

## Girls and Inclusive Education Network (GIEN)

### 1. Background

Access to inclusive and quality education for girls is one of the prominent pre-requisites to promote gender equality and empowerment. Education gives women and girls the opportunity to access social, economic and political opportunities which enables them to demonstrate their meaningful presence in decision making and leadership roles at home, community, and nation building. Educated girls seldom marry young and are seen to lead more healthy and meaningful lives as they are able to understand and mindfully engage with the world around them. Education enables girls to generate incomes to support themselves, take leadership roles in home and society, participate in decision making process and guide their families towards a brighter future.

Girls face barriers to education broadly because they are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, harmful socio- cultural norms and practices, violence and violation, poor infrastructure and lack of agency. Among many issues related to attainment of inclusive quality education for girls, access, safety, life skills and career moves are important aspects. Hence, an education free of harmful gender/social norms empower girls and boys and enables them to contribute to reductions in school-related gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child/early marriage. Along with social, political and economic barriers as mentioned above, climate change as posed additional vulnerability to women and girls. Even though women and girls are vulnerable to climate change; they have demonstrated their capacity to act as leading change agents in society to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change. In this context, there is a need for collective action and initiatives that encompass the multitude of issues faced by many girls at a larger nationwide level.

Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and frameworks provided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are some of the international instruments that have been used to develop and design several innovative and gender responsive interventions to empower, train and engage women and youth to support different levels of government and communities in order to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change on human lives. More importantly, an increased understanding of the intersections among climate change and SDGs, gender inequalities that prevail in the communities, climate change risks, gender related vulnerabilities to climate change and positive, proactive engagement of youth and women will have significant impact to mitigate the climate change issues.

Mechanisms and structures like child clubs, youth clubs and various groups for girls and young people are present in Nepal, however, they have not organized for collective action to attain inclusive and quality education. In this context, Girls, and Inclusive Education Network (GIEN) has emerged as a key catalyst which consists of girls, youth, and adult members as representatives from a range of stakeholders at school, municipality, provincial and federal levels with core agenda of promoting inclusive education including specific needs of women and girls and adverse impacts of climate change and disaster.

The network aims to work together with the government to promote girls' right to education and livelihoods by sensitizing communities on the barriers which girls face including harmful

traditional practices. Members of GIEN also lobby with the local government to ensure the voices of marginalized girls are prioritized on policy decisions and reflected in local action plans. GIEN also assists local governments and schools to re-enroll children into education during and post COVID context.

Some major achievements of GIEN can be outlined as follows:

- CEHRD (Center for Education and Human Resource Development) initiated process to draft GIEN structure and ToR (Terms of Reference). These documents were used as reference for provincial and local level GIEN.
- Provincial level GIEN in Sudurpaschim, Karnali, Lumbini, Koshi and Madhesh provinces have been formed.
- Formation of Palika level GIEN is completed for 182 municipalities/rural municipalities among which 77 local levels have endorsed GIEN procedure. Likewise, 10 municipalities/rural municipalities have published GIEN procedure in palika's local gazette (RED BOOK).
- 163 school level GIEN have been formed in two districts: Bara and Rautahat and capacity building trainings to the network members have been completed.

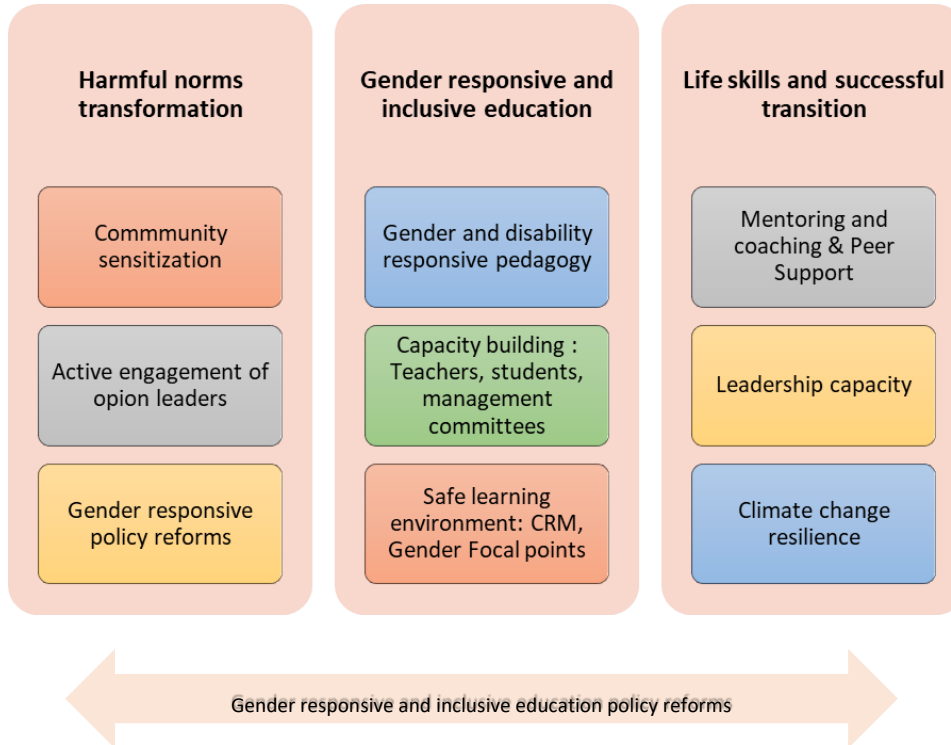
## 2. Purpose, aim, objectives and scope

