

Consultation on Draft Conceptual Framework for a Global Network to Connect and Empower Girls' Education Leaders

Girls' education champions working across different sectors and at national, subnational, provincial or grass roots levels are invited to add their voices to a consultation on a global network to connect and empower girls' education leaders. Please read the introduction to this draft conceptual framework before reviewing the framework itself and answering five questions for consultation on page 6. Please fill in and send the reporting form at the end of this document (Annex II) to AAnderson@brookings.edu by November 20, 2015. Thank you very much in advance; your responses to these questions will inform the scope and design of a global network of and for girls' education leaders.

Why do we need a network of girls' education leaders?

Now is the time to lift up the global ambition for girls. Building on the progress to date, the global community should move its collective focus up from enrolling girls and boys in school in equal numbers to ensuring that girls complete secondary education with the skills they need for healthy and productive lives and livelihoods. This requires advancing the “second generation” girls' education priorities, including access, making schools safe and girl-friendly, improving learning quality, supporting transitions to higher education and work, and local leadership development.¹ A number of champions have taken up the important challenges facing girls' education, including First Lady Michelle Obama, whose Let Girls Learn (LGL) whole of government effort aims to increase attention and efforts around adolescent girls' secondary education. A key component of the Let Girls Learn strategy is community empowerment, which hones in on the challenge of local leadership. This girls' education leadership network design consultation process has emerged out of these discussions and calls by girls' education leaders to support a global network of the next generation of girls' education leaders.

Narrowing in on the priority of supporting local leadership, it is clear that the second-generation girls' education challenges require overcoming several barriers that are complex and intertwined. To accomplish this—and ultimately ensure that all girls have safe learning and skill-building opportunities—the international community must support, connect and empower the individual girls' education leaders who best understand their communities and the challenges girls face, but who often lack a space to share within and across countries, learn from others working in similar contexts and apply that knowledge to innovate.

¹ Raising The Global Ambition for Girls' Education. Rebecca Winthrop and Eileen McGivney, Brookings Institution, December 2014. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/12/05-raising-global-ambition-girls-education-winthrop-mcgivney>

There is a window of opportunity given the confluence of evidence around the need for local leadership, high-level political support and wide public interest in the girls' education sphere. This consultation process aims to capitalize on this momentum by supporting the design a global network of local girls' education leaders, or leaders and emerging leaders who are working within their communities to ensure girls a safe and high-quality education. Critically, such a network has been called for by girls' education leaders themselves, who desire a community of practice to connect and develop relationships, share ideas and best practices, solve problems, build tools and create new knowledge to advance the field. Moreover, with the adoption of the new [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), a global network can help connect local leaders within and across countries to ensure that the people working on the frontline of girls' education strategies and policies are at the center of this movement.

Complementarity with other initiatives and networks

While there are existing organizations, networks and initiatives that support local level leaders in individual countries, there is currently not a mechanism (or organization, network, platform) that allows for individual girls' education leaders of different levels and from different sectors to connect, share information and knowledge and collaborate *within and across countries globally*. These individual leaders need a network within which they can communicate and learn from others facing similar challenges to make their road less lonely, get new ideas and innovate.

This is NOT a network of organizational partners. This is a network of and for individual girls' education leaders across sectors (civil society, education sector, health sector, government, private sector, etc). who want to connect with, share and learn from each other and potentially collaborate with each other. As such, this network will not duplicate efforts of networks of organizations, such as UNGEI, the Girls CHARGE (the Collaborative Harnessing Ambition & Resource for Girls' Education) Initiative or the Let Girls Learn: Community Empowerment Initiative. Instead, this network seeks to complement the work of those organizational networks. It will also seek to learn from, connect with and serve as an umbrella across existing national and subregional networks of girls' education leaders, such as CAMA, FAWA and national civil society networks that work with the Global Partnership for Education.

Draft conceptual framework for a global network to connect and empower girls' education leaders

The following draft conceptual framework is based on recommendations that emerged out of a meeting in December 2014 with leaders in girls' education from eleven countries and subsequent discussions with girls education leaders and partners as well as the Let Girls Learn initiative analysis and research on network design processes and lessons learned.

It is important to note that the consultation process at this time is focused on the conceptual framework of the network, not the network form in terms of governance, coordination/secretariat and hosting arrangement. Once the conceptual framework has been refined through wide consultation with girls' education leaders around the world, the consultative process will move forward in the process to define the specific network functions and form.

Network Vision

The network works towards a world where girls everywhere have the skills they need for their lives and livelihoods.

