

United Nations Children's Fund  
Regional Office for South Asia

# Young Champions for Education: A Progress Review

## *Final Report*



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Regional Office for South Asia  
and  
**United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)**

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Manish Thapa

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## Acronyms

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
COs	Country Offices
CMES	Centre for Mass Education in Science
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
CYAPL	Commonwealth Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living
DDC	District Development Committee
DoE	Department of Education
DYD	Department of Youth Development
DYS	Department of Youth and Sports
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GNH	Gross National Happiness
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MCC	Mass Line Media Centre
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCWC	National Commission for Women and Children
NFYOB	National Federation of Youth Organizations – Bangladesh
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
RED	Regional Education Directorate
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
SSMK	<i>Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura</i> (Chatting with my Best Friend)
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGEI	The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAST	Voluntary Artists' Studio, Thimpu
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
YCs	Young Champions
YDF	Bhutan Youth Development Fund
YICC	Youth Information Contact Centres
YVIA	Young Volunteers in Action

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## Executive Summary

The concept of youth participation is emerging and becoming a central idea in the youth development discourse. It is a fresh way of engaging young people as central actors in the development equation – architects of their own personal development and in that of their communities and society in general. The Young Champions movement within the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) in South Asia is one such programme which is being carried forward by young people who believe in and work toward a vision of a world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming societies where gender equality becomes a reality.

This study is a review of the progress of activities of the Young Champions for Education model in South Asia. Under implementation since 2007, the Young Champions are spokespersons for girls' education and gender equality, and represent the UNGEI movement at community, national and, for some, regional levels. They have worked closely with governments and other stakeholders to create a multi-stakeholder partnership. As advocates for girls' education, the champions have influenced and enabled positive policies and practices for girls' education. The champions are multi-talented and have been using these talents (music, arts, theatre, sports) to introduce a recreational aspect to activities and events as a 'hook' to attract and retain the interest and involvement of other young people.

An important observation emerging from this study is that the South Asia Young Champions movement offers opportunities, motivation and capacity-building for young people. The strength of the model lies in the conceptual guidance provided by UNGEI, thus allowing country-level models to evolve to suit country-specific needs and contexts. Innovative and effective strategies for youth engagement vary by country and include:

- Grassroots activities initiated and led by young people, or in partnership with caring adults, represent **opportunities** for engagement. Engagement is a stepping-stone into broader community life and a gateway to civic and associational life beyond schools and family. This is clearly seen in Young Champions' work in Nepal, Pakistan and other South Asian countries where Young Champions are critical change agents in their own communities.
- **Motivation** for youth to be engaged in something that benefits people other than themselves. Young people become aware about issues that affect them and their communities – they get to grasp the nature of the complexities and possible solutions.
- **Skills and capabilities** to do more. As young persons gain skills, experience and knowledge, they also increase their ability to effect change. All young champions are provided with regular training to build their capacity to become the change agents in their own communities.

The Consultant identified five issues that UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs should take into consideration with regard to the Young Champions model. These are discussed further in Chapter 3:

- a) Mainstreaming versus scaling-up of Young Champions programmes
- b) Branding versus identity of the Young Champions

- c) Replication of similar types of programme at Country Offices
- d) Lack of proper sections within Country Offices to oversee Young Champions programmes
- e) Sustainability of the Young Champions movement.

### Suggestions and Recommendations for UNGEI South Asia

Based on the above issues and after assessing the programme at each country level, the following suggestions and recommendations are proposed:

#### **A. Institutionalization**

1. UNGEI South Asia should encourage mainstreaming the Young Champions programme wherever it has reached a certain level of maturity. The programmes in Nepal, Pakistan and India have already reached such a point, and there has been considerable progress in scaling up the programmes in these countries. UNGEI South Asia should support these countries in their mainstreaming effort.
2. In countries where the Young Champions programmes are at a less well developed stage (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka), UNGEI South Asia should encourage scaling up of the programmes. It should support these countries in considering the models practised in Nepal, Pakistan and India and should arrange exposure trips to those countries where the programme is already scaled up so that each can learn from others' experiences.
3. UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs should be careful during the scaling up/mainstreaming process of the programme so that the identity (vision) of the programme is well maintained. The branding 'Young Champions' may vanish during the scaling up/mainstreaming process but the broader objectives must be maintained.

#### **B. Coordination mechanisms**

4. UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF Country Offices should ensure that programmes are not replicated among their various sections. In particular, UNGEI South Asia should play an important role in creating a mechanism whereby there is coordination amongst the existing sections and programmes within UNICEF COs.
5. Various sections in UNICEF such as Education, Child Protection, Health, Social Policy, Communications etc. should be involved in planning and implementation of Young Champions programmes, since the Young Champions movement now has a broader focus than just education. UNGEI South Asia can facilitate this process to make the Young Champions a 'flagship youth movement' in South Asia.
6. UNICEF should consider having an adolescent/youth section which can oversee its adolescent/youth programmes. During the consultation, Country Offices suggested renaming the Child Protection Section as the Adolescents and Child Protection Section, so embracing adolescents and youth programmes. UNICEF ROSA, UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs should lobby for this change.

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### C. **Backstopping and support mechanisms**

7. UNICEF COs, with support from UNGEI South Asia, should support national, multi-stakeholder consultations to position and institutionalize the Young Champions model at the country level. There is a great need for such consultation meetings in some countries, especially in Bhutan and Maldives. These multi-stakeholder consultation meetings can provide guidance to COs for scaling up/mainstreaming of UNGEI and Young Champions programmes.
8. UNGEI South Asia should set aside funds to support the country roll-outs of the Young Champions model. Specifically, UNGEI South Asia should provide leadership, guidance and technical assistance for further planning and capacity building, and facilitate scaling up and mainstreaming Young Champions so that this concept can transform into a youth movement in each country.
9. UNGEI South Asia should play an important role in backstopping and providing technical support to assist the UNICEF COs to take responsibility for mainstreaming/scaling up the Young Champions programmes at country level.
10. UNGEI South Asia should provide necessary support to Country Offices to facilitate the transformation of Young Champions from a *Youth Programme* to a *Youth Movement*.
11. UNGEI South Asia should support the formation of a regional secretariat for the Young Champions programmes, as proposed by the Young Champions from Pakistan in the September 2009 Regional Consultation. The Secretariat would be a forum for the Young Champions from South Asia to come together to share their experiences, challenges and good practices.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations for UNICEF Country Offices**

Various aspects can be considered for mainstreaming/scaling up the Young Champions programmes at each country level:

1. UNICEF COs in cooperation with UNGEI South Asia should organize a multi-stakeholder consultation meeting to brainstorm the positioning and institutionalization of UNGEI and the Young Champions at each country level. This process will crystallize the concept and focus of YCs and the entire UNGEI activities for further strengthening these movements.
2. UNICEF COs should look into ways to incorporate/recruit mid-level youth leaders as Young Champions. Mid-level leaders have great advantages as they can work with the high level leadership for advocating child/youth friendly policies while at the same time they can support Young Champions in grassroots advocacy and activities.
3. UNICEF COs should look into their own structures (Education, Child Protection, Health, Social Policy and other sections) for scaling up/mainstreaming the Young Champions programmes to maximize use of resources and avoid duplication of programmes.



4. UNICEF COs should explore possible partnerships with other development organizations (outside UNICEF) – for example, UN bodies (UNAIDS, UNDP) or INGOs such as Save the Children, Plan International, World Education and Aga Khan Foundation – for mainstreaming/scaling up programmes.
5. UNICEF COs should explore possible avenues for cooperation with government stakeholders, especially with Ministries/Departments of Education and Ministries/Departments of Youth. Government policies such as Youth Policy can be entries into scaling up/mainstreaming Young Champions programmes.
6. UNICEF COs should explore possible partnerships with not-for-profit organizations such as prominent NGOs, Universities, Federations of Chambers of Commerce, Youth Organizations Networks, etc. for scaling up/mainstreaming Young Champions programmes.
7. For resources and other support, responsible private sector organizations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives can be viable partners for UNICEF COs.
8. UNICEF COs can see whether good practices in other countries in the South Asian region can be replicated or adapted in their own programmes. One good example of such sharing is Nepal’s SSMK (Chatting with my Best Friend), which is already being replicated in Afghanistan while Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh have also shown interest.

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# 1 Purpose and Context

## 1.1 Background

UNGEI is a partnership of organizations dedicated to promoting girls' education and gender equality. It is being carried forward by young people who believe in and work toward a vision of 'a world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming societies where gender equality becomes a reality.'<sup>1</sup>

The UNGEI Young Champions in the South Asia region are young women and men who represent the UNGEI movement as advocates and change makers in their communities and societies and, through their activities, address the disparities which affect girls' education in the region. The South Asia model also recognizes an emerging demographic trend, the 'youth bulge' that will constitute the next generation of leaders, workers, parents and citizens, and seizes the opportunity to prepare young people for these roles.<sup>2</sup>

In May 2007, over fifty young people, UNICEF and government officers from seven countries of South Asia were trained. Subsequent to the training, the Young Champions returned home and began implementing their work plans. Many in turn trained cadres of young volunteers to help promote girls' education and gender equality. Also in 2007, it was agreed that regional refresher training would be conducted the following year.

The 2008 training provided an occasion to take stock of where the initiative had reached, and how best to move forward to the next stages of implementation, adaptation and institutionalization. It had the following specific outcomes: (i) review of the previous year's activities and sharing of experiences; (ii) preparation of the next year's work plan; and (iii) a draft outline, based on feedback from participants, for a generic training manual to be developed by the South Asia UNGEI, for adaptation and use at country levels.

In September 2009, UNGEI South Asia organized a consultation meeting which had a clear focus on how to mainstream the Young Champions programme. This consultation meeting devised a strategy to mainstream the Young Champions programme so that it can be a flagship youth programme of each UNICEF Country Office. It further planned to involve diverse partners and stakeholders including the private sector, government organizations and other donor agencies in order to scale up its activities and extend the focus beyond girls' education according to each country context.

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted at the UNGEI GAC business meeting, June 2008, Kathmandu, Nepal.

<sup>2</sup> Worldwide, the number of young people (12–24) is expected to increase from 1.3 billion to 1.5 billion in 2035 and gradually decline after that. Countries such as India will reach this peak in the next 20 years (IMF, *Finance and Development 2006*, Volume 43). The total population of girls aged 10–14, already the largest in history, is expected to peak in the next decade (*Girls Count: a Global Investment and Action Agenda*, Ruth Levine *et al.*, Washington DC Centre for Global Development, 2008).