GIEN is an inclusive forum led by the Government of Nepal in line with education policies in all three levels of government. The network is being mobilized with the support of like-minded partner organizations to promote protection and education rights of girls, children with disabilities and children from marginal communities by reducing harmful practices, gender-based violence and promoting female leadership. Under the municipal level, GIEN will work under the custodian of Mayor, whereas Deputy Mayor will lead the committee to bridge the gap between women's and girls' voices and policies with respect to the issues of education, livelihood and protection against gender-based violence. The network is designed to align closely with Government of Nepal's (GoN) policies and priorities outlined in the School Education Sector Plan SESP 2021/32 (under 5.3.3 outcome, activity 1.2.5) regarding the creation of gender networks ensuring GoN's ownership in sustaining these endeavors.

The **major aim** of GIEN is *to work together with the government, Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and communities to promote girls' right to inclusive education, child protection, life skills and livelihood through creation of enabling environments at family, communities, and schools*. In order to achieve this impact level change, **specific objectives** of the network are outlined as follows:

- Support communities to reduce harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and assist local governments and schools to re-enroll children into education.
- Strengthen commitment and capacity of schools for promoting gender responsive and inclusive education.
- Influence and support government to ensure that the voices of marginalized girls are prioritized on policy decisions and reflected in government action plans.

Thus, the major contribution areas of the network can be presented as follows:



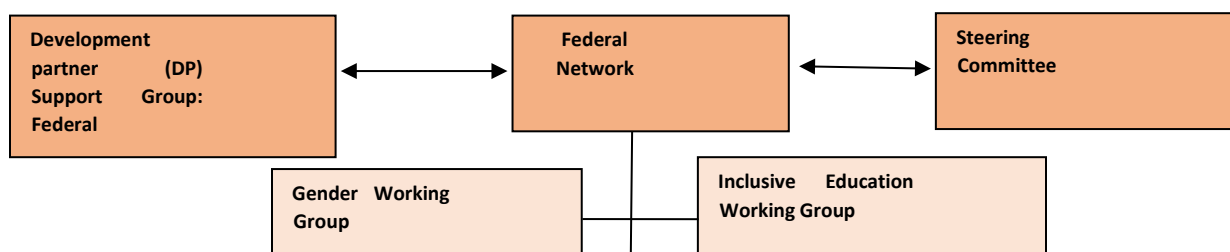
**Figure 1:** Engagement scope of GIEN

### 3. Structure and functions of GIEN

In the Federal Level, GIEN will work in coordination with the Federal government, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), and Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), and receive continuous guidance from the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC). In the Province Level, GIEN will work with the Provincial government, under the leadership of the secretary of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD).

