



Statement by Graduate Women International (GWI), in partnership  
with Girls Not Brides, on the Global Education Summit and Ending Child Marriage

16 July 2021

As the upcoming Global Education Summit approaches, and in the light of the devastating impact of COVID-19 on girls and their education around the world, Graduate Women International (GWI) and our National Federations and Associations (NFAs) are issue this statement to highlight the pressing need to raise the issue of child marriage and girls' education at the Summit and include strategies to address it in national education plans as a matter of priority.

As commitment to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.3 to Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, GWI recently published [Harmful Practices](#) as a guide to eliminate child marriage.

GWI whose global network advocates for the equal right for safe access to education and training up to the highest levels, we call on you as the Global Education Summit leaders to use their positions to:

- Speak about the link between girls' education and child marriage, and advocate for 12 years of free, quality education for all girls and boys, including married girls.
- Work across sectors to guarantee access to 12 years of quality gender-responsive education for all girls, including girls at risk of child marriage and married girls.
- Challenge the drivers of child marriage through the creation of safe and inclusive schools.
- Ensure girls at risk of child marriage and married girls can enjoy continued and safe access to quality education in crisis situations, including COVID-19.

In sum, child marriage not only disrupts a girl's education, but may put an end to it all together in turn perpetuating poverty, dependence, inequality, and insecurity that eventually becomes an obstacle to global development. Thus, as it is stipulated in GWI's resolution on Early and Forced Marriage as a Form of Human and Children's Rights Violations (2013, No. 1), child marriage must be brought to the forefront.

GWI urges you to show leadership on this issue by incorporating policies and budgeting to address child marriage into your government's education strategies, and to speak out about the importance of this at the Global Education Summit. The Global Partnership for Education has outlined education as a key driver in reducing child marriage: it has a target of averting two million child marriages by 2025 in its Case for Investment. To achieve this target and align with the SDG mission to leave no one behind, governments must consider the implications of child marriage on education in order to make sure ALL girls' have access to 12 years of safe, quality education.

We at GWI stand ready to work with you or your team to make sure that all girls can walk into schools, not down the aisle.

Yours sincerely,

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