## 1.2 Outline of the Review

### **Objective**

To review, assess and document the work of Young Champions in eight countries of South Asia, including the support functions of UNICEF Country Offices and other partners; and provide recommendations for improvement and/or scaling up.

### **Scope of work**

To assess and document the progress, potential and challenges of the model of Young Champions for Education, as it is being implemented in various countries, and recommend strategies for scaling up and mainstreaming as appropriate.

### **Key stages**

- Consultations with related sections within UNICEF ROSA, and a literature and documentation review of materials available at UNGEI South Asia and provided by Country Offices.
- Visits to four countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives). Information was gathered through questionnaires, focus group and key informant interviews as well as case studies. An in-depth Appreciative Inquiry workshop was held with the Young Champions in each of these countries. During country visits, the consultant met with relevant representatives from governments, UNICEF Country Offices, partners, community members and Young Champions (see Annex 1).
- Information from the remaining four countries (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) through feedback from Country Offices, Young Champions and other partners/stakeholders through telephone and/or the questionnaire developed for this review, modified as appropriate. Interviews were also held at the Regional Consultation meeting organized by UNGEI South Asia from 08–11 September 2009.

### **Questions addressed**

- To what extent have the Young Champions fulfilled their mandate as advocates and spokespersons for gender equality and girls' education in their communities, including their role focusing on the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, substance abuse and other issues according to context?
- How can the work and strategy of the Young Champions be improved?
- What has been the role of UNICEF Country Offices, UNGEI South Asia and other partners and stakeholders in facilitating this process?
- Does the model have potential for scaling up and mainstreaming? If so, what are the recommended strategies for each country?

The Consultant presented the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the draft report at a Regional Consultation organized by UNGEI South Asia from 08–11 September 2009.

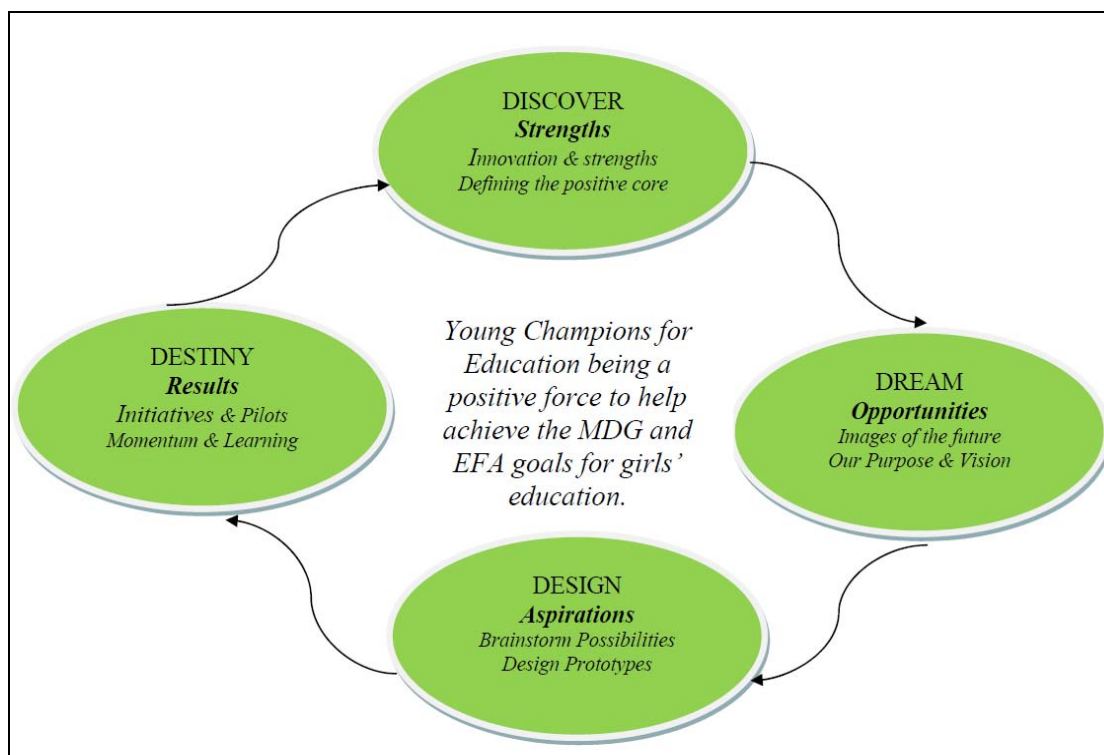
### 1.3 Methodology

The main techniques used for gathering information for this review are described here, and are considered to be credible and appropriate, given the range of information that is currently available, and the limiting time and resource constraints.

#### ***Appreciative Inquiry interview***

**Appreciative Inquiry (AI)**<sup>3</sup> is a strength-based approach to facilitating positive change. The foundational premise of AI is that by engaging people in dialogue and sharing stories that focus on their experiences of success, they unleash creativity and energy for envisioning the potential of the programme and implementing changes that help bring that potential into reality. AI is especially effective where there are diverse stakeholders and there is a sincere desire to engage many, if not all, of them in an open and collaborative process, where the objective is innovation and change that achieves transformational results, and in complex situations where there are ‘no easy answers’.

The Appreciative Inquiry process starts with an affirmative topic choice (Definition) and engages participants in an exploration of the positive core of the group or organization through interviews and inquiry (Discovery). With a clear picture of what gives life to the group, they imagine what would be possible if the potential of the positive core were fully realized and they create a vision for the future (Dream). Then they go on to develop a strategic and pragmatic plan (Design) and to implement the plan (Destiny) for results.



<sup>3</sup> Appreciative Inquiry as a methodology emerged through the work of David Cooperrider and his colleagues from Case Western Reserve University in the mid-1980s as an alternative to traditional action research. For more information regarding Appreciative Inquiry visit: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>.

The basic process of appreciative inquiry is to begin with a grounded observation of the *best of what is*, then through vision and logic collaboratively articulate *what might be*, ensuring the consent of those in the system to *what should be* and collectively experimenting with *what can be*.<sup>4</sup> Thus involving the Young Champions in the Appreciative Inquiry gives them the ownership to design their further scaling up of the programme.

The Appreciative Inquiry interviewing technique was employed among all the Young Champions in each country. In order to facilitate the interview, sets of questions were developed which were used to conduct sessions of the programme (see Annex 2).

### **Key Informant interview**

Key informant interviews provided in-depth, qualitative information that allowed the Consultant to assess the programme's relevance, responsiveness, and further strategy for scaling up.

In addition, these interviews addressed:

- The mandate of the Young Champions as advocates and spokespersons for gender equality and girls' education in their communities, including their role focusing on the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, substance abuse and other issues according to context
- Strategies to improve the work of Young Champions
- Role of UNICEF Country Offices, UNGEI South Asia and other partners and stakeholders (government, donors, partner organizations) in facilitating the work of Young Champions
- Further potential for scaling up and mainstreaming of the programme in each individual country.

The Key Informant interviews were conducted with: 1) concerned government officials familiar with thematic-specific experience, 2) UNICEF country representatives, 3) thematic experts of other donor agencies, and 4) partner organizations of the programme.

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with UNGEI South Asia officials. Questions were designed to be open-ended in order to gather perceptions, observations, options and knowledge of respondents. The first interviews conducted during the field work in Nepal served as pre-tests and the guide was adjusted as required.

### **De-briefing sessions**

The Consultant held a de-briefing/consultation session to refine the preliminary findings and development of conclusions and recommendations with UNICEF Country Offices. The report was presented during the Young Champions Consultation Meeting organized in Kathmandu by UNGEI South Asia from 08–11 September 2009.

The comments and suggestions during the consultation were used to validate and refine preliminary progress review study findings and to identify lessons, conclusions and

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<sup>4</sup> Pamela Johnson and David L. Cooperrider, 'Finding a Path with Heart: Global Social Change Organizations and their Challenge for the Field of Organization Development', in *Research in Organizational Change & Development* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press Inc., Vol. 5, 1991) pp. 223–284.

recommendations applicable to the development of Young Champions for Education programmes.

## 1.4 Challenges

The Consultant faced several challenges during the progress review study including:

### *Unstable political development*

One of the challenges the Consultant faced was the unstable nature of political development in Pakistan and Afghanistan, due to which the visits to these countries were cancelled.

### *Lack of availability of key informants*

Some of the countries selected for assessment are volatile. Locating key informants and arranging interviews was very difficult. Key informants from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka were very difficult to access.

### *Time limitation of information collection*

Due to the heightened political dynamics in South Asia, the assigned time-frame for the study was limited. Planned trips to Pakistan and Afghanistan were cancelled and some countries, particularly Sri Lanka, were out of reach due to the ongoing political process.

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## 2 The UNGEI Movement and Young People's Participation

### 2.1 The UNGEI Movement

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Its goal is to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education and to ensure that by 2015 all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to all levels of education. UNGEI, the EFA flagship for girls' education, is a partnership that embraces the United Nations system, governments, donor countries, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, and communities and families. UNGEI provides stakeholders with a platform for action and galvanizes their efforts to get girls in school.<sup>5</sup>

*A world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming societies where gender equality becomes a reality.*

*– Adopted at the UNGEI GAC meeting of June, 2008*

### 2.2 The UNGEI Movement in South Asia

The UNGEI movement is very much relevant to South Asia, as it is home to one-fifth of the global population and is characterized by a high degree of hierarchical and patriarchal structures. Socially and culturally determined gender norms are embedded in the institutions of family, community and society that perpetuate inequality between boys and girls, men and women. These can act as barriers to developing inclusive, gender-sensitive, child-centred, quality education – the known ingredients for getting and keeping girls (and boys) in school.

*The goal of UNGEI in South Asia is 'to improve girls' education by mobilizing a coalition of partners to promote gender equity and equality and advocate for the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education.'*<sup>6</sup>

UNGEI in South Asia works to break this cycle of disparity. Many South Asian countries have already achieved gender parity and made solid and sustainable advances in girls' education. UNGEI wishes to develop a culture of learning in South Asia by mobilizing a coalition of partners to promote and support innovations and share valuable experiences in advancing girls' education.<sup>7</sup>

UNGEI, and its designated lead agency UNICEF, recognize that solutions to the issues of girls' education lie in a multi-sectoral approach. The basis of UNGEI in South Asia is:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ungei.org/whatisungei/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Spence, N., *Girls' Education in South Asia: Breaking the Cycle of Disparity*, UNICEF ROSA, November 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from *Young Champions for Education: Training of Trainers Workshop – Report*, UNICEF ROSA, 2007.

