



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On World Youth Skills Day, Graduate Women International urges States to “reimagine” how they think about education of future generations in the post-pandemic context, especially for women and girls.

Geneva, Switzerland, 15 July 2021 – World Youth Skills Day is an international Day of Observance, celebrated on 15 July each year, that sheds light on the necessity to equip youths aged 15-24 with appropriate tools to enter and flourish in the labour market. Concerningly, young people today are facing unfamiliar and multifaceted skills development challenges emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Graduate Women International (GWI) observes this year’s theme, *Reimagining Youth Skills Post-Pandemic*, by raising global awareness that forced schools and workplaces closures result in learning and training losses, especially for young women whose futures are consequently vulnerable in post-pandemic context.

With the COVID-19 pandemic causing a projected loss of 195 million jobs (International Labour Organisation (ILO)), GWI **urges** States to prioritize and commit to skills development for all youth, especially women and girls who are often overlooked as future successful professionals. ***This means transforming the way they think about education.*** Reimagining youth skills training necessitates a commitment to funding education, building infrastructure, and investing in quality teacher training. In a global economy heavily dependent upon digital technologies, ensuring digital access also requires genuine commitment by States.

“The link between gender inequality and access to digital technology has come to the foreground during the pandemic. Access to information for young women through digital technology will enable them to develop skills for critical thinking, autonomy, self-teaching in certain areas and to strengthen their dreams and ambitions”, said Terry Oudraad, GWI President. “Solutions must be in accordance with both present and future possibilities, and young people must be part of it”, she adds.

As highlighted in the GWI webinar, “NEET Effect in Changing Times!”, held on 12 June 2021, ILO experts reaffirmed that young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) are at risk of becoming socially excluded, and that we must take into account the gendered dimensions of NEET, which reveals how girls and women are particularly affected due to the proportion of domestic work.

About Graduate Women International (GWI): 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 nongovernmental organisation advocating for women’s rights, equality and empowerment through access to education beyond primary school and training up to the highest levels. GWI maintains special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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