Network Mission

The mission of the network is to connect, empower and build the capacity of girls' education leaders to ensure all girls have safe learning and skill-building opportunities.

Network Objective

Support and empower girls' education leaders by connecting them to each other and to others who can assist and advocate for them, enabling the sharing of evidence and ideas as well as collaboration that builds capacity and leads to new knowledge and innovation.

Network Outcomes

1. Girls' education leaders will have improved access to evidence and learning, tools and methods, guidance and support in order to overcome barriers to girls' education.
2. Improved quality of the work of the leaders in the network, based on the knowledge, evidence and innovations shared and integrated back into member work.
3. Improved knowledge base for the field as lessons learned are channeled back to a wide group of stakeholders through network discussions and activities.

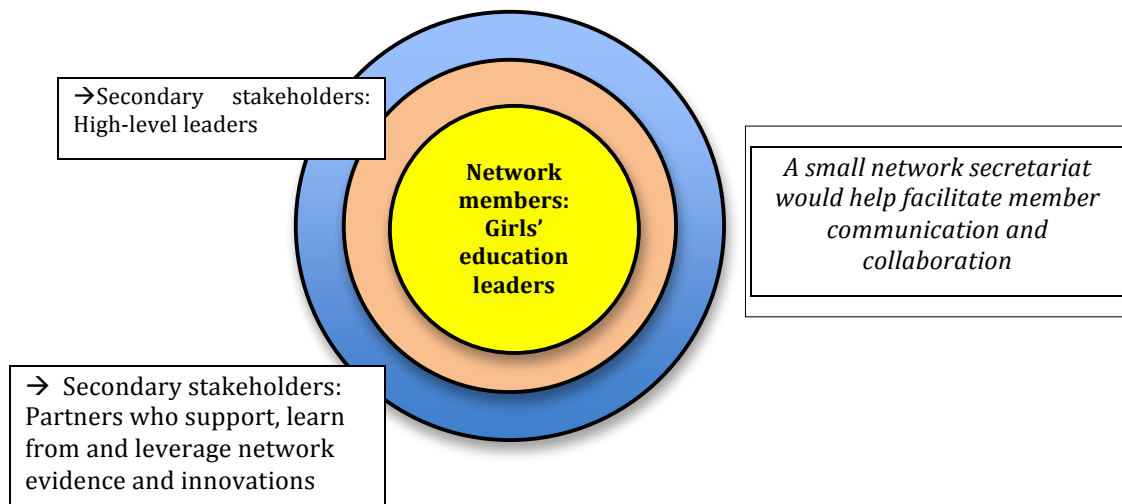
Network stakeholders

The network's members and primary stakeholders are individual girls' education leaders and emerging leaders from around the world (see *figure, pg 4*). Network membership is on an *individual* basis, not an organizational basis. The network defines girls' education leaders broadly to describe a diverse array of champions, including national civil society leaders who are heading up organizations and already working on scaling; national, subnational and local leaders in positions of influence to bring about change in girls' education (within government, education sector, private sector, media, etc); and emerging leaders at national, subnational, provincial or grass roots levels. An inclusive network with diverse points of entry (individuals within civil society, the education sector, government, the private sector, media, etc) will help to break down the silos that girls'

education leaders often confront. In addition, network members themselves will directly benefit from diversity along the leadership continuum, whereby local community leaders can be connected to and learn from national leaders and visa versa, enriching the work of all members.

The network has been envisioned with two groups of secondary stakeholders (see figure, pg 4):

- An advisory group or some platform for high-level leaders (such as the First Ladies of all countries, including Michelle Obama; Malala, Graca Machel, Julia Gillard, Gordon Brown, etc.) to amplify messages and support the work of local girls' education leaders, sharing their work globally and pulling levers behind doors for influence, policy and funding. Members will benefit if they can count on the clout of such leaders, who can develop a political strategy, advocacy and fundraising around the shared interests, vision and stories from leaders the network. In turn, the network could help develop world leaders' knowledge and credibility in the girls' education movement, bringing resources to drive changes in particular country contexts called for by girls' education leaders.
- A partner group made up of organizations and networks that commit to not only supporting network members by sharing resources and opportunities with the girls' education leadership network but also to learn from and leverage the knowledge base for overcoming barriers to second-generation girls' education challenges that derive from the network discussions and activities.