- UNGEI is a *Movement* to highlight and improve the root causes of the low levels of education for girls and the essential barriers of access, retention, quality and learning achievement encountered by them.
- UNGEI is a *Concept* for reconsidering and energizing existing efforts in girls' education and education for hard-to-reach communities.
- UNGEI is a *Coalition* of partners committed to girls' education, representing the UN, bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society and the private sector; a partnership with representation at global, regional and country levels to enable change on the ground.
- The diverse composition of the UNGEI partnerships captures the multiple, inter-related dimension of girls' education, and education of disadvantaged communities, and provides, builds on and facilitates these critical linkages.

#### **UNGEI partners in South Asia**

- UN and inter-governmental agencies engaged in multi-sectoral activities that have gender as a cross-cutting issue
- International and regional NGOs, knowledgeable and experienced in the South Asian region
- Key and strategic players in advancing girls' education at country level to ensure UNGEI stays focused upon valuable on-the-ground realities and expertise
- 'Friends of UNGEI' in South Asia reflecting broader linkages at regional and global levels of committed partner agencies, institutions and individuals.

#### **Strategic objectives**

- To develop a coalition of partners to collaborate more effectively for increased and improved education for girls in South Asia
- To lobby UNGEI goals in influential policy and decision-making bodies for transforming policy and practices
- To develop a regional knowledge bank for capacity strengthening of partners and information-sharing of expertise, innovations and promising practice oriented to a South Asia context
- To provide support and encouragement to the roll-out of country-level UNGEI coalitions (or their equivalents) in South Asian countries.

### **2.3 Young People in South Asia**

*My friends, no-one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death.*

*– Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary General  
(UN World Conference of Ministers for Youth, Lisbon, August, 1998)*



Up to two thirds of the populations of developing countries are under 30 years old. One fifth of the population in South Asia is between the ages of 15 and 24. India alone has some 200 million young people. This is the largest number of young people ever to transition into adulthood, both in South Asia and in the world as a whole.

The concept of youth participation is emerging and becoming a central idea in the youth development discourse. It is a fresh way of engaging young people as central actors in the development equation – architects of their own personal development and that of their communities and society in general. With the adoption in 1965 of the declaration of the 'Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples', the UN began the process of internationally legitimizing and mainstreaming youth participation in global civic and political affairs. Henceforth, youth participation has become a well entrenched tradition in most global institutions and in many local and national processes.

*The young should sing, scream, paint their faces, go out into the streets, fill the squares, and demonstrate against lies, deceit, and shamelessness. The young should – while accepting the indispensable limits to freedom, the only way freedom can be real – fight against the abuse of power ... Defence of freedom and alertness to its betrayal are democratic duties that we cannot neglect whether we are young or not. Moreover, protesting against the ethical slips of morally incompetent authorities is not only a way of studying and learning, but also a way of deepening knowledge and strengthening the roots of democracy.*

– Paulo Freire

Youth participation is a process where young people are actively influencing processes, decisions and activities that affect their lives. This is a broad definition and is often used interchangeably with the term 'empowerment'. Many governments have now defined youth participation as a process or a state where young people can create choices, make informed decisions freely and take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. More importantly, empowerment is based on the belief that young people are the best architects for promoting their development, and in meeting the challenges and solving the problems faced in today's world.

The twentieth century saw the emergence of powerful social movements led by young people. Many of these were driven by the ideal of democracy and freedom for all. From the poverty-stricken rural parts of Nepal to the affluent ambience of New Delhi, India, youth-based movements have demonstrated that young people are able and often ready to carve out political space independently. In this process, participation is not something given to young people – it is something they create.

Thus there is no alternative to targeting young people in development strategies in South Asia. There are no alternatives to young people as the principal actors on the ground. Youth leadership and partnership with other generational cohorts, especially those with a different experience of value formation, are important. Young people are growing up in a period of globalization – one in which technology and geopolitics continue to change rapidly. They will influence new thinking and become both the engine and the implementers of new paradigms of development and democracy in South Asia.

## 2.4 UNICEF and Young People – Partners in Progress

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to promote the development needs of children up to the age of 18 years. Impressive achievements in child survival techniques and programming over the past several decades place UNICEF increasingly in a position to direct more resources to development and protection of children who have reached their second decade of life. Although the CRC defines children/adolescents as up to 18 years, research on peer projects has shown that those of 18–24 years (or even beyond based on the definitions of youth in each country context) often have great influence on the decision-making and subsequent behaviour of younger children and adolescents, and are a key resource within families and societies.<sup>8</sup>

### Definition – Population

Child: 0–10 Years

Adolescent: 10–18 Years

Youth: 15–24 Years (definition may vary according to country context)

Young People: 10–24 Years (definition may vary according to country context)

Realizing this fact, the idea of young people as advocates and change-makers to help make education available for all children is embedded within the UNGEI movement in South Asia. The young people are the partners in progress where they take responsibility in being the role model in their own society and community. This responsibility is carried forward by champions who believe in and work toward a vision of 'a world where all girls and boys are empowered through quality education to realize their full potential and contribute to transforming societies where gender equality becomes a reality.'<sup>9</sup>

## 2.5 UNGEI and Young Champions for Education – the Concept<sup>10</sup>

UNGEI works with champions at global, regional and country levels, as a specific strategy to help achieve the MDG and EFA goals for girls' education. In light of the multiple, overlapping and specific disparities faced by girls in the South Asia region, it is suggested that the model be approached from a slightly different perspective by UNGEI South Asia, working with Young Champions of both genders.

The model draws from existing experience and consultations with young people across the world, both face to face as well as in virtual discussions. Evidence shows that young people are more receptive to knowledge received from peers and celebrities. And whatever the medium, there must be an element of 'fun' in the way messages are delivered. A dialogue session on 'Education, Role Models and Youth Leadership', jointly organized by the 'Voices of Youth' initiative of UNICEF and the World Association of Girl Guides in 2002, is relevant. When asked about specific attributes they sought in role models, young people said, among other things, that good role models were able to convince society of the value of girls' education as well as inspire and give hope to the girls themselves. People who fight difficult situations and do something for their country, someone who shows that you can make a difference, 'just normal people who have accomplished something' are good role models.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, *Youth Participation: UNICEF's Experience Working with Young People*, Programme Experience Series – Gender, Partnerships & Participation – No. 1, May 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Adopted at the UNGEI GAC business meeting, June 2008, Kathmandu Nepal.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from the *Young Champions Concept Note*.

The South Asia UNGEI Young Champion is a young person who believes that education makes a positive difference in people's lives, and should be accessible, equal and of high quality for everyone, both girls and boys. The champion also believes that unless the broader issues of social exclusion and multiple disparities including class, class, gender and ethnicity are addressed, girls in particular will not find themselves on a level playing field, and will be forever left behind. The champion must be a spokesperson with credibility, and be willing to devote time to further these objectives. The champion should be versatile, because young people are drawn to events with elements of recreation. The champion must have passion – a conviction in the mission, and a drive to make a change. Ideally, the Young Champion would be affiliated with an organization, as champions with affiliations are better supported and sustained than those who are not.

The Young Champions are advocates and spokespersons for specific issues, practices, behaviour, attitudes and policy change related to girls' education. As spokesperson for girls' education, the champion represents the UNGEI movement at community, national and, for some, regional levels. He/she works closely with country and regional partnerships including UNICEF Country Offices. As an advocate for girls' education, the champion has access to senior policy makers to influence and enable positive policies and practices for girls' education. He/she has frequent interaction with the media, and uses the print media, and radio in particular, to ensure that communities can access these messages. The champion is multi-talented and uses these talents (music, dance, theatre, mountaineering, sports) to introduce a recreational aspect to activities and events as a 'hook' to attract and retain the interest and involvement of other young people. The champion works closely with the government, and finances projects and events through funds raised from the government, private sector or UNGEI partners.

Selection of champions rests with the country UNGEI partnerships or, in the absence of one, with UNICEF Country Offices.

The UNGEI partnership in each country, or UNICEF CO, supports and guides the champions to implement their work plan and deliver results through an agreed reporting mechanism. Facilitating speaking engagements, media interviews, meetings with decision makers, or financial support to organize local level training sessions or implement small projects are examples of the kind of support the champions would need. UNICEF COs set aside a small amount of resources for this purpose. Young champions keep UNICEF COs informed of their activities in this role, irrespective of whether or not these involve UNICEF funding.

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## 3 Young Champions for Education: Overall Progress Review

### 3.1 Young Champions for Education

The Young Champions programme has evolved from a small project in each country with the specific theme of girls' education to a broad process/movement with cross-cutting themes that young people are facing in their day-to-day life such as early and forced marriage, politicization of schools, quality of education, unemployment, substance abuse among young people, HIV/AIDS, religious education, conflicts and natural disaster, etc. The movement transcends the borders of South Asia as over the last three years the focus of Young Champions has been common across each country and thus they are working on an integrated approach to share and exchange ideas and practices as well as to act collaboratively so that they can be a strong voice in the region.<sup>11</sup>

#### Aphorisms

- ▶ Instead of cursing the darkness, why not light a candle yourself? *Ani Choying*
- ▶ Changing even one life is worthwhile. *Starfish story*
- ▶ If you want to see the change, you have to be the change. *Gandhi*

– From Young Champions Consultation Meetings 2007–09

The Young Champions for Education programme is effective as it focuses on the development of critical youth leadership skills. UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs facilitate processes through which young people acquire the skills they need to be effective, such as organizing, advocacy, and resource mobilization and fund-raising, so that they can be change agents within their own community. Youth leadership provides a core of skills that is essential to individual development while tapping into the resources of young people to take actions.

At the heart of this youth-based social movement is the concept of youth activism, as all the Young Champions are volunteer activists. Activism allows young people to take on the role of social actors – they identify issues that affect them and take purposeful action to change things according to their context. For example, the Young Champions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal are working to promote girls' education in their own communities, while the Young Champions in Bhutan and Maldives are focused on other issues related to education, including substance abuse and other pressing issues that young people are facing in their context.

