Reflections from the Chair

Chema Raghavan, Chair, East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI

The East Asia Pacific region is one of the most dynamic regions globally, with indicators that are at the forefront of global trends and with clear progress on nearly every indicator. Despite these achievements, gender gaps continue to exist with vast disparities, and girls are at a serious disadvantage in some countries, while boys are at a disadvantage in others. Gender parity in education is far from being achieved in secondary education enrolment, and gender parity in the labour market in the region remains unapproached with women earning less than men in nearly all sectors. To address these challenges, in the last year, the EAP UNGEI and its members have worked on issues around marginalisation and School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV). The EAP UNGEI Regional Forum on Gender Equality in Education, held on August 28-29 in Bangkok, provided a platform where diverse groups of partners such as academics, CSOs, government officers, donors, individual experts, NGOs, and UN agencies discussed experiences on the ground, lessons-learnt, and a way forward. I hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter, which highlights the discussions at the Forum and our partners’ work on SRGBV.
Me and My Story

Plan International Viet Nam

(All names in this story have been changed)

Story of Nu

I am a girl student who is in the 9th grade of a secondary school in the suburb of Hanoi. I am pretty and study quite well at school. However, as I reached puberty, my looks have changed fast and made me different from other girls in the class. Because of my appearance, the boys in class used to stare and make comments on my looks which made me miserable when at school.

Hai was one among them. During the break, Hai and some boys used to point at me and made bad comments about my appearance. Hai even touched parts of my body. Initially, I thought it was just an accident so I did not react. But this kind of act happened again following laughter from the other boys.

I started to feel scared of Hai and wished to get away from him, and his friends. But because we studied in the same class, there was no way to hide from Hai. I felt scared and under pressure whenever I saw him. However, I could not tell anyone about what Hai had done to me. I was afraid that my friends would also pay keen attention to my appearance if I told them about Hai’s behaviour. I was so scared that I planned to quit school in order to stay away from Hai.

I learnt about the psychological counselling service in my school through the head teacher. I did not dare to visit the counselling room since I was afraid of being noticed by my friends. And then, I noticed the mail box next to the counselling room. I started to write a letter to Ms. Cuc, who is the school counsellor, under the Gender Responsive School Project funded by Plan International Vietnam.

One day, Ms. Cuc came to meet me. She asked me to help her in writing on her logbook because I have a good hand-writing. With this reason, I was happy to come to see her without any rumours among friends about me visiting the counsellor’s room.

I felt scared and under pressure whenever I saw Hai. I could not tell anyone about what he had done to me. I was so scared that I planned to quit school.

After having talks with Ms. Cuc, I was given helpful advice about my progress, my strengths in learning and my open future ahead, that I should consider the consequence of quitting school. Ms. Cuc also promised to work with me through talks and take necessary steps so that this kind of action would not happen again. After that, I learned that Hai had recognized his indecent behaviours after having talks with Ms. Cuc. Though Hai did not say sorry to me directly, he apologized for his acts in a letter. I was still afraid to face Hai when recalling his acts in the past. But following Ms. Cuc’s advice, I started to read some books in order to develop positive solutions and overcome my fear.
Story of Ms. Cuc – the counsellor:
After being in operation one month, the school’s counsellor has faced difficulties having students come to visit her. There is an evident psychological barrier as students are reluctant to take the initiative to go see her. Many students want to come and share their stories but they are shy and often afraid that others (students and teachers alike) will accuse them of having psychological problems. Because of this problem, our school has installed one mailbox to encourage those who are reluctant to share problems to directly write to us. With this solution, we have received some letters from students. Nu is one among them.

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When reading Nu’s story, I approached Nu by asking her to come to help me in the office. In this meeting, I listened to her story and gave her explanations and encouragement. I realized Hai was the cause of Nu’s fear. Therefore, I had a private talk with Hai and found out that his behaviour came from a challenge among boy students, daring each other to touch Nu’s body because of her appearance. Understanding the root cause, I informed him that his action had violated the law and could therefore be punishable by law. I also explained about the consequences of his actions on Nu’s health and suggested the possibility of having a more healthy friendship between them. After having talked with me, Hai realized his mistakes and wished to apologize to Nu, but he was reluctant to do so in public. I advised him to write an apology letter to Nu. After having talks with both Nu and Hai, there had been no repetition of this action. Nevertheless, Nu was still afraid of Hai because of his actions in the past.

