

## CASE STUDY:

# Documentation of Gender Responsive Pedagogy as a Best Practice by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

By Leah Njambi Wanjama and Felicita Wanjiru Njuguna



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### KEY FINDINGS:

- Teachers were ignorant of how destructive their negative attitudes and language were to students' learning and the quality of their education, particularly for girls. In their view, they were encouraging students to work hard. Most of them confessed that when they went through Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP), they were shocked to learn how their negative language and attitudes affected the students.
- Teachers have become more gender-aware and have adopted practices that promote equal participation of boys and girls within the school environment.
- There is consistent evidence of a change in the gender dynamics in school and of the behaviours and attitudes of girls and boys in the classroom. This has improved learning, as girls and boys no longer have unhealthy competition but support each other to learn.
- In Malawi and Ethiopia, the two countries where GRP was fully embraced, the Ministries of Education made mainstreaming GRP in teacher training colleges (TTCs) a policy. of girls and boys in the classroom. This has improved learning, as girls and boys no longer have unhealthy competition but support each other to learn.

### Introduction

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), is a Pan-African, non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1992 and headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. FAWE is a network of 34 national chapters aimed at promoting gender equity and equality in education in Sub-Saharan Africa in line with Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by fostering positive policies and attitudes towards girls' education.

Over the last 21 years, FAWE has been involved in promoting girls education in Africa particularly in research and documenting what worked well. In its endeavour to contribute to gender-responsive, quality teaching and learning, particularly for the girl child, FAWE conducted research on the needs of learners in education. The findings from this case study were that teaching and learning practices were largely gender-biased.

Teachers were found to use abusive and negative language which transmitted negative messages and inhibited learning. Teachers were found to apply traditional teaching methodologies that did not give girls and boys equal opportunities to participate. Further, they used gender-insensitive teaching and learning materials, most of which perpetuated gender stereotypes. Some textbooks used in schools transmitted and continue to transmit messages showing girls and women in traditional, limited, and subservient roles such as domestic, care-giving, and supportive roles. Women and girls were also portrayed as weak, passive, and submissive. Boys and men were portrayed as powerful, aggressive, or assertive and as intelligent and leaders in society. Personality attributes portrayed in textbooks were consistent with traditional notions of male superiority and authority. Consequently, the teaching and learning materials reinforced gender stereotypes.

Classroom set-up was found to create dynamics that affected teaching and learning processes. Some of these included content delivery, large classes, teacher-learner interaction, learner-learner interaction, teacher and learner presentations, and teachers' and learners' behaviour and morale. Further, it was found that teachers grouped pupils according to abilities. Boys, who were thought to be better performers, were grouped together while girls were put in their own groups. Girls were found to be shy, had no confidence, and did not believe in their capabilities. This had a negative impact on their learning. Further, institutions did not have adequate or appropriate infrastructure and furniture. This was particularly serious in the schools that did not have adequate and appropriate sanitation, such as water, sanitary bins, sanitary pads, or adequate toilets for girls. It emerged that in most schools there were few and dirty toilets that did not cater to girls' menstruation needs.

Some of the toilets did not have doors and therefore did not provide privacy. As a result, most girls stayed away from school during their menstrual periods, which led to poor performance and dropping out of school.

In most regions, girls also dropped out of school due to early pregnancy and marriages, which were found to be prevalent. Further, parents did not believe in or value girls' education, leading to lack of support for girls to attend school. They used children, especially girls, to generate income through trade, employment, or other labour. Girls were assigned and performed household chores and acted as house mothers when their mothers went to the markets, leaving them no time to learn (2015 FAWÉ Case Study).

## Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) model intervention

The FAWÉ GRP model intervention has been implemented since 2005. The model was designed to equip teachers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to empower them to respond adequately to the learning needs of girls and boys by using gender-aware classroom processes and practices. GRP also targets the school management to sensitize them on gender and to support their ability to create a conducive learning environment. The GRP model aimed to create a gender-sensitive teaching environment that would enhance and facilitate equal participation of both boys and girls. FAWÉ undertook this commitment in hopes that the GRP model intervention would transform education systems if adopted by Ministries of Education and development partners. GRP was expected to greatly contribute to improving girls' retention and performance, as well as the overall quality of learning when systematically and consistently practiced.







There are 3 key elements that make up the FAWE GRP model:

- Gender assessment and policy analysis in the target institutions and countries;
- GRP training of teachers targeting their knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills; and
- GRP training of the school management team.