The Consultant observed the significance of youth engagement in the UNGEI movement, be it large-scale or small-scale, explicitly political or not, as it offers opportunities, motivation and capacity-building. This innovative model of youth engagement is a very effective strategy to work for promotion of UNGEI's vision in South Asia for the following reasons:

- Grassroots activities initiated and led by young people, or in partnership with caring adults, represent **opportunities** for engagement. Engagement is a stepping-stone

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<sup>11</sup> Adapted from the reflections of John Evans (UNICEF ROSA Consultant) in his presentation on September 11, 2009 at the Regional Consultation Meeting of Young Champions.

into broader community life and a gateway to civic and associational life beyond schools and family. This is clearly seen in Young Champions' work in Nepal, Pakistan and other South Asian countries where Young Champions are critical change agents in their own communities.

- Second, it provides **motivation** for youth to be engaged in something that benefits people other than themselves. Young people become aware about issues that affect them and their communities – they get to grasp the nature of the complexities and possible solutions.
- Third, it provides young people with **skills and capabilities** to do more. As young persons gain skills, experience and knowledge, they also increase their ability to effect change. All Young Champions are provided with regular training to build their capacity to become the change agents in their own communities.

### 3.2 Major Issues in Young Champions Programmes

The Consultant identified five issues that UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs should take into consideration with regard to the Young Champions model:

#### a) *Mainstreaming versus scaling-up of Young Champions programmes*

'Scaling up' is a process by which the programme (with UNICEF's own initiation) can be broadened to reach to a certain level or concentrate its activities for tackling specific issues. For example in Nepal, the Young Champions programme is concentrated in districts where girls' education status is low. The entire focus of the Young Champions is then to improve the situation of girls' education in these districts. 'Mainstreaming' is a process whereby the programme is implemented at a national level in partnership with other (concerned) stakeholders, especially including government. Scaling up is a process where the programme ownership is with UNICEF (or with some stakeholders) but mainstreaming is process whereby the programme is a national programme with ownership of diverse stakeholders.

One of the major issues/dilemmas that UNGEI is facing at this point is whether it is the appropriate time to mainstream the Young Champions or whether the programmes are only ready to be scaled up. This debate is very pertinent as most of the countries (except in Nepal, India and Pakistan) are at an early stage of the development of their Young Champions programmes.

At Country Office level the Young Champions programmes are under UNGEI within the Education Section (except in Afghanistan and Maldives). The Education Sections are already overloaded with lot of in-country responsibility and the perception in most of them is that the Young Champions programme is an UNGEI South Asia initiative – so there is a distinct lack of ownership of the programme among the country offices. This is one of the obstacles to mainstreaming/scaling up of the Young Champions programme.

*b) Branding versus identity of the Young Champions*

Another issue that Young Champions programmes may face during the stage of mainstreaming/scaling up is that of retaining their identity.

This issue is very pertinent as UNICEF wishes to encourage partnerships with GOs, NGOs, the private sector, international organizations and other UN bodies to take forward this model to mainstream the programmes within each country context. Other partners and stakeholders may want to re-name and re-brand the programmes according to their own interests and needs. UNGEI South Asia has made it clear that its intention is not to pursue strong UNICEF or UNGEI branding of the programme; rather its interest is to retain some level of identity of Young Champions programmes in such partnerships. How to do this is one of the major challenges in the mainstreaming/scaling up stage of the programmes.

*c) Replication of similar types of programme at Country Offices*

There can be similar types of programme implemented by different sections within Country Offices. In Bangladesh, the Child Protection Section has a similar programme to that of the Young Champions known as *Kishori Abhijan* (Empowerment of Adolescents). Similarly, in Bhutan, the Child Protection Section supports the *Young Volunteers in Action* (YVIA), which has a very similar objectives and focus to the Young Champions. In both cases the two sections were unaware of each other's programmes, thus wasting very scarce resources which could have been utilized to strengthen or mainstream one programme instead. This was the biggest obstacle to mainstreaming/scaling up the programmes observed by the Consultant.

*d) Lack of proper sections within Country Offices to oversee Young Champions' programmes*

Another issue within the UNICEF Country Offices is lack of a proper section to oversee youth/adolescents programmes. Since UNICEF specifically focuses on children's issues, youth tends not be a priority. Child Protection Sections have some programmes for adolescents and young people, but still this is not the official section to oversee adolescent or youth programmes. Thus UNICEF is not very good at incorporating young people in its programmes. According to a research study in 1997, only 29% of UNICEF's 302 programmes worldwide focused on youth and adolescents. Only 31 programmes included youths in problem analysis, identification and design of the programme. Hopefully this situation will have improved since 1997, but in the South Asian region there is still clearly a need to make adolescents and youth into active participants and partners in programmes.

*e) Sustainability of the Young Champions movement*

The issue of sustainability always arises with every programme and project, and the Young Champions movement is no exception. The UNICEF COs see the Young Champions programme as a project within UNGEI, while UNGEI South Asia has a vision to make it a movement supported by UNICEF. This mismatch of vision at the various levels is a great challenge to the sustainability of this initiative. Also, as discussed above, similar programmes within UNICEF sections also pose threats to the sustainability of the Young Champions movement.

### 3.3 Suggestions and Recommendations for UNGEI South Asia

Based on the above issues and after assessing the programme at each country level, the following suggestions and recommendations are proposed:

#### **A. Institutionalization**

1. UNGEI South Asia should encourage mainstreaming the Young Champions programme wherever it has reached a certain level of maturity. The programmes in Nepal, Pakistan and India have already reached such a point, and there has been considerable progress in scaling up the programmes in these countries. UNGEI South Asia should support these countries in their mainstreaming effort.
2. In countries where the Young Champions programmes are at a less well developed stage (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka), UNGEI South Asia should encourage scaling up of the programmes. It should support these countries in considering the models practised in Nepal, Pakistan and India and should arrange exposure trips to those countries where the programme is already scaled up so that each can learn from others' experiences.
3. UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs should be careful during the scaling up/mainstreaming process of the programme so that the identity (vision) of the programme is well maintained. The branding 'Young Champions' may vanish during the scaling up/mainstreaming process but the broader objectives must be maintained.

#### **B. Coordination mechanisms**

4. UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF Country Offices should ensure that programmes are not replicated among their various sections. In particular, UNGEI South Asia should play an important role in creating a mechanism whereby there is coordination amongst the existing sections and programmes within UNICEF COs.
5. Various sections in UNICEF such as Education, Child Protection, Health, Social Policy, Communications etc. should be involved in planning and implementation of Young Champions programmes, since the Young Champions movement now has a broader focus than just education. UNGEI South Asia can facilitate this process to make the Young Champions a 'flagship youth movement' in South Asia.
6. UNICEF should consider having an adolescent/youth section which can oversee its adolescent/youth programmes. During the consultation, Country Offices suggested renaming the Child Protection Section as the Adolescents and Child Protection Section, so embracing adolescents and youth programmes. UNICEF ROSA, UNGEI South Asia and UNICEF COs should lobby for this change.

#### **C. Backstopping and support mechanisms**

7. UNICEF COs, with support from UNGEI South Asia, should support national, multi-stakeholder consultations to position and institutionalize the Young Champions model at the country level. There is a great need for such consultation meetings in some countries, especially in Bhutan and Maldives. These multi-stakeholder

consultation meetings can provide guidance to COs for scaling up/mainstreaming of UNGEI and Young Champions programmes.

8. UNGEI South Asia should set aside funds to support the country roll-outs of the Young Champions model. Specifically, UNGEI South Asia should provide leadership, guidance and technical assistance for further planning and capacity building, and facilitate scaling up and mainstreaming Young Champions so that this concept can transform into a youth movement in each country.
9. UNGEI South Asia should play an important role in backstopping and providing technical support to assist the UNICEF COs to take responsibility for mainstreaming/scaling up the Young Champions programmes at country level.
10. UNGEI South Asia should provide necessary support to Country Offices to facilitate the transformation of Young Champions from a *Youth Programme* to a *Youth Movement*.
11. UNGEI South Asia should support the formation of a regional secretariat for the Young Champions programmes, as proposed by the Young Champions from Pakistan in the September 2009 Regional Consultation. The Secretariat would be a forum for the Young Champions from South Asia to come together to share their experiences, challenges and good practices.

### 3.4 Suggestions and Recommendations for UNICEF Country Offices

Various aspects can be considered for mainstreaming/scaling up the Young Champions programmes at each country level:

1. UNICEF COs in cooperation with UNGEI South Asia should organize a multi-stakeholder consultation meeting to brainstorm the positioning and institutionalization of UNGEI and the Young Champions at each country level. This process will crystallize the concept and focus of YCs and the entire UNGEI activities for further strengthening these movements.
2. UNICEF COs should look into ways to incorporate/recruit mid-level youth leaders as Young Champions. Mid-level leaders have great advantages as they can work with the high level leadership for advocating child/youth friendly policies while at the same time they can support Young Champions in grassroots advocacy and activities.





3. UNICEF COs should look into their own structures (Education, Child Protection, Health, Social Policy and other sections) for scaling up/mainstreaming the Young Champions programmes to maximize use of resources and avoid duplication of programmes.
4. UNICEF COs should explore possible partnerships with other development organizations (outside UNICEF) – for example, UN bodies (UNAIDS, UNDP) or INGOs such as Save the Children, Plan International, World Education and Aga Khan Foundation – for mainstreaming/scaling up programmes.
5. UNICEF COs should explore possible avenues for cooperation with government stakeholders, especially with Ministries/Departments of Education and Ministries/Departments of Youth. Government policies such as Youth Policy can be entries into scaling up/mainstreaming Young Champions programmes.
6. UNICEF COs should explore possible partnerships with not-for-profit organizations such as prominent NGOs, Universities, Federations of Chambers of Commerce, Youth Organizations Networks, etc. for scaling up/mainstreaming Young Champions programmes.
7. For resources and other support, responsible private sector organizations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives can be viable partners for UNICEF COs.
8. UNICEF COs can see whether good practices in other countries in the South Asian region can be replicated or adapted in their own programmes. One good example of such sharing is Nepal's SSMK (Chatting with my Best Friend), which is already being replicated in Afghanistan while Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh have also shown interest.

**Case Study: Using Radio**  
**SSMK (*Chatting with my Best Friend*)**

Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura ('Chatting with My Best Friend') is a radio programme that discusses teenagers' and adolescents' issues without judgement in a frank, honest and informed manner. This project has now reached its eighth anniversary in Nepal. It was started by UNICEF under the Life Skills Communication Initiatives for Young People in Nepal to meet the needs of young people who felt that they had no-one with whom to share their fears and longings. The project has been a role model and is now replicated in Afghanistan as a trial.