I had a discussion with the head teacher of Nu’s class. She knew Nu was attracting boys’ attention but did not expect this to have such consequences for Nu. She agreed to help Nu to overcome her difficulties. We, teachers, had talks with Nu in several occasions and encouraged Nu’s participation in other students groups and extracurricular activities in the school. I also advised Nu to read some books such as “Sympathy and Forgiveness” and “Dare to Forgive” so that she could have more positive thoughts regarding the experiences that she had dealt with. I am glad to see Nu accepted my advice with a constructive attitude.

Three weeks after Nu’s incident, Nu came to me to return the two books she had borrowed. She said that she felt more relieved and dared to face Hai. She no longer thought of giving up school. Other teachers also informed me that Nu was concentrating more on her studies. In the latest meeting with Nu, I found her very open and happy. She said she had talked to her classmates about the advantages of sharing their worries to the school’s counsellor. In the position of a counsellor, there is no better reward for us than to see students overcome these difficult situations and to hear such positive feedback.
Equitable access to a quality education remains a barrier for millions of girls. Both in and out of school, girls face considerable challenges that hinder them from fulfilling their full academic potential. Among these challenges is School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV). SRGBV in the form of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, harassment, and bullying limits girls’ enrolment, undermines their participation and achievement, and increases girls’ absenteeism and dropout rates. The notions of sexual purity, shame and family honour prevalent in many Asian countries limit the space for girls and young women to report sexual violence, thus leaving girls more vulnerable to SRGBV. While there is recognition among concerned governments and NGOs that school-based bullying and sexual violence are significant problems, media attention and public awareness tend to be limited to extreme cases. The overarching limitations are the weak implementation mechanisms and dearth of available data and research on the exact nature and extent of SRGBV in the South and East Asian regions. Consequently, enrolment rates for girls are lower and the cycle of violence is perpetuated.

The Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools (PEASS) program was developed by Plan as part of the Because I am a Girl campaign’s Global Girls’ Innovation Programme. Plan has developed this innovative and results-oriented initiative of research and programming to address gender inequality in schools and the prevalence of SRGBV in and around schools in Asia. Together with the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), Plan conducted research to assess the magnitude and nature of SRGBV in Pakistan, Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia, and Vietnam in 2013-2014.

The notions of sexual purity, shame and family honour prevalent in many Asian countries limit the space for girls and young women to report sexual violence, thus leaving girls more vulnerable to SRGBV.

The research collected information from 30 schools across the five countries and gathered data from 9,000 students, teachers, principals, and parents to analyse:

- The gender attitudes of students;
- The experiences of violence within school settings, including the incidence, forms, frequency and perceived consequences of SRGBV, the sites and contexts, the help-seeking behaviours of girls and boys, including facilitative and constraining factors;
- The awareness and perceptions of school authorities regarding SRGBV and their capacity to discuss and respond to SRGBV;
The perceptions and response of key adults in the lives of children;

The existence and efficacy of forums, services and mechanisms that encourage reporting of SRGBV by both children and parents; and

The policy and legislative responses on the issue.

Research findings confirmed that SRGBV is a significant barrier to children’s access to education in the South Asia region as it undermines participation and academic achievement whilst increasing girls’ absenteeism and dropout rates.

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Investigation into students’ gender attitudes revealed great variation across countries with Pakistan having the lowest proportion of students reporting egalitarian attitudes (4% for girls and 1% for boys), and Vietnam having the highest (40% boys and 58% girls). In Pakistan, close to half of the boys fall in the low gender equitable category. Interestingly, across all five countries there are more girls in the high equitable category than boys. This suggests that across the region boys are brought up in environments that promote harmful gender norms, roles and stereotypes.

Across countries close to half of students have concerns regarding the safety of their schools. The research revealed that violence is very common and highly prevalent in schools across countries. It was reported the highest in Indonesia at 84%, with 90% boys and 79% girls reporting it.

The prevalence of emotional violence is highest in all the countries, followed by physical violence. The prevalence of physical violence is highest in Nepal (47%) followed by Indonesia (40%) and Vietnam (31%). A significantly higher proportion of boys reported facing physical violence in school than girls.