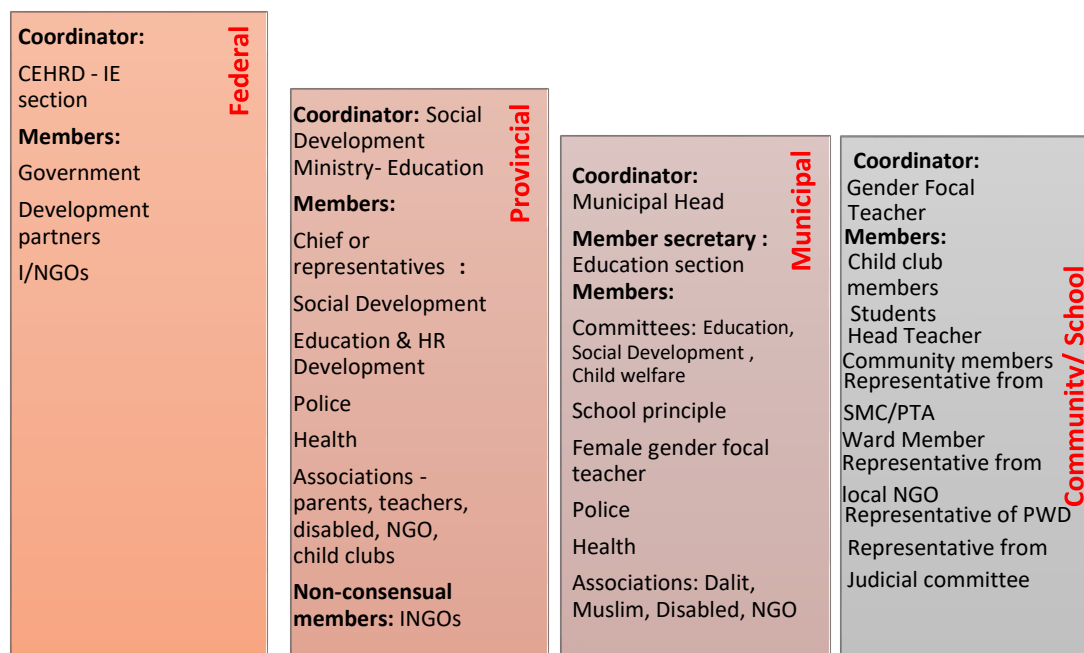
Under the municipal level, GIEN will work under the custodian of Mayor, whereas Deputy Mayor will lead the committee to bridge the gap between women's and girls' voices and policies with respect to the issues of education, livelihood and protection against gender- based violence. Likewise, in the School/Community Level, with the support from the principal and School Management Committee (SMC), the GIEN works with the gender focal person and student representatives to help strengthen complaint response mechanisms as well as ensure that the school has a gender- responsive learning environment.

Similarly, the development partners such as People in Need (PIN), Street Child, Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) and UNICEF are helping the government pilot and scale the initiative. However, it is open for any agencies for aligning with the GIEN partnership.



**Figure 2:** Organogram of GIEN at different levels

Different levels of these networks are led by government authorities and school teachers at the school level.



**Figure 3:** Representation of different stakeholders in GIEN

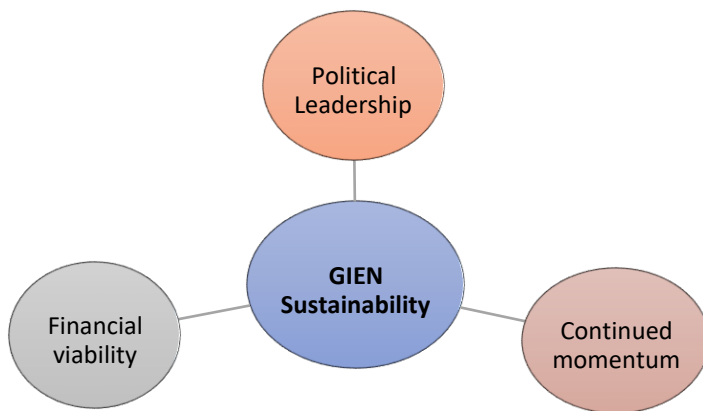
These networks at different tiers have various designated roles and responsibilities for driving agenda of gender responsive and inclusive education.

Tier	Major roles and responsibilities
Federal	<p><b>Gender responsive and inclusive education and transformation of harmful norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education policy reforms for promoting agenda of inclusive education</li> <li>• Coordinate design of federal inclusive education programmes</li> <li>• Coordinate capacity building, networking and knowledge sharing events</li> <li>• National Campaigns against harmful social norms</li> <li>• Technical insights for resource materials including IEC</li> </ul> <p><b>GIEN promotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bi-annual GIEN meetings for sharing learning and identifying future directions</li> <li>• Endorsement of procedures and guidelines for activation of GIEN including ToR, strategic plan, sustainability plan</li> <li>• Technical support, follow up and joint monitoring at provinces and municipalities</li> <li>• Coordination for promoting resource base for GIEN mobilization including budget allocation for strengthening capacity of provincial, municipal and community/school level networks</li> </ul>
Provincial	<p><b>Gender responsive and inclusive education and transformation of harmful norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy dialogue and programming to promote girls' education and gender equality</li> <li>• Support to address unsolved CRM (Complain Response Mechanism) related issues shared by municipality level GIEN</li> <li>• Coordinate and influence local government to develop programs and policies to address harmful social norms like early marriage/GBV/child labor/disability etc.</li> <li>• Monitor and observe the delivery of the project designed to address harmful social norms and provide necessary feedback to the local government.</li> <li>• Coordinate with like-minded agencies, alliances and stakeholders and ensure effective program delivery</li> </ul> <p><b>GIEN Network promotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively engage in endorsement of operation procedures and ToR to make GIEN functional</li> <li>• Promote linkages with federal GIEN</li> <li>• Develop IE (Inclusive Education) programmes and ensure budget allocation for GIEN network promotion at different tiers Encourage municipal government to form GIEN and its functionalization with periodic review and reflection</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance and joint field monitoring at municipal levels</li> </ul>

