

## Post-2015 global education goals

### The Issue

To build on the progress made towards achieving universal primary education, as identified in the [Millennium Development Goals](#), the next step must be to turn the spotlight on secondary, tertiary and continuing education. There are currently 34 million adolescent girls out of school, which has grave consequences for their development and future prospects.<sup>1</sup> In economic terms, an extra year of secondary school increases women's wages by 15-25%.<sup>2</sup> Two-thirds of the 774 million illiterate people in the world are female,<sup>3</sup> while the global literacy rate for women with disabilities is just one per cent.<sup>4</sup> Girls of secondary school age are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, violence and gender-based stereotypes, which can compromise their completion of second level education. Before the issue can be effectively tackled and change implemented, it is necessary to identify the causes of the persistent inequalities and disparities between male and female post-primary education.

### Barriers to Access

Several factors greatly restrict or even prevent access to secondary education for girls. These include:

- Early and forced marriage (child marriage)
- Living in conflict zones including those displaced or living in refugee camps
- Threat of physical and sexual violence, bullying or harassment, while travelling to or from school or while on school premises
- A lack of suitable and safe sanitation facilities for adolescent girls
- Belonging to a minority or indigenous group, including rural girls, girls with disabilities and girls living in extreme poverty
- A shortage of female teachers or female-only schools in places where sex-segregation is required for girls to attend schools
- Cultural prejudice regarding the role of women in society, which requires girls and women to undertake domestic duties and caregiving; this may also arise in situations of family poverty where girls are prematurely withdrawn from education to care for siblings and the home
- A need to travel significant distances to reach secondary school, particularly in rural and indigenous areas
- Curriculum which does not meet the specific linguistic or other needs for girls from certain vulnerable groups, including ethnic and indigenous minorities
- Disabled girls face multiple barriers to education. Facilities and teaching methods may not be properly adapted to address the specific needs of the students
- Teenage pregnancy can discourage young women from continuing or completing education, where social stigma or school policy can inhibit the possibilities to attend secondary school.

### GWI's position

Educated girls and women are an integral part of the solution to all post-2015 development challenges. A long-term vision, political courage, legislation, and a commitment of economic resources are needed for all States to provide quality secondary education for all of their adolescent girls.

In order to address the main barriers to girls' education, GWI urges states to:

- 1. Recognise and respect that everyone has the right to education.**

GWI recommendation:

<sup>1</sup> "Girls' education- the facts", EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Fact Sheet, October 2013

<sup>2</sup> Policy Recommendations for the Sustainable Development Goals Open Working Group - Eighth Session, 3-7 February 2014

<sup>3</sup> "Girls' education- the facts", EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Fact Sheet, October 2013

<sup>4</sup> "Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities" United Nations Enable, available at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=33&pid=18>



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# Policy Position

- All states should sign and ratify relevant human rights treaties including: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education
- An explicit requirement of inclusiveness and non-discrimination in education should be included in the post-2015 education goals.

## **2. Commit to a standalone goal in the Post-2015 Agenda for gender equality in education.**

### GWI recommendation:

- Compile sex and age disaggregated data on all post-2015 education goals and targets
- National and international literacy campaigns should be launched, especially focused at girls and women from vulnerable groups.

## **3. Emphasise quality.**

### GWI recommendation:

- Ensure all school curricula complies with quality standards in education as identified in the [report](#) of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, and includes the [seven domains of learning](#) as identified by the Brookings Institute
- Develop modern, gender-neutral curricula
- Incorporate human rights education and sexual health education as integral parts of curricula
- Include all stakeholders in curriculum development and delivery of education, including parents, communities, teachers and the private sector
- End gender-stereotyping and streaming of girls and women into certain fields; promote education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for girls, as well other non-traditional fields of knowledge.

## **4. Ensure safety in girls' access to education.**

### GWI recommendation:

- Ensure that school premises are safe environments; provide safe transport to and from school; build safe and private toilets and hygiene facilities for girl students
- Strengthen national legislation on the right of girls and women to secondary, tertiary, continuing and non-traditional education
- Adopt and implement national legislation to combat early and forced marriage
- Support pregnant teenage girls to stay in school and to return to school without prejudice, exclusion or stigma against them.

## **5. Recognise that a basic education should extend to secondary education.**

### GWI recommendation:

- Institute universal free secondary education for all girls and boys.

## **6. Invest in teachers.**

### GWI recommendation:

- Commit to spending *at least* six per cent of national GNP and 20% of national budget on education, as recommended by UNESCO<sup>5</sup>
- Commit to teacher recruitment and training to meet a looming global shortfall; provide teachers with competitive salaries
- Appropriately train teachers for indigenous, disabled, and linguistic minorities and other vulnerable or marginalised groups.

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<sup>5</sup> Education for All Global Monitoring Report "Policy Paper 12: Increasing tax revenues to bridge the education financing gap" UNESCO, March 2014.