Over half of students reported experiencing some form of violence around/on their way to school in the last 6 months in Cambodia, Nepal and Indonesia; while a third report this in Vietnam and a fifth in Pakistan. Comparatively, smaller proportion of students reported experiencing sexual violence, ranging from 25% in Indonesia to around 3% in Pakistan and Cambodia.

It is however important to exercise caution in relation to the figures on sexual violence as students’ fear of repercussions which might result from reporting sexual violence (harsher punishment for boys and restriction on mobility and withdrawals from schools for girls), could have influenced their reporting. The research notes that these figures could be an underestimate.
A disturbingly low proportion of students report experience of violence (irrespective of the perpetrators) either at home or at school. Only a third of students report this to a key adult.

Teachers and non-teaching staff are amongst the main perpetrators of violence in schools. Of the students who reported experiencing violence in school in the last six months, a fifth reported teaching/non-teaching staff as the perpetrator in Cambodia and Vietnam; while nearly half reported this in Pakistan.

In Vietnam and Indonesia, more students reported teachers/school staff as perpetrators of emotional forms of violence, while in Pakistan and Nepal, more students reported physical violence.

There is variation in students reporting peer-based violence in schools, from 33% in Vietnam to 58% in Cambodia. In addition, over half of students reported experiencing some form of violence around/on the way to school in the last 6 month in Cambodia, Nepal and Indonesia; while a third reported this in Vietnam and a fifth in Pakistan. When we asked students about the consequences of violence, the predominant consequences included feeling sad or depressed, feeling afraid of coming to school and being unable to concentrate on studies in most countries. In Nepal, missing school and injury are also reported.

Across countries, a disturbingly low proportion of students report experiencing violence, (irrespective of the perpetrators) either at home or at school. Only a third of students report this to a key adult. However, it is equally concerning that even when students report or complain, action taken by the duty bearers is abysmally low. This confirms that report and response mechanisms across research countries are very weak.

Over the past year, Plan Vietnam has piloted a model of Gender-Responsive Schools in 20 schools in Hanoi that are currently being monitored, documented and evaluated. The model is showing promising results. After ensuring the model’s effectiveness and efficiency, the Hanoi Department of Education will replicate it in 785 schools in the city, reaching 529,116 adolescents. (Note: Nu in the first article attends one of Plan’s Gender Responsive Schools in Hanoi, Viet Nam).
Real Talks - Key Issues around Gender Equality in Education in the Region

EAP UNGEI Secretariat

(The following article was written based on the East Asia and Pacific UNGEI Regional Forum on Gender Equality in Education Report)

During the Regional Gender Forum, a Fishbowl session facilitated by Anna-Karin Jatfors, the Campaign Manager for UNiTE, provided a platform for the participants to gain insights and share perspectives on key gender equality in education issues in the region.

On the topic of underlying barriers for achieving gender equality in education, participants pointed out that education is often seen as a tool of domestication, that boys are invested in and sent to school but girls remain home as their parents believe girls will marry and then not use their education - educating the girls is not seen as economically viable. It was also mentioned that East Asia and Pacific is the most disaster-prone region, and children in these disaster-prone areas and in zones subject to environmental depletion are at high risk.

Overcoming these barriers requires addressing gender stereotypes at an early age, localized debates, and communities to strengthen connections with women’s empowerment groups. What do we need for addressing these barriers? First of all, an increased funding to strengthen gender equality projects is necessary. Funds need to be allocated for policies with special attention on how the policies are funded, and implementation of the policies need to be monitored for results. On the ground level, training for teachers and for the community was considered as vital.

However, disconnection between actors at different levels, NGOs to CSOs to government Ministries, presents a critical challenge to making progress. Stakeholders must collaborate and think ‘outside the box’ in terms of ways to work together. Social media can present both opportunities and challenges in terms of providing space for voices and networking, but it also can perpetuate stereotypes and raise ethical issues. Youth groups, such as the Youth Advocacy Group (YAG) can work with social media to become agents of change.

What is a Fishbowl Session?