Municipal	<p><b>Gender responsive and inclusive education, harmful norms transformation and life skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure CRM is effectively implemented in every school.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy dialogue and programming to promote inclusion (including disability inclusion), women empowerment and to respond the climate change and DRR issues.</li> <li>• Influence duty bearers to undertake their responsibilities effectively.</li> <li>• Provide technical inputs to the local government for the effective delivery of the activities designed to promote gender responsive and inclusive education.</li> <li>• Capacitate gender focal teachers, SMC and PTA to eliminate the harmful social norms and GBV</li> <li>• Coordinate with schools and facilitate to celebrate different day celebration like IWD, 16 days campaign, children's day etc.</li> <li>• Provide budget resources for targeted stakeholders for livelihood promotion</li> </ul> <p><b>GIEN network promotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate to develop and endorse GIEN operational procedure</li> <li>• Coordinate with provincial level GIEN for technical inputs</li> <li>• Organize regular interaction with GIEN members and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Promote linkage with Inclusive Education based CSO members</li> <li>• Recognition of local level GIEN networks in consultations of seven- step local budget planning for budget advocacy</li> </ul>
School/community	<p><b>Gender responsive and inclusive education, harmful norms, and life skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building on girls' education rights, women leadership, budget advocacy including procedures of seven steps planning, climate change DRR</li> <li>• Coordinate local level awareness, campaigns and day celebrations in inclusive education and climate change</li> <li>• Advocate for strengthening CRM mechanisms, provision of capacitated gender focal teachers</li> <li>• Influence for incorporating agenda of gender responsive and inclusive education in School Improvement plans (SIP) and Social Audits</li> <li>• Active engagement in local planning process to advocate for budget allocation for gender and IE related agendas.</li> </ul> <p><b>GIEN Network promotion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize regular monthly / quarterly learning sharing sessions to discuss challenges and prioritize way forward.</li> <li>• GIEN champions identification, capacity enhancement and mobilization</li> <li>• Build linkage with Inclusive Education based CSO members to create more synergized advocacy</li> </ul>

#### 4. Sustainability Plan

Creating a network is easier task than ensuring its functionality and continuity as it needs strategic leadership and enabling environment. Sustainability of GIEN has been planned from the very beginning of its formation to ensure that the GoN entities, CSOs, communities and other stakeholders are engaged and committed for the cause and longevity of the network. In terms of GIEN, various aspects of sustainability have been considered.



**Political sustainability:** Alignment of the network with the government policies and priorities as outlined in the School Education Sector Plan 2022/32 will ensure receiving continued government leadership to sustain the GIEN network interventions. Besides, linking with the municipal local planning process as well as endorsement of inclusive education municipal policies and GIEN operational procedures with active engagement of community networks will also help in driving local leadership for the network promotion including its replication in different other municipalities.

**Process sustainability:** Process sustainability will be ensured with strong political leadership from the GoN. Strong network base at community level with active engagement of stakeholders and young girls will drive the agenda of gender responsive and inclusive education and concerns of safety and security including gender-based violence and safe learning environment in school, family, and community. In order to strengthen community-based networks, GIEN champions representing young girls will be identified and capacitated to enable them to amplify concerns of right to education for gender and social inclusion and justice more strongly. Besides, there will be strategies to incorporate other organizations so that these processes are replicated in other areas.

**Financial sustainability:** Policy endorsement and incorporation of GIEN as a key network in government's inclusive education programmes will support in ensuring financial contribution required to sustain these initiatives. Adaptation of GIEN in local level planning process also ensures financial sustainability. Development Partner Support is another way to ensure

