



Graduate Women  
International (GWI)

# Press Release

## **On World Teachers Day 2016, GWI calls for greater empowerment for teachers in order to achieve progress on inclusive, quality education for all**

Geneva, Switzerland, 5 October 2016 – on World Teachers Day 2016, [Graduate Women International](#) (GWI) calls for greater empowerment of teachers as a critical step towards the achievement of quality education. Teachers are indisputably an influential and powerful force for equity, access and quality in education. Yet frequently they face formidable barriers in the teaching context. Low or lack of remuneration, overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms, sexual harassment or abuse, and a lack of respect from school leaders and community members all contribute to difficult working conditions that are experienced globally by teachers.

Struggling with low salaries and status, a recent survey of 21 countries by the [Varkey Foundation](#) found that only in China were teachers considered to have equal status with doctors. According to the [United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation](#), (UNESCO), 1.6 million teachers are missing in secondary classrooms, preventing 250 million children from accessing and attaining secondary and lifelong education, the majority being girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, only [31% of secondary teachers are women](#); in this region there is a strong correlation between female teachers and increased girls' participation, retention and success in schooling. Empowering girls and women through education up to the highest levels depends on teachers being deployed and professionally equipped to do so. GWI directly addresses the shortfall of women teachers through the [Teachers for Rural Futures](#) project in Uganda, which supports girls to train as secondary school teachers and return to their rural communities as qualified teachers and ambassadors for girls' education.

With the challenges facing teachers, GWI wishes to emphasise the importance of investment into Goal 4 of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and specifically Target 4c: *'By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers...'*. Since teachers are the single most influential and powerful factor in educating both girls and boys, gender parity in their recruitment and appointment is essential. To attract and retain qualified women teachers their environment must be safe and remuneration gender-equal and in line with inflation. Provision of ongoing relevant and effective professional development opportunities, including ICT skills and training, are key in teacher motivation and confidence.

GWI President Geeta Desai states: "GWI fully supports the 2016 World Teachers Day theme of 'Valuing teachers, improving their Status'. GWI together with its international membership addresses the challenges facing women teachers, taking direct action through advocacy at international and national level, and at community level with our projects. GWI calls on policy makers and States to show their commitment to quality education by investing in and supporting teachers."

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international nongovernmental organisation (NGO) based in Geneva, Switzerland, with a presence in over 80 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training



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up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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