The Fishbowl is a discussion technique that aims to provide a space for rich discussion among participants. The structure is made up of a smaller inner circle with chairs for participants, with one chair remaining empty, surrounded by an outer circle of participants who can enter when they would like to contribute by taking the empty chair. Once a participant’s point is made, the participant should exit the inner circle and return to the outer circle, leaving space for others.
Despite these challenges, education remains a powerful force to help shape worldviews and to influence positive attitudes of gender equality and social tolerance.

Despite these challenges, education remains a powerful force to help shape worldviews and to influence positive attitudes of gender equality and social tolerance. Communities and individuals become enthusiastic and motivated when schooling and education are topics of public discussion, and this energy needs to be supported. Through technology and the youth network available in Asia, these aspirations can be promoted. Training teachers and the community on gender can integrate a gender perspective leading to the mainstreaming of gender from the bottom up. Engaging local communities will strengthen the importance of the topic and help to change traditional norms and promote positive gender perspectives, in turn, increasing local ownership of these issues. In addition to the importance of gender issues being recognized at the local level, lobbying towards institutionalizing gender into the government is equally important, and a sector-wide approach is critical in mainstreaming gender in education systems.

The Role of Education towards Empowerment: Addressing Marginalisation and Gender-Based Violence in Schools

Jeffry Acaba, Youth LEAD

Marginalisation is a complex cluster of social conditions brought by misconceptions regarding people’s differences – from sexual orientation to gender identity, poverty status, ethnicity and language, and physical condition or health status. Marginalisation exists in various forms and affects peoples’ lives, disenfranchising them from reaching their fullest potential.

While education remains to be the most powerful tool in empowering marginalised people, how are we sure that our schools are safe spaces free from violence and harm? These two intersecting hurdles towards empowerment were presented and discussed in a lively talk show organised by East Asia and Pacific UN Girls Education Initiative (EAP UNGEI) as one of the side-events at the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing +20 Review” in Bangkok, Thailand.

A side event on gender equality in education, focusing on marginalisation and School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV), aimed to 1) share perspectives and evidence generated by the regional UNGEI policy advocacy agenda; 2) update regional groups on the work of UNGEI through its working groups in SRGBV and marginalisation; and 3) highlight some key
messages including “boys’ disadvantage does not mean girls’ advantage.”

The talk show featured some of the most active advocates of gender equality in education who are members of EAP UNGEI, as well as partners from other organizations in the region. Welcomed by Dr. Chemba Raghavan, Chair of EAP UNGEI, and moderated by Anna-Karin Jatfors, Regional Programme Manager for Ending Violence against Women (UN Women), the audience was invited to participate and answer two rounds of questions tackling marginalisation and SRGBV.

The first round of questions focused on settings where marginalisation often happens, barriers toward accessing education among migrant children, and the linkages between preventing child labour and girls’ participation in education. Jeffry Acaba from Youth LEAD talked about the persistent marginalisation experienced particularly by female domestic workers and young transgender girls. Kristina Mejo from the International Organization on Migration (IOM) highlighted how status, such as legal and social, can affect migrant children from accessing education with barriers they may face, such as language, cultural norms and even distance from school.

Anna-Karin explained how intersecting layers of disadvantage, such as being HIV-positive or being a member of an indigenous group, can further exacerbate migrant children’s situation. Chitraporn Vanaspong from the International Labour Organization (ILO) described how the rigid gender norms within families force girls out of school and put them at home either to take care of their younger siblings or to do housework, while some girls are forced into child labour.

The second round of the talk show focused on SRGBV with another dynamic set of panellists who talked about the different forms that SRGBV can take, and the targets of such violence. The discussion included ways that safety in schools can be guaranteed. Anna-Karin shared how EAP UNGEI has been working hard with partners to address SRGBV through relevant policies, to ensure that all children are able to access education in safe learning environments.

Alessandra Tranquilli from Plan International cited some findings of Plan’s research on SRGBV in five countries -- Pakistan, Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia and Vietnam. Among these findings were the observation that girls showed more equitable attitudes than boys, that all forms of SRGBV (verbal, physical and sexual) were highly prevalent across the countries studied, and that more than 50% of children in school feel unsafe due to acts of corporal punishment.