Initially the program was developed, implemented, and financed by the FAWE Regional Secretariat with support from its national chapters. It was piloted in three FAWE Centers of Excellence (COEs) in Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania through in-service trainings and later extended to other schools. The concept and materials were then refined through a series of consultations and workshops with teachers and gender and pedagogy experts. During the consultations and workshops, FAWE realized that the in-service training was going to be a mammoth task if GRP training was to reach every teacher in a country. It was also going to be difficult and challenging, hence the decision to introduce GRP as a component of pre-service training in teacher training colleges (TTCs), whereby all teachers leaving college would be equipped with GRP skills. This was seen as a better option, so GRP was implemented both in pre-service and in-service training. As an in-service training, it continued to be implemented in COEs and schools. As a pre-service training, it was implemented in TTCs in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Senegal. In 2009, the GRP model was implemented in TTCs in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe (FAWE Final Report 2009). Since then, the GRP model has been replicated in 19 other countries in Africa.

GRP targets six key areas: classroom set-up, lesson planning, teacher-learner interaction, delivery methodology, language use, resources for teaching and assessment, and school or institutional management. The components of the intervention included training teachers and head teach-

ers of schools and principals of colleges on gender and the importance of gender-responsive language use; how to develop gender-responsive lesson plans; improvising teaching and learning materials to make them gender-responsive; and how to organize the classroom set-up to facilitate positive engagement of the teacher and learners, both girls and boys. The role of school management in creating a gender-sensitive and conducive physical environment was a critical component in the intervention.

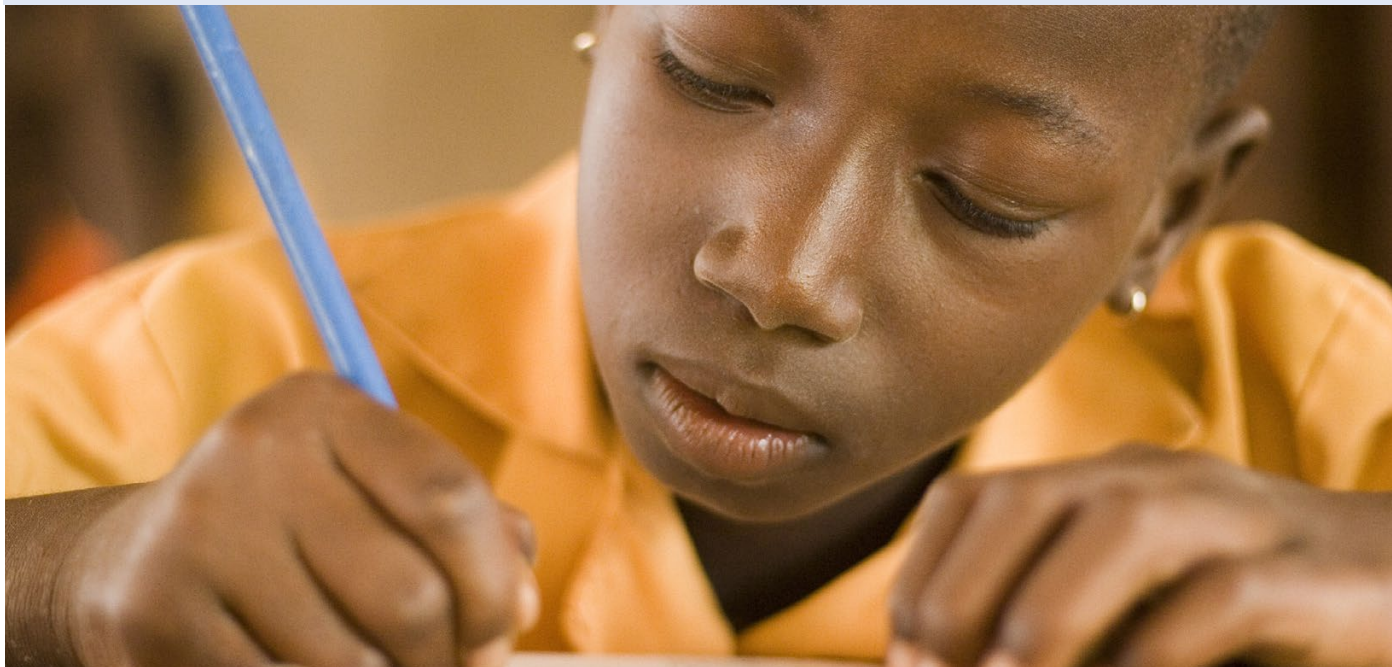
## Decision making on GRP adaptation

From the case study research, it emerged that decisions to implement GRP intervention were made at different levels. The FAWE Regional Secretariat made decisions as to which countries the GRP would be implemented in first and provided the initial guidance and support that was necessary for the intervention. FAWE National Chapters (NCs) carried out needs assessments and policy analysis and sensitized the Ministries of Education on the importance of girls' full participation in learning processes. The NCs and the Ministry of Education officials partnered to identify the institutions to be involved in implementing the intervention. Ministries were also influenced by FAWE to develop a policy to accommodate and mainstream GRP. FAWE and the ministries sensitized the school management and teachers on the importance of taking up GRP in their schools to address the issues raised in the needs assessments.

