



G7 Development & Education Ministerial Meeting

Recommendations of the W7
July 5, 2019

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Preamble

In 2000, 54% of the 378 million out-of-school children, adolescents and youth were female. By 2016, the female share of the global out-of-school population of 263 million had fallen to 50%. However, these global averages mask considerable gender disparities at regional and national levels, especially in least developed countries where the most marginalized girls, adolescent and young women and their communities are still not being reached.

Of the 63 million out-of-school children of primary school age, 34 million, or more than one-half, live in sub-Saharan Africa. Southern Asia has the second-highest number of out-of-school children with 10 million. Across sub-Saharan Africa, girls of every school-age group are more likely to be excluded from education than boys. For every 100 boys of primary school age out-of-school there are 123 girls denied the right to education¹.

Girls face multiple barriers to education especially as they reach adolescence. Multiple and cumulative disadvantages intersect, and impact their right to education:

- *Barriers related to social norms* such as unequal gender norms and stereotypes, child marriage & early pregnancy, but also disability, ethnicity, isolated rural areas,
 - *financial barriers* (school related fees for instance especially with the rise of non-regulated for profit education providers, which tends to exacerbate gender discrimination
 - *school related barriers* such as school related gender based violence (SRGBV), poor wash facilities, and gender bias mirrored in teachers pedagogy, curricula textbooks, lack of comprehensive sexuality education, etc.
- Knowing all mentioned barriers are exacerbated during conflicts and disasters, girls being 2.5 times more likely to be out of school in times of crises compared to boys.

The W7 welcomes the G7's education and development agenda and its prioritization of gender equality in and through education, as well as highlighting the importance of quality technical and vocational education and training, especially in sub-Saharan countries, to better fight inequality.

However, to achieve SDG 4 and 5 and fulfil the international promise of leaving no one behind, especially for most marginalized girls of LDCs, we ask for stronger political, technical and financial support from G7 countries.

Recommendations

1. **Ensuring quality inclusive education for all, including women's and girls, by eradicating inequalities in particular in countries of the Global South, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel, recognising that girls and young women are often the most marginalized and excluded group in the world.**

In line with the 2030 Agenda, we ask the G7 to monitor and reporting, on progress towards SDG4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.5 and to ensure the global commitment of leaving no one behind is a guiding principle of all national and international education policies, with a focus on least developed countries², especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel.

¹ <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs48-one-five-children-adolescents-youth-out-school-2018-en.pdf>

- This acknowledges that in order for education to be gender-responsive and transformative, collaboration and **coordination with and across other sectors is critical**, e.g. in terms of access to water and sanitation, health, social protection, child protection, and justice. Moreover, it is important to **adopt a multi-stakeholder approach**, including donors, governments, CSOs, in particular women- and girls- led organisations, at local, national and international levels, within the education sector.
- Inclusive education should entail **targeted interventions to support girls' access and retention to education**, including in times of crisis, as girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school in times of crises compared to boys. Countries should invest in prevention and protection initiatives meant to ensure a **safe learning environment** for all children, on their way to school as well as within the school, including for all G7 countries to adopt and support partner countries in endorsing and implementing the Safe School Declaration³ in conflict affected areas.
- We encourage that particular attention be placed on **data reliability, availability and sharing** (disaggregated by age, gender, socio economic status, and disability), for example, through an open data platform.

2. Ensuring a gender transformative education to improve learning outcomes and ensure the socio-economic empowerment of both boys and girls, firstly in least developed sub-saharan countries, including Sahel countries

We ask the G7 to set the example and to promote a holistic and gender transformative approach of education, including tackle the discriminatory gender norms, attitudes, behaviours and stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequality.

This includes providing technical and financial support to partner states wishing to implement a sectoral education plan (ESP) promoting gender equality, in line with UNGEI / GPE guidelines, keeping with the country-ownership principle. This support should be brought in priority to least developed sub-Saharan countries, including Sahel countries. Gender responsive plans should include budgets, action plans, data and M&E strategies and be built amongst key actors (civil societies, including children and youth led organizations, and line Ministries).

This entails addressing specific multiple and intersecting barriers girls and young women face to accessing and completing of education through the implementation of solutions such as:

- increasing community support for quality girls' education;
- taking action to prevent child and early marriage and early pregnancy;
- supporting initiatives that end violence in and through formal and non-formal education;
- providing gender-friendly, safe and protective learning environments (i.e. temporary learning spaces, accelerated education for girls and boys affected by crises);
- promoting and delivering gender-sensitive pedagogy, teaching materials, and classroom activities supported by gender-responsive textbooks;
- investing in gender responsive foundational, life⁴ and employability skills, including girls' education and training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, in digital computing technologies, and in information and communication technology;
- training for teachers and other educational staff;
- and delivering comprehensive sexuality education as a critical lever to girls' and women's empowerment; hence it allows them to make their own choices, avoid unwanted pregnancies and STIs and efficiently fight gender based violence.

² https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/ldc_list.pdf

³ www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/safe_schools_declaration-final.pdf

3. Increasing funding to deliver free basic quality gender responsive education in countries of the Global South, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel.

We ask the G7 to publicly commit to allocate 15%⁵ of their total official development assistance budgets and at least 4% of their humanitarian aid to the education sector, refraining from directing aid to profit making schools and prioritising free, quality and inclusive public basic education systems that can transform gender relations, from early childhood, through multi-year flexible funding to strengthen the humanitarian and development nexus, and to support greater domestic resource mobilisation.

Greater financial efforts should be put in particular in free basic quality gender responsive education in Sahel countries. Gender equality and in particular gender transformative basic education should be recognized as a priority of the Sahel Alliance and benefit from more ambitious investments.

4. Promoting the central role of education in achieving SDG 5 and other SDGs.

Education is key to the achievement of other rights and development in general. For instance, one additional school year can increase a woman's earnings by 10% to 20% (WB, 2002).

If all women had completed their primary education, maternal mortality rate would drop from 210 to 71 cases per 100 000 live birth, i.e. a 66% reduction⁶.

This includes build on and be accountable on the following commitments:

- Explicit recognition of the link between access to education and access to health, particularly for early childhood development, and access to sexual and reproductive rights in development aid policies including in the framework of the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's** conference to be hosted by France in 2019.
- To publish a timely, transparent and independent monitoring and reporting on progress towards the **political and financial commitments of the 2018 G7 Charlevoix and Whistler Declarations** in order to unlock the power of adolescent girls for sustainable development in developing countries, including fragile and crisis-affected countries.

⁴ Life skills (sometimes referred as 'soft skills' or 'transferable skills') includes skills such as confidence building, critical thinking, problem solving, team working, communication, willing to learn more skills, digital skills and financial literacy.

⁵ According to UNESCO, aid to education should be multiplied by 6 to achieve the targets of SDG 4 - in 2016, it represented only 7.6% of total development aid compared with 10% in 2009 - and it did not target the priority needs of the most vulnerable populations with only 24% of this aid being allocated to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa in 2016. The share of humanitarian aid allocated to education, was only 2.1% in 2017.

Note

The Women 7 (W7) constituency brings together civil society organisations from the G7 countries and developing countries invested in women's and girls' rights. Its mission is to ensure that concrete commitments in favour of gender equality are taken throughout the whole G7 process.

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⁶ "Sustainable development begins with education", UNESCO, Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2014

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**Time passes by, inequalities remain.
Le temps passe, les inégalités persistent.**