Justine Sass from UNESCO Bangkok triggered a discussion on how teachers can also be targets of SRGBV, though they are often not considered so because of stereotypical assumptions and
power dynamics. She also mentioned the challenges of collecting data on cases of GBV in and around school and elaborated on how young boys and girls become targets of SRGBV particularly if they do not conform to rigid gender norms, such as wearing particular clothing assigned to a specific sex. She mentioned a recent study on SRGBV, conducted by UNESCO, Plan International, and Mahidol University, where findings showed 6 out of 10 same-sex attracted transgender youth have been bullied in the past month, and 25% of youth were bullied if they were perceived to be same-sex attracted or were transgender.

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Addressing SRGBV requires a way of gauging whether schools are actually considered safe for students and teachers who might be targets of SRGBV. Prabhleen Tuteja from UNiTE Youth Network introduced the Safety Audit as a tool to monitor and ensure that schools are safe. It also provides a platform where marginalized groups, including young women and girls, can report cases as well as access specific support systems they need if they become victims of abuse or violence.

The panel discussion was capped off by Laisenia Raloka from the National Substance Abuse Advisory Council of the Ministry of Education in Fiji, who explained the importance of partnership between governments and civil society organizations to address SRGBV through a multi-level approach: from students refusing to tolerate violence, supportive schools with prevention and reporting mechanisms, to collaborative stakeholders outside of schools who can provide support to students in bringing an end to all violence, particularly gender-based violence.

In her concluding remarks, Justine Sass, speaking on behalf of Mr. Min Bista, Co-Chair of EAP UNGEI from UNESCO, zeroed in on the strong and inevitable linkages between marginalisation and SRGBV as interconnecting entities that challenge access to education for children and youth, particularly girls. She stressed that marginalised young people may be more vulnerable to SRGBV, and that SRGBV can lead to further marginalisation. Addressing these is not the responsibility of civil society or community based organizations alone, on the contrary paving the way towards empowerment is everybody’s responsibility, and ensuring safe spaces is an initial step towards ending gender-based violence in schools.

A recent publication of EAP UNGEI and UNESCO Bangkok called “School-Related Gender-Based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region,” which specifically looks at the causes, nature, manifestation, scale and the consequences of SRGBV in the region, was shared at the UNGEI side-event as were copies of an SRGBV infographic produced by UNGEI. The infographic is available in English, French, Spanish, Bahasa, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi, Khmer, Korean, Sinhala, Thai, Vietnamese. All materials are available on the UNGEI website.
EAP UNGEI Regional Forum on Gender Equality in Education

UNGEI and partner organizations held the Regional Forum for Gender Equality in Education on August 28th-29th, 2014, in Bangkok, Thailand. The forum was held back to back with the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee (GAC) meeting and addressed three key areas of UNGEI’s work: Gender equality in Education Sector Plans, Marginalisation in Education, and School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV). Key UNGEI partners’ discussions on the essential themes of gender equality in education sector plans, marginalisation, and SRGBV provided increased knowledge and awareness on these programme areas. The discussion energized efforts through the sharing of best practices and the brainstorming around work plan priorities, which resulted in concrete recommendations for 2015. More details can be found in the report here.
Reducing and Preventing School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) in Asia-Pacific

Karen Humphries-Waa, UNESCO Bangkok

For many children in Asia-Pacific, school is not a safe space for learning, but a place where they have to deal with threats of bullying, harassment, assault and even rape. While any child can be affected, girls in the region are particularly exposed to violence in, around, and on the way to school. Gender-based violence in schools is a violation of human rights that raises additional barriers to learning and can adversely affect the health of students. In extreme cases it can even drive young people to suicide. Studies also show that violence begets violence, perpetuating a vicious cycle that can last generations.

Innovative info-graphic launches campaign against school-related gender-based violence

To mark the International Day of the Girl Child, on the 11th October, the regional partners in UNGEI and the UNiTE campaigns launched a social media campaign to mobilise policy makers, the education sector and youth to address SRGBV. The principles of the campaign are captured in this infographic which explains SRGBV and how it threatens children’s futures.