Each weekly one-hour episode of SSMK is designed to equip young people with knowledge and life skills, empowering Nepal's youth to deal with the difficult issues they face in their daily lives. The programme combines music with drama, and talks between young female and male hosts. The programme also empowers its young listener base to make informed decisions about issues as varied as migration, pre-marital pregnancies, HIV and AIDS and the fledgling peace process in Nepal.

The audience of SSMK in Nepal is estimated at around 6 million, and there are about 1000 listener clubs around the country. SSMK provides a platform for young people to open up and encourages them to move forward to learn from others as well. It is not only focused on disseminating information but also on making young people participate actively in the programme and in their own communities as agents for change. Thus programmes such as SSMK are very effective in promotion of the Young Champions' work.

For more information, see [www.ssmk.org](http://www.ssmk.org).

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## 4 Young Champions for Education: Country Context and Recommendations

### 4.1 Afghanistan

Despite political difficulties and challenging circumstances, Afghanistan is very keen on implementing the Young Champions programme. The commitment level of government officials and the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office is very commendable and they have tried their best to implement the programme for promotion of girls' issues (another challenging and herculean task in Afghanistan). At the first ToT, three Young Champions represented Afghanistan. In the first year they raised awareness on the importance of girls' education through radio programmes and they mobilized NGO support to provide materials for girls' schools in Takhar. They also developed mobilization materials to encourage young female graduates to become teachers and started a weekly educational newsletter called 'Seeking Peace'. They trained four high school students to write articles and develop a magazine, and managed a pen pal project between Afghanistan and an American school to share information on girls' education. The Young Champions also wrote magazine articles on girls' education which were distributed to school students and provided clothing to 500 street children on the occasion of Eid.

In the second year the programme took a slightly different approach which included the government-created Youth Information Contact Centres (YICC) with support from UNICEF. This is a very innovative model and the most viable option in Afghanistan to scale up and mainstream the Young Champions programme as government is already partner to this initiative and YICC is the hope of young people in the war-torn country.

The YCs programme is progressing despite the insecurity, political instability, and geographic and seasonal access constraints in Afghanistan. The Consultant lauds the courage of the staff of UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office, YCs and staff of YICC to implement the vision of UNGEI through youth involvement in Afghanistan.



*Afghanistan: Girls attending class (Photo Credit: Afghanistan Presentation at Young Champions Regional Consultation Meeting 8 –11 September 2009, Kathmandu)*

## Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in Afghanistan

- Scaling up/mainstreaming of the Young Champions programme is very necessary in Afghanistan. YICC is the best partner for this. UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office should also look into other avenues to mainstream the YCs programme – the Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs could be a viable partner for this purpose.
- The Young Champions programme in Afghanistan should recruit female Young Champions so that they can be role models for the promotion of girls' education. Afghanistan should also consider 'peacebuilding' as a programme focus as youth should be a positive force for peace in Afghanistan.
- YCs should be involved in advocating for a Youth Policy and other youth-friendly policies, as well as lobbying for the creation of a National Youth Volunteer Service in which young people are motivated to serve their own community and the overall nation-building process.
- UN agencies such as UNDP (National Joint Youth Programme) and other international organizations can be brought into the programme. Private sector organizations fulfilling the ethical standards of UNICEF also can potentially support the mainstreaming of the YCs' work.

## 4.2 Bangladesh

UNICEF Country Office Bangladesh sent four representatives for the 2007 ToT of Young Champions. All the Young Champions selected were journalists, one working for national television and other three working as child journalists. Subsequently three of these Young Champions attended the 2008 ToT.

In the first year the Young Champions concentrated on using media to promote girls' education. Fatema Akter (Young Champion and popular TV host in Bangladesh) produced and directed a TV documentary titled *Girls Star*, which depicts successful stories of girls who have been able to be role models in society because they were educated. The documentary was aired on major TV channels. Other YCs used newspaper reporting as a medium for the promotion of girls' education.

In the second year, all Young Champions were very active in their own settings. Fatema Akter used TV as a medium to promote girls' education, whereas other YCs used various means. UNGEI South Asia also organized a National Level Consultation where YCs were also part of the programme. YCs trained 26 more YCs from around Dhaka, expanding the number of YCs to 30. These newly recruited YCs are working on promotion of girls' education in their own communities and some of them are running classes for street children.

The YCs are very successful in fulfilling their mandate to advocate for girls' education and they are role models in their own communities. Despite the resource crunch and several challenges they are doing a commendable job. They are scaling up the programme at a satisfactory pace. The UNICEF Country Office, particularly the Education Section, in Bangladesh contributes as much as it can despite its own challenges and overload of activities.



Bangladesh: YCs running classes for street children (Photo Credit: Manish Thapa)

### Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in Bangladesh

- Scaling up of Young Champions is very necessary in Bangladesh. Currently all the YCs are around Dhaka, thus YCs should reach to rural parts of the country.
- The YCs programme in Bangladesh should have a distinct thematic focus based on the needs of young people. Girls' enrolment rate in recent years is higher than that of boys, thus the YCs should diversify their thematic focus into issues such as reproductive health, early child marriage, substance abuse, etc.
- The UNICEF Child Protection Section has its own flagship programme known as *Kishori Abhijan* (Adolescent Peer Leaders Programme) which is has already reached an advanced level. The programme involves multi-stakeholder partners including GOs, Save the Children – Australia (technical partner), BRAC and Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES) as implementing partners. So it would be better to further strengthen this programme by putting in more resources. This is the best way to scale up the YCs programme and a viable way to mainstream it.
- The YCs programme should look into the avenues that the Youth Policy of Bangladesh provides. Bangladesh's Youth Policy clearly lays out a foundation for creating appropriate opportunities for youth's involvement in all sectors of development. It also has a strategy for employment-generation training for youth. The Department of Youth Development (DYD) can be a viable partner for scaling up/mainstreaming the YCs programme as DYD has mission and vision statements which are in line with the YCs programme. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Primary & Mass Education can also be partners in the YCs programme.
- Bangladesh has a very extensive network of NGOs. BRAC (the world's largest NGO) is a potential NGO partner for scaling up the Young Champions programme. Similarly, Mass Line Media Centre (MCC) is another potential partner as they are already implementing the *Shishu Prokash* programme which has now 640 young journalists reporting about child rights and other issues of young people from 64 districts of Bangladesh. The National Federation of Youth Organizations – Bangladesh (NFYOB) is another possible stakeholder for further scaling up the YCs programme.

- UN agencies and other international organizations can be part of achieving the goals of the YCs programme. Commercial banks and private sector organizations fulfilling the ethical standards of UNICEF can also be partners.

### **4.3 Bhutan**

UNICEF Country Office Bhutan sent four representatives to the 2007 ToT of Young Champions. The representatives were selected from the National Women's Association of Bhutan, Kuzoo FM, VAST and the Youth Development Fund. Four representatives also attended the 2008 ToT – two participants (VAST and Kuzoo) continued from the previous year and there were two new participants (YDF and National Commission for Women and Children – NCWC).

In the first year the Young Champions concentrated their activities on the media and arts. Kuzoo FM and VAST undertook activities utilizing their network to promote education among young people, as well as also using the medium to talk about various issues that youths are facing such as substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

In the second year, all Young Champions were very active on their own organizations. YDF and NCWC used their networks to sensitize people to the CRC and promote volunteerism among youth. Kuzoo FM produced and broadcast weekly radio shows which predominantly focus on various issues that the youth of Bhutan is facing, such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, youth unemployment, etc. The Young Champion of VAST organized art camps with the theme of Education for All and environmental issues such as sanitation.

The Consultant assessed that despite the Young Champions' own professional challenges and lack of resources, they were able to do a commendable job of fulfilling their mandate as advocates and spokespersons for gender equality and girls' education in their communities, including their role focusing on the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, substance abuse and other issues according to the context of Bhutan.



*Bhutan: Youth Centre (Photo Credit: Manish Thapa)*

## Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in Bhutan

The Young Champions programme in Bhutan is progressing at its own pace but for scaling up and mainstreaming the programme, the following recommendations are made:

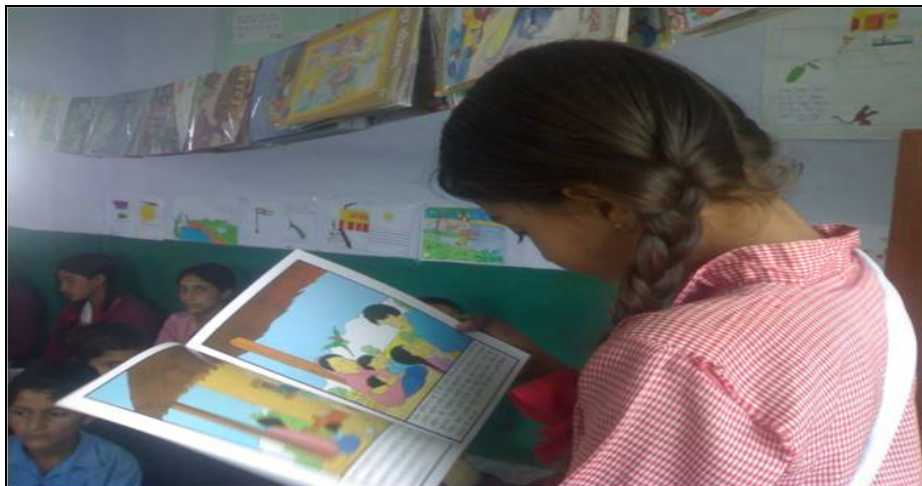
- UNICEF Bhutan should explore the scaling up/mainstreaming of the Young Champions programme with government, UN agencies, INGOs and private sector organizations. UNICEF Bhutan in cooperation with UNGEI South Asia should hold a multi-stakeholder consultation meeting to brainstorm the positioning and institutionalization of UNGEI and Young Champions in Bhutan.
- UNICEF in Bhutan is already supporting a similar programme under the Child Protection Section: Young Volunteers in Action (Y-VIA). This programme is undertaken by the Youth Development Fund with support of UNICEF. The Y-VIA programme recruits young people who are committed to volunteerism and they are mentored to carry out activities to address the challenges of young people such as substance abuse, unemployment, reproductive health, etc. This is an existing and well functioning network. Thus rather than replicating the programme it would be wise for the YCs to complement it, and active Y-VIA members can be recruited as YCs. Similarly, YDF also hosts a Golden Youth Award every year. All the recipients of this award can also be recruited as YCs.
- The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) can be an ideal partner to work on the issue of girls' education. Many underage children (especially girls) are used as domestic helpers as well as parking fee collectors. Similarly there is a rising trend towards bar girls (entertainers in bars), who are particularly vulnerable as they are out of school and susceptible to risks such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, prostitution and teenage pregnancy. UNICEF and NCWC can formulate effective policies as well as advocacy campaigns to support these vulnerable children.
- Media can be used as a means to promote youth issues and help young people confront challenges they face. Programmes like *Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura* ('*Chatting With My Best Friend*') should be promoted. For this Kuzoo FM is the best medium as its target audience is young people aged 12–25.
- The Voluntary Artists' Studio, Thimpu (VAST) is another network that the Young Champions programme can use as it strives to inculcate social and moral values through shared responsibilities and artistic explorations among children and youth. VAST can be supported to implement projects to promote culture, health and hygiene, and care of the environment using art as a medium through art camps, classes, visits, pilgrimages, etc.
- The Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) within the Ministry of Education can be an ideal partner for UNICEF to advocate and formulate youth-friendly policies. Currently DHS is involved in drafting the Youth Policy for Bhutan. DHS is also planning to extend the Youth Centres in all *Dzongkhags*.
- The UNICEF Country Office in Bhutan should incorporate the four pillars of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a major guiding principle for the development of children and youth of Bhutan and the South Asia region as a whole. The GNH is a culturally friendly as well as very relevant policy for the countries in the region. So

