresponding posters. Encourage them to read others’ contributions and place a dot next to notes they find particularly relevant or important.
4. **Debrief (10 minutes):** The facilitator reads aloud the post-it notes with the most dots, highlighting key themes. Invite participants to share any additional thoughts or reflections.

Follow-up and move into discussion on project activities and timelines:

The ideas and policies identified during this activity should inform discussions about project activities, timelines, and how the AGEE Framework can support ongoing gender and education policy development and practices.

Personal Reflections



What comes to mind when you think about gender equality in education in [country]? What progress has been made in the past 10 years? What challenges persist?



What values do you associate with gender equality in education in your country?



What current activities or policies on gender and education data exist? How can these be strengthened or built upon?



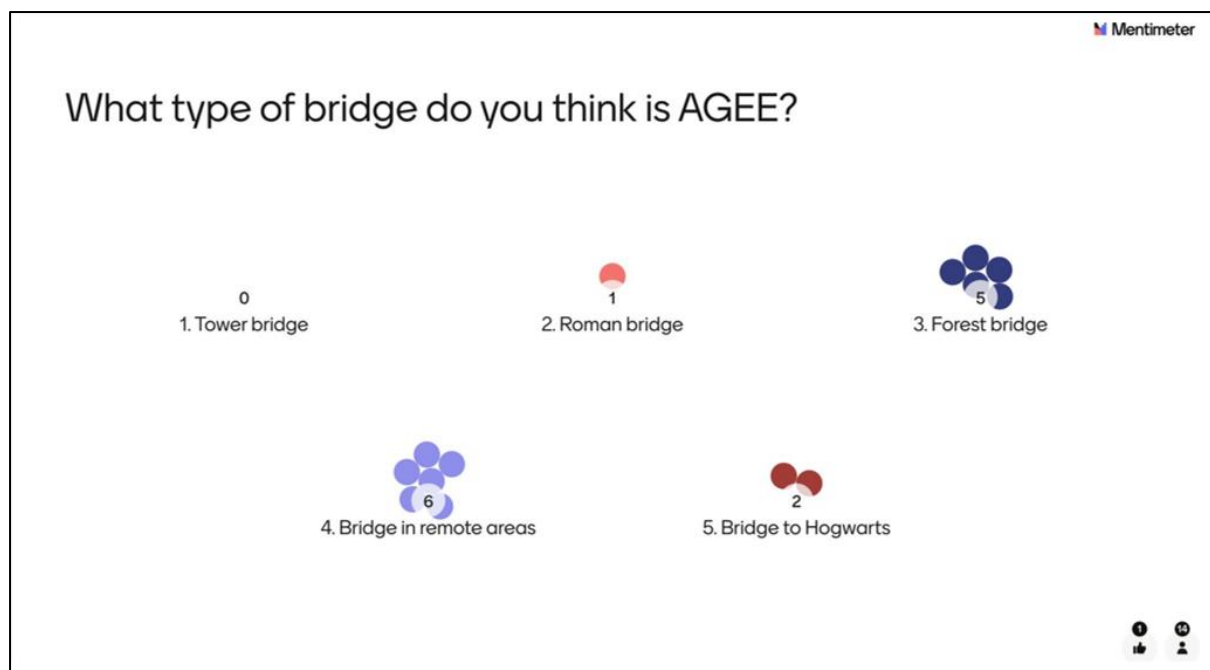
Which key stakeholders do you think need to be involved in processes to deepen and sustain work on gender equality in and through education?

APPENDIX 2: BRIDGE ACTIVITY

During the team meeting in London (March 2025), the research team participated in an exercise to reflect what type of “bridge” the *Bridging AGEE* project represents. Conducting this exercise at the end of the project’s first year allowed us to hear diverse perspectives on what connects and why, as well as the range of team members’ expectations regarding the project’s research, implementation and outcomes.

Five different pictures of bridges were presented, each representing bridges in diverse contexts. Example of criteria on the bridge selection would be famous/unknown, new/old, located in natural/urban areas, used/abandoned, real/fictional. The team was then invited to select the one they felt best reflected *Bridging AGEE* and share their reasoning with the others (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2 Captions for the bridge activity



Source: Mentimeter, multiple choice slide generated during London team meeting in March 2025.

This initial discussion later enabled the team to work in smaller groups to define the “bridging core” of the project at local, national and international levels. The aim of this second exercise was to establish a shared understanding of the work being carried out across different levels, and to ensure it can be clearly communicated to stakeholders, thereby supporting advocacy and knowledge-sharing. The following are the results of the exercise:

- **Local:** A participatory dialogue to documenting needs for girls and boys in education that reflects reality and relationships in the community. Exploring opportunities for collaborative solutions and influence decisions at local and national levels.

- **National:** *Bridging AGEE* supports policy decision-making and planning for national development through contextualised knowledge and data on gender equality in and through education.
- **International:** Connecting the global to the local for improving data for gender equality in and through education.