UNGEI and UNiTE encourage the graphic to be shared widely to raise awareness of school-related violence, and to join the efforts to build communities where all children can pursue their fundamental rights to an education in a safe environment. The infographic is available in English, French, Spanish and other regional languages (Bahasa, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi, Khmer, Korean, Sinhala, Thai, Vietnamese).
Indonesia: Working together to address SRGBV

With support from UNGEI, UNESCO Jakarta recently hosted a groundbreaking stakeholder meeting to discuss SRGBV in Indonesia. Government officials joined with civil society to discuss the preliminary findings of a recent review “The Situation and Response Analysis on School-Related Gender Based Violence in Indonesia.” Participants included representatives from the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs, Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection, the National AIDS Commission local NGOs and UN Agencies.

![Government officials and the civil society joined together to discuss SRGBV in Indonesia at the Stakeholder meeting, which was hosted by UNESCO Jakarta with support of EAP UNGEI © UNESCO Jakarta](image)

The group considered how SRGBV affects outcomes in education, causes low self-esteem among students, impacts performance and attendance, and can lead to students dropping out. Participants discussed the nature and scope of SRGBV, its impact, existing policies, programming and implementation responses and ultimately what needs to be done to prevent and address SRGBV in Indonesia. Bullying on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation was also included as a form of gender-based violence. The stakeholders discussed the challenges to protecting a child’s right to education and to health. Key findings included acknowledgement that programmes tend to address violence in schools rather than gender-based violence specifically; and certain policies discriminate against people on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. The group agreed to meet regularly to drive an improved response to SRGBV. The next meeting, to be hosted by the WHO, will discuss inclusion of SRGBV in the Global School-Based Health Survey.

SRGBV Curriculum

UNGEI is also leading on a number of other exciting projects in the region to address SRGBV, including the development of a Curriculum Resource for use by schools to reduce and prevent SRGBV. This resource will target teachers and students in grades seven and eight (lower secondary school) and specifically address gender discrimination in education settings. To be released in early 2015 this resource will include provision for countries to contextualise examples and language to the local culture. In a country-specific project Dr. Fang Gang, the Director of the Institute of Sexuality and Gender Study at the Beijing Forestry University, is developing a toolkit for Chinese secondary school teachers, student unions and clubs, with the aim of eliminating SRGBV from Chinese secondary schools.
Announcements

EAP UNGEI Regional Gender Forum was held on August 28-29, 2014. EAP UNGEI brought together regional and global UNGEI members, donors, representatives from the governments, CSOs, NGOs, and experts for a Regional Forum on Gender Equality in Education. The aim of the Forum was to strengthen understanding of implementing policies and programmes for gender equality in education. By bringing together UNGEI members and partners on the essential themes of gender equality in education such as sector plans, marginalisation, and SRGBV, the RGF successfully increased knowledge and awareness on these programme areas. **China, Fiji, Indonesia, Micronesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor Leste** presented their work particularly around the issues of marginalisation and SRGBV. Towards the end of the forum, the participants carried out vibrant discussions on programmes, research, and advocacy, and made recommendations for the 2015 EAP UNGEI work plan. Please find the full report of the forum [here](#) for more details.

SRGBV Infographic released! On the occasion of the **International Day of the Girl Child**, observed on 11 October, concerned networks in Asia-Pacific called for action to address SRGBV in the region. Partners in the EAP UNGEI and the Secretary-General’s UNiTE to End Violence against Women (UNiTE) campaign supported the creation of the SRGBV infographics, encouraging the graphic to be shared widely to raise awareness of school-related violence, and to join efforts to build communities where all children can pursue their fundamental rights to an education in a safe environment. The [SRGBV infographic](#) is available in multiple languages including English, French, Spanish and other regional languages such as Burmese, Khmer, Hindi, Thai, and Vietnamese.

**Beijing +20 UNGEI Side Event.** On November 18, 2014, UNGEI organized a side-event at the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing +20 Review held in Bangkok, Thailand, where issues around marginalisation and SRGBV, particularly on the theme of “**From Marginalisation to Empowerment: the Role of Education**” were discussed. The side-event was carried out in a talk show style, where the experts and youth activists in the region asked a question to the audience, addressed their responses and presented their experiences and knowledge around the issue raised. A key point that was emphasized was that marginalisation and SRGBV are not separate issues, but are very interlinked, a child who experiences SRGBV can be further marginalised, and a marginalised child can also experience SRGBV.