there should be a network among the Young Champions so that this policy can be promoted and practised for the overall development of youth in the region.

#### 4.4 India

UNICEF Country Office India sent five representatives from government and UNICEF for the 2007 ToT of Young Champions. India's Young Champions programme has been incorporated into its major government intervention, including *Mahaila Samakhya* which is a programme to empower women and girls in their communities using education. According to UNICEF, young people are part of these government systems through *Meena Manch*, adolescent forums (*Balsanghams*), *Balpanchayats* and school cabinets. UNICEF Country Office has used this avenue to mainstream the YCs programme rather than developing its own programme. However, no Young Champions from India have yet been part of the consultation meetings held in Kathmandu.

The Consultant found India's Young Champion programme to be overwhelming in terms of the approach UNICEF India Country Office has adopted. India is a challenging country due to its size (in terms of both geographical and population) and issues. Thus UNICEF should make sure that young people are part of the programme as it is exclusively a youth programme and needs to be taken seriously both by UNICEF India Office and UNGEI South Asia.



*India: A Meena girl reading a Meena book (Photo Credit: India Presentation at Young Champions Regional Consultation Meeting 8–11 September 2009, Kathmandu)*

#### Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in India

- UNICEF India Country Office should make an attempt to diversify the thematic approach of the Young Champions programme in India to include WASH, life-skills education, reproductive health, etc.
- UNICEF India Country Office should also look into other avenues to mainstream the YCs programme in India. One of the possible ways is to seek an avenue through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The Department of Youth Affairs has drafted the Youth Policy of India which is very extensive and can be used to mainstream the YCs programme.

- UNICEF India should ensure that Young Champions are active participants in the regional consultation meetings which give them an immense opportunity to learn from other countries' experience and strengthen the network among them. In the last two regional consultation meetings, YCs from India were absent.
- As in Nepal, India should also initiate a network of Young Champions at state level. At the centre a national level network should be created which can be instrumental in advocating youth-friendly policies.
- A multi-sectoral coordinated response to the broad range of issues in girls' education should be identified and addressed by involving other partner organizations (NGOs, INGOs and private sector organizations).
- UNICEF India Country Office should also look into avenues for further partnership with other UN agencies and international organizations which can collaborate in achieving the goals of the YCs programme.
- Commercial banks and private sector organizations fulfilling the ethical standards of UNICEF can also be partners.

**Case Study: Meena Manch**

***Meena Girls for Girls' Education***

State-owned radio and television channels in India and across South Asia are airing spots promoting girls' education featuring *Meena*, an animated character developed by UNICEF. The barriers that prevent girls going to school – household chores, the lack of basic facilities in schools and the poor quality of teaching by demotivated teachers – are addressed through these spots. State-level initiatives are also being undertaken to develop programmes for television and radio based on the idea of *Meena*, which could be listened to in listener groups.

In Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India, the State Education Department has taken the lead in supporting the establishment of more than 19,000 girls' groups called *Meena Manch* all over the State. The process was initiated in 2002. Seeing the success of the *Meena Manch*, it has been decided to expand the concept to many other states. These *Meena Manch* initially comprise a minimum of 20 girls. Out of these, 15 girls are in upper primary school and the rest are out-of-school girls. Gradually the number of members increases. Under the guidance of one facilitator teacher the *Manch* contributes to ensure age-appropriate enrolment, regular attendance and completion of primary education up to class five by all girls in their area. As the experience shows, the entire process also contributes to empowerment of girls.

Similarly in the primary schools, *Meena Cabinets* are being set up. The *Meena Cabinets* have two children from each of classes 3, 4 and 5. Cabinet Members will help ensure that all children who are enrolled attend school regularly.

The capacity of the community-based organizations is also being built up to promote girls' education and to contribute to make school an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for both teachers and children. This is also a good model which can be replicated in other parts of South Asia as the *Meena* series has been popular all over the region.



## 4.5 Maldives

The Young Champions programme in the Maldives started only in 2008. UNICEF Country Office Maldives sent four representatives for the 2008 ToT of Young Champions. The representatives were selected from various youth-based organizations: Journey – Empowered Youth Programme, Utopian Culture and Rights for All.

All the Maldivian Young Champions were very active in their own organizations. Since the YCs programme has only recently begun in the Maldives, they have concentrated their activities mainly on substance abuse as this is the most pressing issue that Maldivian youths are confronting.

The Consultant assessed that despite the Young Champions’ own professional challenges and lack of resources, they have been able to do a commendable job to fulfil their mandate. The major challenge was funding as the UNICEF Country Office in the Maldives cannot allocate enough funds to the programme. A second challenge was accessibility, as it is very expensive and time consuming to travel from one island to the other. Thus most of the activities of YCs were focused in Male’ only.

The third challenge was the difficulty for the Young Champions to maintain their organizations. Most of them exist on paper only, and opening up offices is a very expensive affair. Thus all Young Champions have to opt for alternative employment to sustain themselves.

However, despite these challenges some progress was made. The Young Champions were able to produce a documentary titled *Voices from Shadows* which depicts the situation of substance abuse among the youth of the Maldives. They also were able to implement a Peer Education Project (PEP) which aimed to develop the skills/awareness of young people in HIV/AIDS and substance abuse.

**the P.E.P.**

**What's P.E.P.?**  
It's the Peer Education Project. Up for it?

**What will you do?**  
You will attend training sessions on peer education and peer drama. You will get to educate your peers in different schools.

**Duration?**  
Two months. With flexibility.

**Training sessions?**  
Conducted by professionals. No need to sit all the time. Energizing activities guaranteed.

**Why volunteer?**  
You are going to address the issue of drug abuse and HIV in Maldives.

**Do you know why most young people start experimenting with drugs? One of the major reason is peer pressure. This could be tackled through peer education in the form of peer drama.**

**Be part of the solution!**

**What is peer drama?**  
It's not a typical drama.

You are acting to deliver a message by interacting with the audience. Hence, it will be more challenging. Also, you are fulfilling a social responsibility.

**Volunteers needed:**  
25 only

**Deadline: 28th July 2009**  
Sign up sheets available at your school office.

Volunteers will be selected via interview held on;  
**28th July 2009 (Main site)**  
**29th July 2009 (New site)**

We are looking for dedicated and enthusiastic individuals.

**Who is executing this project?**  
Utopian Culture in association with UNICEF. Your participation will be acknowledged.

In Association with **unicef**

Maldives: Peer Education Project implemented by Young Champions

### Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in Maldives

The Maldives has made significant social and economic strides over the past two decades. Now the country’s biggest assets – Maldivian youth – face increasingly greater risks as many of them are experimenting with drugs and gang-based violence and choose to be ‘voluntarily

employed'. These are the challenging issues that the Young Champions of the Maldives should focus on over the coming year. Recommendations for scaling up and mainstreaming the YCs programme in the Maldives are:

- Scaling up/mainstreaming of the Young Champions programme is very necessary in the Maldives. Currently all the YCs are concentrated around Male', thus YCs should reach to all atolls.
- As well as working with substance abuse, YCs can work on other thematic issues: curbing youth gang violence, promoting volunteerism, sensitizing youth to their national cultural heritage and reinforcing moral education in the wake of growing exposure to external influences and contacts. UNICEF Maldives should conduct a KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) study to ascertain the issues and challenges young people are facing so that UNICEF can prioritize its interventions.
- The YCs programme should use sports and other recreational activities to engage youth. Radio could be a means for information and entertainment sharing among Youths (SSMK Model).
- YCs should be involved in advocating for the Youth Policy and Disability Policy as well as lobbying for creation of a National Youth Volunteer Service in which young people are motivated to serve their own community and in the overall nation-building process.
- The Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports is an ideal government organization for mainstreaming the Young Champions programme in the Maldives. Journey, Rights for All and other youth organizations can be instrumental in promoting the YCs' work.
- UN agencies and other international organizations can be partners in achieving the goals of the YCs programme. Dhiraagu is a private organization which can support the mainstreaming of the YCs' work as it is already a partner organization with UNICEF on curbing substance abuse issue among the youth of Maldives.

## **4.6 Nepal**

UNICEF Country Office Nepal sent four representatives for the 2007 ToT of Young Champions. The representatives were selected from various parts of Nepal which were priority districts for girls' education. UNICEF Nepal Country Office has organized training courses for inducting new YCs in the seven priority districts (Sarlahi, Bara, Rautahat, Parsa, Kapilbastu, Dhanusa and Siraha).

In the first year the Young Champions concentrated their activities on inducting other YCs in communities where girls' education enrolment and attendance are low. The Young Champions mobilized almost 300 young people into 33 Young Champions groups and noted a five per cent increase in students' regular attendance. The Young Champions were also able to mainstream 14 madrasas into the government system through collaborative efforts with the madrasas, the District Education Office (DEO) and the District Development Committee (DDC). They also promoted best practices in schools by working with the media, forming an e-group and setting up a virtual platform with 103 members worldwide.