Network values: The spirit and guiding beliefs of the leadership network will guide the culture of network interactions and members and stakeholders in their work:

- Members and stakeholders are guided by the network's vision and mission: local girls' education leaders need to be connected and supported in order to overcome the barriers that stop girls' from completing quality education.
- Members and secondary stakeholders are committed to sharing knowledge and skills with others in an effort to create a culture of giving back and continually bringing up new leaders.
- Members and secondary stakeholders have a commitment within the network to collaboration, openness, and transparency; members leave organizational mandates (hat) and competition at the door.
- Membership in and operation of the network proactively seeks to build equity in stakeholders, and through the network to remove barriers to the access of knowledge, information and ideas.

Questions for consultations with girls' education leaders

Girls' education champions working across different sectors and at national, subnational, provincial or grass roots levels are invited to add their voices to this consultation on a global network to connect and empower girls' education leaders. Please read the introduction to this draft conceptual framework before reviewing the framework itself and answering five questions below. Your responses to the following questions will inform the scope and design of a global network of and for girls' education leaders.

1. Based on the conceptual framework presented on pages 1-5, is this a network that you as an individual would be interested in joining? Why or why not?
2. Are there changes you would suggest to the language around the network's vision, mission, objectives, stakeholder groups or values? If so, what are they? Please be as specific as possible.
3. One of the strengths of a community of practice is that network members can collectively learn, innovate and can carry out tasks and projects together. Are there any specific topics / subjects that you would like to learn about or for which you could contribute to members' learning? Are there any specific tasks or projects that you would be interested in participating in as a potential member of this network? Are there other ways that you would envision to contributing to a network connecting and supporting girls' education leaders?
4. As a potential member of this network of girls' education leaders, how would you like to communicate with, learn from and collaborate with other members? See Appendix I on pages 7-8 for a list of network communication and learning tools; which would you be most likely to utilize? Are there some tools in the list that are unrealistic for you or other girls' education leaders with whom you work? Are there any key communication and learning mechanisms that you use which are not listed?
5. Do you belong to or participate in other networks or communities of practice with a similar mission to connect, empower and build the capacity of individual girls' education leaders to ensure all girls have safe learning and skill-building opportunities? If so, what are they and how would you envision that this new global network would complement or add value to the work of the network or community of practice to which you already belong?

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Appendix I: Communication and Learning Tools for a Community of Practice

On-going dialogue between members in a community of practice is critical and choosing the right communication and learning tools will help to build a strong network. The table below highlights network communication and learning tools that can be used by members with high and low levels of access to technology.

Communication and Learning Tools for a Community of Practice

A website captures information from network members and publishes it for members and for public at large. Provides easy access to an interactive **listserv and/or private forum** for to share information and evidence on specific issues, Q&A and post articles. A website also provides a platform for **blogs, a resource database, a member database** and an **on-line event calendar**.

A member newsletter presents an opportunity to highlight the community calendar and share network-led projects, member-driven events and resources and partner capacity building opportunities

Collaborative projects, such as developing a best practice resource via a task team or interest group, allow network members to collaborate with each other to address collective learning and needs while also building relationships and sense of joint enterprise.

Webinars provides an interactive platform for members to share information, expertise and promising practices. Advance planning is critical in terms of ensuring a well-moderated webinar with a timely topic.

What's App groups and other mobile apps provide for low-cost, interactive problem solving, idea generation, and education for those who cannot easily access on-line technologies.

On-site visits and informal one-to one interactions develop personal relationships, build trust, and create foundation for deeper problem solving.

One-to-one or small group interactions by skype, phone/teleconference and/or e-mail help build relationships while providing for low-cost, interactive problem solving, idea generation, and education.

Face-to-face meetings and conferences at local, national, regional and global levels build trust and foster sense of joint enterprise that increases productive participation in all learning activities. Members become more willing to:

- Engage each other on challenging topics

- Initiate one-to-one exchanges
- Ask questions and solve problems over phone
- Provide answers on listserv
- Contribute to website

Meet-Ups are open and informal gatherings in all corners of the globe where network members and others can network, share experiences, and discuss relevant topics. Usually takes place on a subnational level within dates designated by the network coordinator. Members volunteer to organize them and there are instructions.

A LinkedIn page for general information and professional networking opportunities.

A Facebook page for connecting externally

*** Consideration of communication and connection platforms / mechanisms will need to planned around protection and security issues related to membership and sharing sensitive information*

REPORTING FORM: FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Based on the draft conceptual framework presented on pages 1-5, is this a network that you as an individual would be interested in joining? Why or why not?

2. Are there changes you would suggest to the language around the network’s vision, mission, objectives, stakeholder groups or values? If so, what are they? Please be as specific as possible.

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Other comments