## Participating partners

The case study research found that the implementation of the GRP intervention was a collaboration with diverse and committed partners. FAWE NCs collaborated with the





FAWE Regional Secretariat and Ministries of Education (teachers and administrators) to drive the implementation. The participating partners differed from country to country. For example, in Malawi partners included Plan International and GIZ. Plan International replicated GRP in their area of operation with 103 schools. They trained 6 to 10 teachers in every school in order to improve quality of access and delivery of education. GIZ sponsored a team of Malawian teachers to travel to Germany to learn about learner-centered delivery. In Tanzania, UNESCO replicated GRP in 3 districts and in 7 secondary schools per district, which included community sensitization using the FAWE Tanzania (FAWE TZ) Theater for Development approach. UNICEF replicated GRP in about 1,620 primary schools in 22 districts. Child in Crisis-Italy supported FAWE TZ in improving physical, social, and academic environments so as to enhance retention, participation, and good performance. For example, at Lufilyo Centre of Excellence (COE) Child in Crisis-Italy built a dining hall, library, and girls' toilet block; donated books, beds, and mattresses; and supported a community sensitization workshop in gender awareness. At J.J. Mungai COE, Child in Crisis built a library, equipped it with books and other teaching and learning materials, and provided bursaries for girls. At Mgugu COE, they constructed a two-in-one dormitory to accommodate 64 to 80 girls; installed a solar system and a permanent water system; donated computers, books, and other teaching and learning materials; and gave bursaries to girls. They also supported bursaries for girls in other ordinary schools where FAWE TZ was implementing GRP. NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) replicated GRP and the Tuseme [Let Us Speak Out] Empowerment Programme in primary and secondary schools in 10 intervention districts. African Initiative replicated GRP and Tuseme in primary

and secondary schools in three districts. FAWE TZ plans to replicate GRP in the Aga Khan Foundation project in three districts in South Tanzania.

In Uganda, partners included GIZ, UNICEF, Rockefeller Foundation, and FM Radio. Rockefeller Foundation and FAWE supported GRP by providing science equipment, textbooks, and library books while FM Radio gives airtime to promote and advocate for girls' education. Communities supported school activities such as construction of toilets for both boys and girls, construction of restrooms for girls, and installation of solar power. "Straight Talk" NGO improved communication to parents on developmental health and bodily changes to help them support their daughters.

## Cost of GRP

The case study was not able to establish the cost-effectiveness of the GRP model. While there is insufficient data to determine the cost-effectiveness of the intervention, most informants observed that GRP was not an expensive intervention, particularly if implemented as part of pre-service training. They noted that the bulk of the investment is needed at initial stages of GRP. At this stage, funds are needed for policy analysis, gender assessment material development, and training of tutors at the TTC level. The tutors would then mainstream GRP throughout their teaching.

## Impact of the GRP model

The case study examined the implementation of the GRP model in primary and secondary schools and TTCs in six countries: Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Gambia, and Zambia.



The case study found that the GRP model had the following impact:

- **Change in teachers' attitudes and practices:**

Teachers, tutors, and head teachers directly exposed to FAWÉ's GRP training changed their attitudes and practices and became more gender-sensitive. An example of this was provided by Charity of Salima LEA Primary School in Malawi who said, "When I plan my lessons, I do it with the girls and boys in mind. If I have six questions, three will be for boys and three for girls. My learners know there is no escape in answering the questions posed." A head teacher at the JJ Mungai School in Tanzania said, "Girls and boys who had been invisible became more visible when they were placed in groups according to mixed abilities. They interacted more actively in group competition."

In the TTCs, the GRP model had considerable impact on the approach and teaching methodology of pre-service teacher trainees. Both male and female trainees were encouraged to take turns in classroom discussions.

- **Behaviour and attitude change:** There was a positive change in the gender dynamics in schools as the behaviour and attitudes of girls and boys in the classroom became more gender-responsive. The girls actively participated in classroom discussions and their confidence levels increased. Teachers stopped using harsh, abusive, and threatening language. Consequently the learners felt encouraged, interacted freely with teachers and among themselves, and supported each other in school work and assignments. This resulted in teachers transforming teaching. The encouraging language raised learners' self-esteem and confidence, particularly girls'. They were not hesitant in raising their hands to answer teachers' questions and participate. In presenting group work, both girls and boys participated as presenters in equal measure. The result was improved performance among the learners. One of the COEs, Mgugu, was recognized as the most improved school in performance and was awarded a trophy. In confirming that learning had improved since GRP was introduced, Cheka, an alumna of Mgugu School, said, "The new way of learning is much better than what we experienced before. We feel encouraged, particularly us girls who held the perspective that we do not know."

