



Press Release

Graduate Women International (GWI) appeals to governments to support girls' education as a fundamental human right and a means of promoting world peace

Geneva, Switzerland, 10 December 2017 – [Human Rights Day](#) marks the anniversary of the adoption of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (Declaration) in 1948, proclaimed as a common standard of achievement for all peoples of all nations. The Declaration historically established the protection of fundamental human rights irrespective of class, religion, nationality, or any other division. The day also concludes the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#), an annual campaign aimed to raise awareness for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

Article 3 of the Declaration guarantees the rights of life, liberty and personal security while Article 26 protects the right to a free, compulsory and accessible education. GWI recognizes safe access to a quality education as a fundamental human right and promotes the right to quality and safe education for 100 percent of women and girls worldwide as a means of fostering peace and security and the path forward towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). As GWI President Geeta Desai says, "Education and gender equality lies at the center of all efforts to promote tolerance and peace worldwide. Without the protection of education for women and girls as a fundamental human right, sustainable global development and world peace will remain out of our reach."

As contributors to universal peace, GWI continues its grassroots projects such as the [Bina Roy Partners in Development](#) program (generously funded by the [Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund](#)) aimed to advance the status of women and girls through lifelong learning. Leaving no one behind GWI remains committed to promoting education of rural, marginalized, disabled, and the older population of women. In rural settings, only [39 percent of girls](#) attend secondary school compared to 45 percent of boys. GWI encourages governments and communities to implement [non-traditional education](#) as a means of targeting girls in remote and rural areas, as well as community-based educational programs as a means of spreading awareness about the positive results achieved from allowing girls a proper education.

Although the focus on girls' education has improved over the past few years, a substantial amount of work remains to improve the lives of women girls and women through education. For every year of secondary school, the number of girls enrolled as compared to boys decreases by [8 percent](#). Out of the 115 million illiterate people aged 15 to 24 worldwide, [over 59 percent](#) are female. Globally and systematically, girls are denied the access to an education. Due to widespread poverty, gender-based violence and harmful or restrictive cultural norms and stereotypes, girls face many barriers in the effort to achieve a quality education. As a fundamental human right, it is imperative that these barriers are overcome, and that education is universally guaranteed.

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with 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 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.

-ends-

Learn about our [advocacy work](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter \(@GradWomen\)](#)

For more information please contact: Stacy Dry Lara, Executive Director, Graduate Women International
T: +41 22 731 23 80; Email: sdl@graduatewomen.org

Contributing to this press release is GWI intern Danielle Innocent from Boston University.