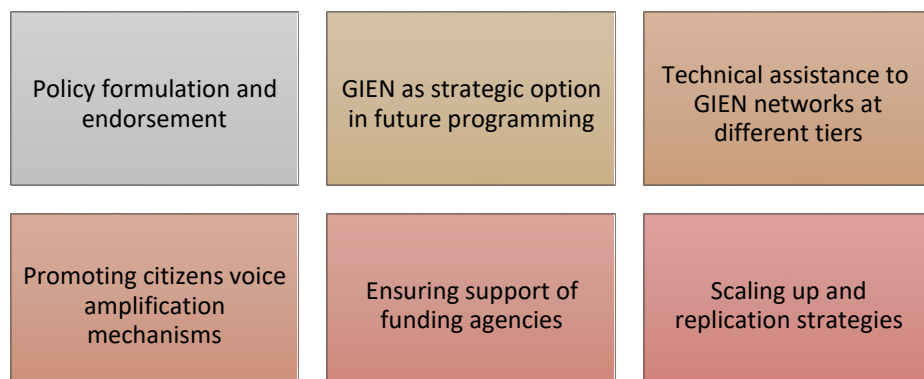
continuation of GIEN. On the other hand, there will be inter-linkage with local planning process to mobilize municipal government budget for local level interventions.

## 5. Next Steps

It is essential to ensure functional GIEN at different tiers for enabling it to act as catalytic agent to drive agenda of gender responsive and inclusive education.

Tiers	Actions
Federal	Steering committee endorsement in leadership of CEHRD
	Endorsement of strategic plan
	Endorsement of Terms of Reference
	Technical assistance and joint monitoring to local GIEN networks
Provincial	Establishment of provincial networks
	Endorsement of Terms of Reference
	Quarterly meeting of provincial GIEN networks
	Joint monitoring visits
Municipal	Establishment of municipal networks in new areas
	Endorsement of GIEN operational procedures
	Knowledge sharing and networking events
	Monthly/ quarterly meeting of GIEN
	Periodic supervision to schools
School/ Community	Establishment of school level networks
	Capacity building of GIEN champions
	Coaching support to gender focal teachers
	Monthly/ quarterly GIEN meetings
	GIEN team members led campaigns and events

Some of the major contributing factors to ensure stronger presence of GIEN are:





## Annex One: Representation of GIEN at different levels

Level	Representation
Federal	<p><b>Coordinator:</b> Director General, Center for Education and Human Resource Department</p> <p><b>Member- Secretary:</b> Director of Inclusive Section, CEHRD</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Chief/ representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Minister</li> <li>• National Planning Commission</li> <li>• National Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• National Women Commission</li> <li>• Ministry of Federal Affair and General Administration</li> <li>• Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare</li> <li>• Ministry of Health and Population</li> <li>• Teachers Confederation</li> <li>• AIN representatives</li> <li>• Parents Teacher Association</li> <li>• National Federation of the Disabled Nepal</li> <li>• Central Child Welfare Committee</li> </ul> <p>Invitee Members: representatives from development partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF Nepal</li> <li>• People in Need</li> <li>• VSO Nepal</li> <li>• Save the Children</li> <li>• Street Children</li> <li>• Educational Pages</li> <li>• Aasaman Nepal</li> </ul>

Provincial	<p><b>Coordinator:</b> Chief of Education Development Section, Social Development Ministry</p> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <p>Chief / Representative of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Development Section, Social Development Ministry</li> <li>• Human Resource Development Center</li> <li>• Education Development Directorate</li> <li>• Provincial Police Office</li> <li>• Health Directorate</li> <li>• National Teachers Federation</li> <li>• School Management Federation</li> <li>• Child Club</li> <li>• Parents Association</li> <li>• Child Protection Committee</li> <li>• Disable Federation</li> <li>• NGO Federation</li> </ul> <p><b>Invitee Members:</b> Representatives from development partners like:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UNICEF Nepal</li> <li>2. VSO Nepal</li> <li>3. Save the Children</li> <li>4. Street Children</li> <li>5. People in Need</li> <li>6. Educational Pages</li> </ol>
Municipal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice Chairperson/Deputy Mayor- Chairperson</li> <li>• Palika level Education committee- Member</li> <li>• Coordinator or member of social development Committee- Member</li> <li>• Chairperson or member of child welfare committee- Member</li> <li>• School principal (representing all school of palika)- Member</li> <li>• Female gender focal teacher (representing all school of palika)- Member</li> <li>• Area Police Office- Member</li> <li>• Health In- charge- Member</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community school management committee- Member</li> <li>• Dalit/Muslim/disable- Member</li> <li>• Gender focal person from NGO (representing all NGO)- Member</li> <li>• Education section of Rural/Urban Municipality- Member secretary</li> <li>• Two Students representing all schools (1 boy and 1 girl)- Invitee member</li> </ul>

School/community	<p>Coordinator: Head Teacher</p> <p>Member- Secretary: Gender Focal teacher</p> <p>Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child club members</li> <li>• Mothers group</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• SMC/PTA</li> <li>• School principal</li> <li>• Ward Chairperson (representative from ward level)</li> </ul>
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