By the second year, YCs increased their strength to about 200 who are active advocates of girls' education in their own community. In addition to this they have devised an innovative approach to monitoring of students of low-performing schools. The YCs also started to form networks and have started working with the DEO in each district and with the Regional Education Directorate (RED) at the regional level. This is a very innovative and sustainable approach to mainstreaming the YCs' work in Nepal.

For policy advocacy, UNICEF Nepal Country Office with support from the YCs formed the Women Parliamentary Network for Girls' Education which signed a commitment letter (see case study below) that all the women parliamentarians will work together for the formulation of girls' education-friendly policies.

Nepal is one of the best models for the YCs in South Asia to adapt or replicate in their own countries. The successful partnership of YCs, UNICEF Nepal Country Office and the Ministry and Department of Education is having a positive impact on the improvement of girls' education in Nepal.



Nepal: Glimpses of ToT of Young Champions (Photo Credit: Manish Thapa)

### Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in Nepal

The Young Champions programme in Nepal is one of the most successful models observed in this review. For further scaling up and mainstreaming the programme, it needs to follow up the following recommendations:

- The Young Champions programme in Nepal should be implemented in the remaining eight girls' education districts.
- It is necessary to induct mid-level Young Champions who can advocate for policy as well as being instrumental in supporting the work at grassroots level. The UNICEF Country Office in Nepal can consider forming a Youth Parliamentary Network for Girls' Education which can work with the Young Champions for policy advocacy at the centre.

- Funding is the major challenge for the promotion of Young Champions' work in the districts. UNICEF and Young Champions should seek cooperation and partnership with other stakeholders (GOs, private sector organizations and INGOs) for securing adequate funding for making it a flagship programme.
- The Young Champions have been working with Ministry of Education. However, there are also avenues for cooperation and partnership with the newly established Ministry of Youth and Sports which is working on drafting the Youth Policy of Nepal. The Young Champions programme can be a model for them for the establishment of a National Youth Voluntary Service.
- The Young Champions can contribute to existing programmes such as Peacebuilding, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Civic Education (Civic Leadership School), HIV/AIDS, etc. in partnership with concerned stakeholders.

**Case Study: Women Parliamentary Network for Girls' Education**  
**15 point Collective Commitment**

Education and gender equity are fundamental rights of human welfare and equality in any society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Giving high priority to structural outline and functional level on the issue of girls' education and gender equity, with the objective of raising our voice from the policy level for the construction of strong communities, we all women members of the Constituent Assembly express our commitment to the following points as an appeal for implementation:

1. Develop a like concept for equal access of education and opportunity to all children (girls and boys). Implement free and compulsory education by establishing it as a fundamental right.
2. Develop programmes to enrich self-confidence and dignity, improve reproductive health and introduce a psychosocial counselling service. Terminate the punishment system of girls at the school level.
3. Establish a friendly environment for all children for drinking water, toilets, hygiene, sanitation and seating arrangements. Make sure that girls participate with appropriate and comfortable uniform in school and during extracurricular activities (sports).
4. Establish favourable conditions to obtain primary education closer to home for the children from remote areas, minorities, small groups and dispersed areas. Create the opportunity of secure, free and residential education to girls from minorities, poor households, marginalized groups and remote areas; and to those who have special educational needs. Also, ensure employment opportunities.
5. Terminate gender disparity in household activities; provide a like formal education to all children.
6. Considering the cultural diversity based on different geographical situations, eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, gender, language, religion, economy and regional inequality in schools.
7. Launch formal education as a movement for the education of deprived persons, victims of conflict, women, handicapped and housewives. Start ECD (Early Childhood Development) classes and classes for women.
8. Establish an Open University and promote mass open education. Develop the methodology to assess education standards on the basis of skills.
9. Prohibit disrespectful sayings, slang, abuse and rebukes as well as physical and mental misbehaviour against women and girls. Develop thinking and behaviour that respects gender.
10. Ensure primary education in mother language. Terminate existing gender inequality in religious and traditional education systems. Include these education systems in mainstream education.
11. Terminate discrimination against women at policy making and implementation levels. Develop gender unbiased curriculum. Make compulsory the provision of female teachers at the primary level.

12. Ensure equal participation of girls in technical and vocational education through positive discrimination.
13. Terminate bad culture and superstition by providing awareness about kamalari, Jhuma, witchcraft, child marriage, forced marriage, polygamy, abortion after identification of gender, ghumto pratha , girls' trafficking, chaupadi, untouchability during menstruation and child birth (sutkeri) and the dowry system. Ensure the provision of basic health education about malnutrition, post-natal care (sutkeri), uterine prolapse (aang khasne), breast cancer and uterus cancer from the primary school level.
14. Establish an observation and evaluation unit regarding girls' education and form a counselling unit including guardians at the school.
15. Enforce effective implementation of treaties and agreements about girls' education and gender equity.

*Note: This Collective Commitment has been edited for language clarification.*

## 4.7 Pakistan

UNICEF Country Office Nepal sent three representatives for the 2007 ToT of Young Champions. The representatives were selected from various parts of Pakistan, especially from Lahore and North West Frontier Province (NWFP). The Young Champions in Pakistan have been active in strengthening networks within the government, mobilizing the available Girl Guide and Boy Scout networks and developing their own advocacy material. They have produced a wide range of communication materials that include a logo, a website, a brochure, a folder, T-shirts and caps.

In Punjab province, the Young Champions have set up an office in the Directorate General of the Social Welfare Department, established links with UNICEF's Education and Child Protection sections and identified focal persons in the Provincial Education and Social Welfare Departments. At the provincial and district levels, they have mobilized Young Champions groups and prepared a Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategy: they have developed IEC/BCC material for enrolment campaigns, formed media committees, initiated radio programmes and a newsletter. Their aim was to reduce drop-out rates and improve retention in the early years of primary school.

In NWFP, the Young Champions have developed a life skills manual and begun an enrolment campaign focusing particularly on girls. They have mobilized Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and held sports and social events highlighting girls' education. The Young Champions network currently has over 650 members. In the second year, the programme has been replicating the model of the first year. In both provinces, Punjab and NWFP, Young Champions utilized the scouts and guides networks for the promotion of girls' education.

The Pakistan Young Champions programme is yet another successful model. The use of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides networks is a very innovative strategy to scale up/mainstream the Young Champions programme. This is a model which can be applicable in other country contexts where the scouting movement is well developed.



*Pakistan: Young Champions encouraging IDP girls to attend schools (Photo Credit: Pakistan Presentation at Young Champions Regional Consultation Meeting 8–11 September 2009, Kathmandu)*

### Recommendations to UNICEF Country Office in Pakistan

- The Young Champions programme of Pakistan should be implemented in other provinces of Pakistan. UNICEF Pakistan Country Office should seek partnership with other organizations to scale up and mainstream the Young Champions programme.
- As in Nepal, Pakistan should also initiate the formation of a network of Young Champions at provincial level. At the centre a national level network should be created which can be instrumental in advocating youth-friendly policies.
- Funding is the major challenge for the promotion of Young Champions' work in Pakistan. UNICEF and Young Champions should seek cooperation and partnership with other stakeholders (GOs, private sector organizations and INGOs) for securing adequate funding for making it a flagship programme.
- A multi-sectoral coordinated response to the broad range of issues in girls' education should be identified and addressed by involving other partner organizations (NGOs, INGOs and private sector organizations). Peacebuilding is another issue that YCs in Pakistan can work on as there is a need for young people to be engaged in creating a peaceful Pakistan.
- A linkage between YCs and the Ministry of Youth Affairs can be instrumental to advocate for youth and gender-friendly policies at the federal as well as provincial level. Such partnership can be an avenue to mainstream Young Champions under the Youth Policy.
- UNICEF Pakistan Country Office should also look into avenues for further partnership with other UN agencies and international organizations such as Aga Khan Foundation.
- Commercial banks and private sector organizations fulfilling the ethical standards of UNICEF can also be partners.

**Case Study: Boy Scouts Movement**

***Approaches to scaling up/mainstreaming the YCs programme***

The Pakistan Boy Scouts movement is part of the international scout body. It takes the view that the wider issues of poverty reduction and physical barriers to education are the government responsibility, but the scout movement can contribute in terms of changing the behaviour and value structures of people, particularly in a rural context.

Common misperceptions are that there is no need to educate girls, and that education will make children immoral. To address these, the Boy Scouts realize that mere passion is not enough – initiatives must be practical and use language that everyone will understand. Thousands of scouts in Balochistan have joined forces with UNICEF to help improve the situation for girls in one of the least developed regions of Pakistan. Scouts have been trained to help local communities understand the importance of educating girls. The result has been an increase in the female literacy rate, an increase in the immunization rate and a reduction in diseases due to a lack of hygiene.

Religion plays a very important part in life in Pakistan, so these scouts work through mosques and religious leaders in rural areas to disseminate the message of education in a reasoned way. In the same way, they also work with religious leaders on prevention of HIV/AIDS. This was considered a vulgar topic, so the scouts developed a manual that began with a religious reference – ‘There is no shame in learning’ – which was disseminated to schools and communities. Subsequently the religious leaders incorporated the messages into their teachings.

Most recently, the Pakistan Boy Scouts have begun collaboration with their counterparts in India, in order to begin to break down suspicion and misconceptions between them.

This is one of the best ways to scale up/mainstream the Young Champions’ work in each country. The scout movement is a well recognized youth movement with the stated aim of supporting young people in their physical, mental and spiritual development, so that they may play constructive roles in society.

## 4.8 Sri Lanka

UNICEF Country Office Nepal sent four representatives for the 2007 ToT of Young Champions. All of these were students studying at various levels. The YCs decided to work in the promotion of education among a disadvantaged group (child labourers) as girls’ education is not an issue in Sri Lanka. Accordingly they devised a plan of action which included awareness-raising campaigns and using of IEC materials to sensitize on the importance of education.

Due to the difficult circumstances in Sri Lanka in 2008 and 2009, the Young Champions programme has not been able to move forward. The programme is now not the focus of UNICEF Country Office in Sri Lanka.

The Consultant did not have access to any forms of documentation to gauge the progress of the YCs programme in Sri Lanka.

