



IFUW Update – 31 December 2014

International News Round-Up 2014: The Year in Review



January

“Why women make the best tech investments” (World Economic Forum Blog, 20 January 2014)

When women are able to earn an income, they typically reinvest 90% of it back into their families and communities. For every year a girl stays in school, her future earnings will increase exponentially. The Council on Foreign Relations finds that one additional year of primary education alone can increase a girl's future wages by 10-20%, while an extra year of secondary school adds another 15-25%. But, we mustn't only be educating girls in basic literacy. We should be preparing them for the jobs of the future, particularly in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) sectors. Read [more](#).

February

“Report Stresses Need for Bold Moves toward Gender Equality at Work” (The World Bank, 20 February 2014)

A new report by the World Bank Group, [Gender at Work](#), stressed the need for bold, coordinated actions to advance equal opportunities for women in the world of work, such as addressing gender biases early, expanding women's access to property and finance, and raising legal retirement ages—with major payoffs in tackling poverty. By virtually every global measure, women are more economically excluded than men, according to *Gender at Work*. Trends suggest women's labour force participation worldwide over the last two decades has stagnated, dropping from 57% to 55% globally. Read [more](#).

March

“Ahead of International Women's Day, UN asks men to ‘stand up and deliver’ on human rights for all” (UN News Centre, 7 March 2014)

On the eve of International Women's Day, the United Nations launched the [“He for She”](#) campaign urging men to stand up for the rights of their mothers, sisters and daughters, while top UN officials stressed that human rights for girls and women are not a dream but a duty of all. Read [more](#). IFUW issued a [press release](#) on International Women's Day, urging States to commit to a standalone goal for secondary education, literacy and numeracy for girls and women in the post-2015 agenda.

April

“Terrorists kidnap more than 200 Nigerian girls” (USA Today, 21 April 2014)

The radical Islamist group *Boko Haram* kidnapped as many as 234 girls from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, north-eastern Nigeria on 14 April. Boko Haram, meaning “Western education is sinful”, opposes the education of girls. Read [more](#). IFUW issued a [press release](#) and joined the [“Bring Back Our Girls”](#) campaign, condemning the kidnapping and demanding the immediate release of all of the

girls. Safe access to secondary education is indispensable; girls should under no circumstances be treated as objects for political or sectarian purposes.

May

“Why India's sanitation crisis kills women” (BBC News India, 30 May 2014)

The murder of two Indian teenage girls, who were raped and hanged after going to use the toilet in a field proves how women have become the biggest victims of India's sanitation crisis. Nearly half-a-billion Indians - or 48% of the population - lack access to basic sanitation and must resort to using the toilet in the open. Several studies have shown that women without toilets at home are vulnerable to sexual violence when travelling to and from public facilities or open fields. Read [more](#). IFUW [emphasises](#) the critical necessity that all schools provide gender-segregated sanitation facilities to reduce the risk of violence and sexual harassment– a significant barrier to access education for female students.

June

“New push to get girls into computer sciences” (The Associated Press, 19 June 2014)

Google launched a campaign called "Made with Code" to inspire interest amongst girls to become more involved in technology and computer science. The initiative's [website](#) features female role-model “techies” who write software to design cool fabrics or choreograph dances, as well as providing a directory of coding programmes for girls. Google is also offering \$50 million in grants and partnering with [Girls Who Code](#), a non-profit launched in 2012 that runs summer coding institutes for girls. Read [more](#).

July

“FGM summit: Cameron calls for end ‘in this generation’ ” (BBC World News, 22 July 2014)

The Girl Summit, hosted by the British government in partnership with UNICEF, saw world leaders, human rights activists and campaigners convene to call for the end of child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). 130 million girls have undergone FGM, with a further 30 million at risk in the coming years. Meanwhile, 250 million girls have been married before the age of 15 (source: UNICEF). Read [more](#). IFUW sees both [child marriage](#) and [FGM](#) as significant barriers to accessing education for girls and women, and calls on all states to commit to implementing legislation to combat and end the practices.

August

“First female winner for Fields maths medal” (BBC News, 12 August 2014)

Professor Maryam Mirzakhani became the first female ever to receive the Fields Medal in mathematics. The hope is that more girls and women will be inspired to enter mathematics, where despite being considered a “male preserve”, the discipline has nonetheless benefitted from the contributions of women mathematicians for centuries. Read [more](#). IFUW took the opportunity to write to Professor Mirzakhani to congratulate her on the monumental award and to commend her on the academic contribution she has made to the field of mathematics.

September

“Hillary Clinton Gets A+ For New Program To Get 14 Million Girls In School” (Huffington Post, 24 September 2014)

Hilary Clinton announced a \$600 million USD global initiative to get girls into secondary school, which aims to improve the quality, safety and security at schools around the world. The initiative known as CHARGE - the Collaborative for Harnessing Ambition and Resources for Girls' Education – is a joint endeavour convened by the “[No Ceilings](#)” initiative at the Clinton Foundation and the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at the [Brookings Institution](#). Read [more](#). IFUW has since become a new joiner of CHARGE, joining over 30 other global partners united to improve the educational prospects for over 14 million girls over five years. Read IFUW's commitments to CHARGE [here](#).

October

“2095: The Year of Gender Equality at Work, Maybe” (World Economic Forum Blog, 28 October 2014)

According to the [Global Gender Gap Report 2014](#) prepared by the World Economic Forum, it may take until 2095 – a further 81 years – before the gender gap is closed completely. Despite certain progress being made in closing the gender gap, worrying trends have nonetheless arisen where certain countries

have seen the gap increase across certain sectors: “nearly 30% of countries have wider education gaps than in 2006, and 40% of countries have wider health and survival gaps”. Read [more](#).

November

“United Nations members resolve to end child marriage” (Reuters, 21 November 2014)

The United Nations agreed on 21 November that all members should pass and enforce laws banning child marriages, resolving to end a practice that affects about 15 million girls every year. Amongst the 118 countries that sponsored the resolution were Mali, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic, which are among the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage. Read [more](#).

December

“Beijing+20: Review of progress underway” (UN Women, 15 December 2014)

In the lead-up to the 20th anniversary of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), representatives from Member States and civil society are gathering to assess the progress and challenges in implementing this landmark blueprint for women’s rights since its adoption in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Member States have recommitted themselves to Beijing at national-level reviews, held with the support of UN Women, which feed into regional-level assessments by the five UN regional commissions. The outcomes of these meetings will be presented at the fifty-ninth Commission on the Status of Women ([CSW59](#)) in March 2015, where IFUW will participate. Read IFUW’s report on NGO CSW Geneva Forum: Beijing + 20 Review [here](#).



Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. IFUW is in special consultative status with ECOSOC and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO.

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