



# GWII Parallel Session

## A Holistic Approach to Education

### Wrap-up

By Louise McLeod, GWII Vice President Marketing

GWII has a vision where 100% of girls and women in the world have achieved quality education beyond primary school, recognising that completion of primary school is not of itself sufficient to prepare and equip girls and women with the skills and knowledge they need to realise their full personal, academic and professional potential.

Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion and peace giving attention to experiential learning, and places significance on "relationships and primary human values within the learning environment." Holistic education attempts to integrate **all ways of learning** that are available to us.

As you have heard our panelists discuss, a more inclusive approach to education is necessary especially for the most vulnerable female populations. Investing in education for girls and women through their life course, and indeed in every aspect of a woman's life, is critical to reducing inequality and stimulating development.

Both the holistic approach and the non-traditional learning approach to education lead to the acquisition of knowledge and skills through learning methods that extend beyond formal means, institutions and sectors.

Our panelists today discussed various approaches to providing a holistic experience to education and the empowerment of women and girls. To sum up:

**A supportive, enabling environment for women and girls in Rwanda provides access to finance and social protection, prioritizes girls' rights to education and increases the decision-making capabilities of women especially when it comes to political empowerment.**

The empowerment of women and girls needs to include the promotion of curriculum development in science and technology along with gender and empowerment policy development in the public service. Mentoring and support are also critical especially for refugee and displaced women and girls.

Women continue to face the challenges of digital inclusion in education and still face barriers to their access to ICTs that many countries are attempting to grapple with and eliminate.

The very fact of being a woman creates difficult situations in all aspects of life that are not readily understood by men. Sanitary dignity involves the necessity of having access to private sources of water



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and areas for personal sanitation along with access **to reusable sanitary** supplies and innovative use of organic forms of sanitary wear. These are of particular importance to girls who often are not able to attend school during their menstrual periods.

Barriers to holistic education for women and girls include equitable universal access to quality education, education in emergency/crisis settings and inclusive education.

Career gender stereotyping and socio-cultural norms that typecast men and women into different professions have resulted in a distinctive gender gap in certain sectors, where women are particularly under-represented especially in innovation-related industries.

It is necessary to provide an interdisciplinary, holistic approach to tackling human rights and education issues related to girls and women. And we can do this by:

. Creating, funding and implementing programmes that ensure women and girls can access quality education throughout their life span and from all available educational sources, whether formal or informal.

- Working to limit influence of cultural and traditional practices on girls' and women's right to education.
- Promoting equal opportunities and the realisation of human rights for all through providing training in basic human rights, including women's rights, and funding to support the realisation of those rights.
- Assisting access to education in those sectors of society where women and girls are most marginalised through natural disaster, war, genocide and post-conflict dislocation.

I would like to thank our panelists today for providing us with a most thought-provoking and informational session.