## Annex 1

### List of People Consulted and Interviewed

Name	Designation	Remarks
<b>Afghanistan</b>		
Mr. Abdul Samad Ghafoori	Education Specialist, UNICEF Afghanistan	
Mr. Bashir Ahmad	General Director Provincial Affairs, Ministry of Education	
Mr. Sayed Aimal Baha	Director, Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, Afghanistan	
Mr. Atiqullah Habibi	Manager, Youth Information Community Centre, Herat	
Mr. Shujauddin Qadri	Manager, Youth Information Community Centre, Laghman	
Mr. Rahmatullah Quraishi	Child Protection, UNICEF Afghanistan	Email interview
<b>Bangladesh</b>		
Mr. Nabendra Dahal	Chief – Education Section, UNICEF Bangladesh	
Ms. Monira Hasan	Education Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh	
Ms. Shaila Parveen Luna	Child Protection Section, UNICEF Bangladesh	
Ms. Ruiya Ashraf Akhter	Young Champion	
Mr. Tareque Mehdi	Young Champion	
Mr. Aslam-ul-huqTaneem	Young Champion	
Mr. Kamrul Hassan Monju	Executive Director, Mass-line Media Center	
Md. Tahiat Hossain	Deputy Director, Training Division, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Dhaka	
Ms. Rashida Parveen	Manager, Adolescent Development Programme, BRAC	
<b>Bhutan</b>		
Ms. Vathinee Jitjaturunt	Deputy Representative, UNICEF Bhutan	
Ms. Ruby Q. Noble	Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Bhutan	
Ms. Kezang Deki	Education Officer, UNICEF Bhutan	
Mr. Bishnu Bhakta Mishra	Education Officer, UNICEF Bhutan	
Ms. Annick Lactis	Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Bhutan	
Ms. Roma Pradhan	Young Champion	
Mr. Sonam Wangchuk	Young Champion	
Ms. Dema	Young Champion	
Ms. Yangchen Lodey	Young Champion	
Mr. Kinzang Wangchuk	Reporter/Producer/Host/Youth Coordinator, Kuzoo FM	
Mr. Chencho Dorji	Director, Department of Youth & Sports	
Mr. Thinley Dorji	Radio Host, Kuzoo FM	
Mr. Karma Jigme Dhondrub	Radio Host, Kuzoo FM	
Ms. Choki Tshomo	Director, Kuzoo FM	
Mr. Sudarshana Perera	UNV Poverty & MDG Specialist, UNDP Bhutan	
<b>India</b>		
Ms. Sara Poehlman	Education Specialist, UNICEF India	



Dr. Neelam Raisinghani	Dy. Director – Girls’ Education, Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education, Jaipur	
Ms. Manjula Sharma	State Gender Coordinator, Himachal Pradesh, Govt of India	
Ms. Kiran Dogra	National Consultant EDCIL, Govt. of India	
Ms. Sarita Mittal	Dy. Director – National Literacy, Govt of India	
Ms. Shweta Sandilya	Education Specialist – UNICEF Bihar, India	
Ms. Deepa Das	Education Officer, UNICEF Assam, Guwahati, India	
<b>Maldives</b>		
Mr. Mansoor M. Ali	Representative, UNICEF Maldives	
Mr. Mohamed Naeem	Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Maldives	
Ms. Ameena Mohamed Didi	Education Specialist, UNICEF Maldives	
Ms. Nashiya Saeed	Young Champion	
Ms. Kulshoom Ali	Young Champion	
Ms. Aishath Azleena	Young Champion	
Journey Recovering Addicts		
<b>Nepal</b>		
Ms. Sumon Tuladhar	Education Specialist, UNICEF Nepal	
Ms. Bimala Manandhar	Education Officer, UNICEF Nepal	
Mr. Dhurba Shrestha	Consultant, UNICEF Nepal	
Ms. Rekha Shrestha	Programme Assistant, UNICEF Nepal	
Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi	Under Secretary, Ministry of Education, Nepal	
Mr. Surait Thakur	Programme Officer, Aasaman Nepal, Janakpur	
Mr. Atahar Kamal	Secretary, Lumbini Integrated Development Organization	
Ms. Divya Dawadi	Section Officer, Department of Education, Nepal	
Mr. Laba Raj Oli	Editor, Education Pages	
Hon. Gyatri Shah	Member of Parliament, Government of Nepal	
More than 50 Young Champions		
<b>Pakistan</b>		
Mr. Mukhtar Aziz. Kansi	Education Officer, UNICEF Peshawar, Pakistan	
Mr. Lila Ram	Education Officer, UNICEF Karachi, Pakistan	
Mr. Sehr Raza Qizilbash	Education Officer, UNICEF Lahore, Pakistan	Email interview
Mr. Fahad Kazmi	Young Champion	
Ms. Alia Shahad	Young Champion	
Ms. Umme Kulsoom	Project Coordinator, Youth Resource Centre Pakistan	
<b>UNICEF ROSA</b>		
Mr. Daniel Toole	Regional Director, UNICEF ROSA	
Ms. Susan Durston	Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF ROSA	
Ms. Raka Rashid	UNGEI Focal Point, UNICEF ROSA	
Ms. Pushpa Chhetri	Research Assistant, Education Section, UNICEF ROSA	
Mr. John Evans	Independent Education Consultant	

Mr. Filip Warnants	Independent Consultant	
Ms. Bisika Thapa	Consultant, UNICEF ROSA	
Ms. Guillemette Meunier	Regional Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF ROSA	
Ms. Rachel Odede	Regional HIV/AIDS Specialist, UNICEF ROSA	De-briefing Session
Ms. Frances Turner	Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF ROSA	De-briefing Session
<b>UNICEF APSSC</b>		
Ms. Margaret Sheehan	Regional Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist, UNICEF Asia-Pacific Shared Services Centre (APSSC), Thailand	Regional Consultation Meeting
<b>DOC, NYHQs</b>		
Ms. Shivangi Shrivastava	Communication Officer, UNICEF Headquarters, New York	

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## Annex 2

# Questionnaire for Stakeholders' Interview

### Questionnaire for UNICEF Staff

1. How are Young Champions (YCs) selected?
  - a. Criteria for selection
  - b. Criteria for selection of districts/regions (within the country)
  - c. Criteria for selection of programme focus (girls' education, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, other pressing issues)
2. How are Young Champions mobilized to achieve the objectives of the programme?
3. To what extent have Young Champions fulfilled their mandate as advocates and spokespersons for gender equality and girls' education (or other programme focus) in their communities?
4. What are the support structures for YCs to enable them to achieve the programme goals?
  - a. Technical support – capacity building programmes/training
  - b. Financial support
  - c. Psychological support – peer to peer support mechanisms
5. What has been the role of UNICEF Country Office, UNGEI South Asia and other partners and stakeholders (including government) in facilitating this process?
6. How can the work and strategy of YCs be improved?
7. Does this programme have potential for scaling up and mainstreaming? If so what are the recommended strategies for your country?
8. How can the YCs programme be mainstreamed?
  - a. Probable scaling-up strategy
  - b. Probable partners (INGOs and government mechanisms)
9. Is there a possibility of mobilizing Young Champions in other aspects or addressing other social issues?

### *Additional Questions*

10. Is there a Youth Policy in the country?
11. Is there a Youth Ministry or Department of Youth in the country which solely works for youth issues?
12. Is there a partnership with such a Ministry/Department for YCs programmes?
13. How can such a partnership be built?

- 
14. How can the YCs programme capitalize on the provisions laid out in the Youth Policy or the objectives of the Youth Ministry/Department so as to be an effective vehicle to advocate for education and youth issues?

### Questionnaire for Young Champions

1. How were you selected as a Young Champion (YC)?
  - a. Criteria for selection
  - b. Criteria for selection of districts/regions (within the country)
  - c. Criteria for selection of programme focus (girls' education, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, other pressing issues)
2. What is the difference in your life/work since you were selected as a Young Champion?
3. How as a Young Champion do you achieve the objectives of the programme?
4. To what extent are you successful in fulfilling the YCs mandate as advocate and spokesperson for gender equality and girls' education (or other programme focus) in your community?
5. What are the support structures for you (Young Champion) to enable you to achieve the programme goals?
  - a. Technical support – capacity building programmes/training
  - b. Financial support
  - c. Psychological support – peer to peer support mechanisms
6. What has been the role of UNICEF Country Office, UNGEI South Asia and other partners and stakeholders (including government) in facilitating this process?
7. How can your work and strategy be improved?
8. Does this programme have potential for scaling up and mainstreaming? If so what are the recommended strategies for your country?
9. How can the YCs programme be mainstreamed?
  - a. Probable scaling-up strategy
  - b. Probable partners (INGOs and government mechanisms)
10. Is there a possibility of mobilizing Young Champions in other aspects or addressing other social issues?

### Additional Questions

11. In your country, are young people involved in all levels of programme (including programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and policy making processes? If so, please describe the process.

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12. Do you think your country has already achieved meaningful youth participation? If so, how? If not, what do you think your government and your organization could do to improve youth participation in your country?
  13. How can youth leadership be developed to hold governments accountable?
  14. How can Young Champions facilitate advancing the mainstreaming of youth in policy making and ensuring meaningful participation of youth?

### Questionnaire for Government Officials

1. What have been the major achievements and/or breakthroughs in concrete terms in implementing the national action plan and/or policies and programmes for Education for All as well as gender equality and advancement of women?
2. Are the goals of Education for All, especially girls' education, being pursued as a priority in relation to other public policy goals? Please explain.
3. Identify areas where mainstreaming a gender perspective has been most/least successful. In which sectors is a gender approach being applied? Please illustrate with examples of legislation, policies, best practice and lessons learned.
4. You are familiar with UNGEI and the Young Champions programme in your country initiated by UNICEF Country Office. How do you see the relevance of this programme?
5. To what extent have the Young Champions fulfilled their mandate as advocates and spokespersons for gender equality and girls' education (or other programme focus) in their communities?
6. What are the support structures provided by your Ministry/Department for YCs to enable them to achieve the programme goals?
  - a. Technical support – capacity building programmes/training
  - b. Financial support
  - c. Psychological support – peer to peer support mechanisms
7. What has been the role of your office in facilitating this process?
8. Does this programme have potential for scaling up and mainstreaming? If so what are the recommended strategies for your country?
9. How can the YCs programme be mainstreamed?
  - a. Probable scaling-up strategy
  - b. Probable partner (including your office)
10. Is there a possibility of mobilizing Young Champions in other aspects or addressing other social issues?