- **Increase in access:** There was a positive impact on access as indicated by an increase in girls' enrolment and enhanced demand for admission to the colleges, due in part to the GRP training of teachers. In J. J. Mungai and Mgugu COEs, there was remarkably improved performance and this created demand for the schools. Most parents wanted to send their children to these two schools as a result of the improved learning environment.
- **Management:** This case study found that in the schools where GRP was implemented, head teachers and teachers continued to partner with the communities in provision of school facilities for girls (toilets and restrooms), electricity, learning materials and also modeling and advising their children. This was the case in Kolididi School and Adjumani School of Uganda and Demo School of Lilongwe. These facilities supported the implementation and sustaining of GRP as they improved retention and participation of girls in schooling.

Head teachers also became better managers. In their own words, some head teachers expressed that they were better administrators after GRP training and implementation. They became more aware of challenges women and girls faced in their institutions and worked to minimize them. The schools became more vibrant. Management provided leadership in sharing positions equally between male and female teachers and boys and girls. Girls and female teachers had bigger latitude in making decisions in schools as they got leadership positions.



- **Retention:** Awareness of sexual maturation and provision of restrooms and sanitary pads to girls led to a greater appreciation of the challenges of growing up. The teachers became more supportive and the girls gained more confidence and discussed the issues of growing up more freely. Both learners and teachers understood each other, which led to greater respect and reduced the abuse of girls. This in turn enhanced girls' retention, according to the head teachers of Demo School in Malawi and Kolididi School and Adjumani School in Uganda.

## Lessons learned

FAWE believes that the GRP model, if adopted by Ministries of Education and development partners, will help transform education systems by empowering teachers with new pedagogical approaches that promote a gender-responsive teaching and learning environment.



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**Community involvement:** Community involvement in the GRP intervention emerged as a prerequisite for success as it promoted “buy-in,” ownership, and support of schools by the community, particularly in the key areas of learning and discipline. However, not all community members were supportive of the change. Some of them had not changed their mindset on the value of girls' education. Some families were still using their girls for income generation and denying them their right to education, according to head teachers at Kolididi, Demo and Adjumani schools. In schools where GRP was embraced, the parent enjoyed favourable relationships with teachers and collaborated with the school management in regular consultation with the teachers on the behavior of their children. They monitored learners outside school and stepped in if the learners were in danger or misbehaving and reported it to the school au-

thorities. They prevented liquor brewers and sellers from reaching the learners and if they were caught, the parents took action. After gender sensitization, the parents were aware of the unfair distribution of household chores between girls and boys and sensitized other parents to share household activities equally among boys and girls.

## Potential areas for increased impact

A number of challenges have arisen in the implementation of the GRP model that provide opportunities for FAWE to increase the impact of the model. A major challenge cited in the study was high teacher turnover. New teachers, particularly in COEs, did not have GRP knowledge and skills and in some cases there was a lack of commitment by GRP-trained teachers to train newcomers on the GRP model. Furthermore, the model needed stronger inbuilt monitoring on key indicators of change such as enrolment and performance. Resistance from teachers with traditional values hindered the full implementation of GRP in classrooms where there was total teacher autonomy.

This case study recommends that the training of trainers component be enhanced to ensure a consistent and continuous GRP practice. Efforts should be made to ensure that there is routine monitoring after the GRP training so that the stakeholders involved commit themselves to the plans of action developed during the training. Further, pre-service training should be enhanced through mainstreaming GRP in TTCs.

## Replicating the GRP approach for greater impact

FAWE's GRP model is seen as an effective intervention to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes and increase enrolment, access, retention, and performance of girls in schools. The FAWE National Chapters in the case study, with support from local partners, Ministries of Education, and donors, engaged with education authorities in their countries to integrate the GRP model in schools and TTCs. The Ministry of Education of Malawi initiated the process of integrating GRP in all government and private TTCs. In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with FAWE Ethiopia, has mainstreamed FAWE's GRP model in pre-service training. Furthermore, 8 David and Lucile Packard Foundation partners in Ethiopia have committed to integrating GRP in more than 300 schools in which they are currently working.



According to case study research, the best option of replicating and scaling up GRP is through pre-service training. Ministries of Education in countries such as Malawi and Ethiopia have already mainstreamed GRP as a policy in pre-service training in all TTCs, both public and private. Quality Assurance and Standards Officers would also routinely monitor GRP implementation and continued use in teaching and learning.

A policy of implementing GRP in pre-service training will ensure that teachers leave colleges understanding GRP.

Ministry of Education Quality Assurance and Standards Officers can monitor the continued use of GRP in schools as their normal duty. This will reduce cost and ensure sustainability and scale-up of the model.

Continuous training of teachers in GRP schools will ensure the continuity and sustainability of the programme and therefore better performance and retention of the pupils in schools.

If the model is implemented in other schools, the issue of transferring teachers not using the model will not arise. ■

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