



Press Release

Graduate Women International (GWI) appeals to governments, legislators, civil society, and individual citizens to mobilise for every person's right to a quality education

Geneva, Switzerland, December 10, 2016 -- On this Human Rights Day, Graduate Women International (GWI) advocates for each person's fundamental right to education and notes that education through secondary school should be compulsory for all boys and girls. In accordance with Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights, all children are born with the right to education, regardless of their sex, race, religion, or any other defining characteristic. The theme of this year's Human Rights Day is "Stand Up for Someone's Rights Today!". Human rights belong equally to everyone; therefore, people must speak up for those whose rights are at risk. GWI takes a stand to increase access to education on behalf of all children who are at a disadvantage.

To achieve the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), immediate action improving access to education must be taken. Although strides were made, the world failed to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal elementary education. To avoid history from repeating itself, it is critical to substantially increase the number of qualified teachers, especially female teachers, in the world. Improving the quality of female teachers will encourage girls to feel comfortable at school, while also providing a positive role model. Rural areas often face the most challenges in accomplishing quality education because many girls lack the opportunity and option to attend school. GWI is working to combat this issue through the Teachers for Rural Futures project that is committed to helping 50 young women earn their college degrees and then return to their communities to be school teachers. GWI's investment in education is contributing to achieving SDG #4 and helping all children have equal access to a quality education.

GWI President Geeta Desai states, "Across the world, inequality exists within education and all basic human rights. It is critical for those in a position of power and influence to take initiative and make a difference. It is within GWI's mission to bring secondary education to all children, especially girls, who lack the opportunity. GWI expresses concern that children living in the poorest 20 percent of households are nearly four times more likely to not attend school than their richer peers.¹ To counteract this issue, GWI is working to advance education with a gendered human rights perspective."

Legal action, international cooperation and political will are all necessary to protect basic human rights and encourage education for all. The International Bill of Human Rights, comprised of [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are celebrated today for their stand for humanity.

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 60 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and

¹"Goal 4..Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform," UN News Center... Accessed November 08,2016, <http://sustainabledevelopment.org/sdg4>.



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empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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