GWI United Nation Representative

Advocacy Report

2024

GWI advocacy goals

- 100% of United Nations Member States commit to policy, legislation, budget and infrastructure to facilitate transition of girls from primary to secondary school and ensure gender parity and gender equality throughout secondary education by 2030.
- By 2030 100% of United Nations low-income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
- 100% of United Nations Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
- Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
- All 17 SDGs will include girls' education targets.

Please bear in mind these five overarching, long-term goals during any United Nations intervention that you make on behalf of GWI. Any intervention should push these five goals further.

NB: *Although these goals represent GWI's mission, UN Reps are also invited to promote GWI key messages on areas where especially relevant e.g., women in STEM, securing investment in women teachers, addressing barriers to girls' education such as child marriage.*

Financial Institutions and Infrastructure Perpetuating Poverty – Gender Bias in Economic Policy
3/18/24

Shaila Rao Mistry – GWI VP of Advocacy; Shoko Ishikawa – UN Women Deputy Director of PPID; Hana Brixi - World Bank Global Director for Gender and Manager of the Human Capital Project; Dr. Monique Newiak - International Monetary Fund Deputy Unit Chief of the Inclusion and Gender Unit

Ms. Ishikawa – UN Women
Challenges

1. Currently 10% of women globally live on less than $2.15 a day.
2. If progress continues to lag on achieving the SDGs, there will be 342 million women still living in extreme poverty in 2030.
3. Over half of women in developing countries see entrepreneurship as a path to overcoming poverty yet women owners of micro- and medium-sized enterprises face a $1.7 trillion financing gap.
4. Less than 1% of ODA goes to support women's rights organizations and movements.

Graduate Women International (GWI)

Recommendations

1. Institute progressive taxation, reform of the international corporate tax structure, and reduction in the high levels of debt distress that constrain developing countries from investing in essential social safety net spending for women's well-being.
2. A significant increase in long-term financing is needed to address women and girls' poverty.
3. Gender-responsive budgets must be established to build stronger, more equal, and resilient societies; such budgets would by their very nature include investment in care policies and infrastructure.
4. Regulatory frameworks are needed to encourage more equitable representation of women in the financial industry. This industry has long been male-dominated. For example, currently women account for only 18% of C-suite positions and only 11% of finance ministers and central bank governors.

Shaila Rao Mistry – GWI
Women are asking for:
1. Equitable access to loans and banking;
2. Elimination of discriminatory practices such as the 'pink tax' found in the US;
3. The recruitment, retention, and promotion of women to positions of leadership;
4. Use of AI to remove structural barriers faced by women;
5. Digital literacy and financial literacy training;
6. Expansion of the number of women entering tech fields; currently 90% of the coding and algorithms are created by men; and
7. Elimination of predatory practices and corrupt lenders.

Miss Hana Brixi – World Bank
Challenges & Recommendations:

1. Women and girls face significant structural, complex, and interconnected forms of discrimination, including legal and regulatory barriers. For example, women enjoy only 2/3 of the legal rights that men enjoy. In addition, they face biases in fiscal policies on both the revenue and expenditure side.
2. Violence and time poverty faced by women and girls continues to extract a significant cost to society.
3. Childcare remains a significant challenge. There is a void when it comes to care services and the care economy across countries. In addition, reliance on the unpaid care of women and girls continues to undermine the economic and social contributions they can make to their society.
4. Identification (ID) remains an issue although quite significant efforts and progress have been made in this area.
5. Innovative engagement is needed to change the mindsets of men, of husbands, of community leaders when it comes to accepting joint ownership by husband and wife of homes and land as something that is positive and acceptable.
6. The World Bank's Human Capital Index as it has been measured indicates that girls and young women outperform boys and young men not only in areas such as numbers of years in school and reading, but also in math and science. However, this has not translated into greater economic opportunities for women.
7. When meeting with Ministries of Finance the World Bank reiterates that gender equality is not only a human right; it also makes economic sense. There's a huge amount of human capital that is not utilized or not utilized

productively. Based on our calculations, income per capita would be 20% higher if women had the same economic opportunities as men.

8. WB has found Cash Plus programs beneficial – the woman of the household is sent a cash transfer in digital format and that is accompanied by an additional safety net component such as child care, digital training etc.

To summarize, a broad-based effort is needed to address the feminization of poverty at multiple levels: policy, law, institutional, and normative. Ministries of Finance must make gender an integral part of national budgets and financial policy if their countries are to prosper.

Dr. Monique Newaik – IMF The IMF's mandate is to look at development through a macroeconomic lens. A major question is how to integrate gender into macroeconomics such that countries as well as women prosper.
1. Analytics/data indicate that gender equity and economic development go hand in hand.
2. Countries who have prospered are those that have narrowed the gender gaps in the labor force by up to 6% over a couple of years.
3. Emerging and developing economies could more than offset the GDP issues brought on by COVID if they did more to support women's economic empowerment.
4. The IMF just put out a paper that states that without strong policy actions to close gender gaps such gaps may never close.
5. The IMF General Strategy (2022) for lending as well as development has 4 pillars: analytics, external collaboration, resourses, and governance. Analytics brings evidence to policymakers that not only is gender equality the right thing to achieve, it also makes sense in terms of investment
6. Among the variables the IMF measures are labor force participation gaps, how gender labor gaps impact GDP, the negative economic impact of child marriage, and quantifying the developmental impact of gender-based violence. In terms of the latter it has been brought to the attention of the Ministers of Finance and other policymakers that for each percentage point reduction in the incidence of gender-based violence by an intimate partner there is an increase in the long term of 8 to 9% more economic activity. These are huge numbers for countries emerging from low income status and a major source of development.
7. When implementing a policy or program we ask:

What people will be impa cted by this measure?

Who is the main beneficiary?

Who is the indirect beneficiary?

What products are being produced that will be likely have a market impact?

8. Finally, designing a financially inclusive strategy is so much more effective when you know where the financial services are missing for women or what the education statistics identify as gender gaps in each income segment of the population. By closing these gender gaps one can highlight human capital accumulation that leads to higher productivity.

Submitted by: Maureen Byrne, Ph.D.; April 5, 2024
United Nations (UN) Representative/NY; Graduate Women International (GWI)

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