



GWI United Nation Representative

Advocacy Report

2026

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.*

UNICEF & The Foundational Learning Skills (FLS) Module

More children are going to school than ever before – but many are still having difficulty mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is of particular concern in the early school years, as foundational skills set the stage for future learning.

UNICEF reported that despite good data on school attendance there is not enough comparable data on what students are actually learning – particularly across different countries and over time. To address this issue, UNICEF, in close collaboration with partners, has developed the Foundational Learning Skills (FLS) Module, a standardized tool to measure whether children have basic reading and math skills. The FLS Module is part of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), the world's largest source of comparable data on children and women.

A new resource hub (data.unicef.org) includes interactive tools, country data, analytical features, and dashboards that anyone can use to look at learning patterns, gain insights, and hopefully translate those insights into policy, research, and programmatic action.



Some of the insights gained to date include:

- The majority of Grade 3 students do not demonstrate foundational reading proficiency at the expected grade level. However, by the end of primary school and into lower-secondary school these students show steep gains.
- In many MICS countries outside of Africa the percentage of students with foundational reading skills starts higher but then plateaus.
- In terms of math skills, students start at a lower level and show more gradual progress across grades, suggesting mastery is a more severe and persistent challenge.
- Differences due to geography, wealth or other factors emerge early but can narrow over time (given the necessary policy implementation and resources).
- At each stage of the education cycle, those children coming from the poorest households are less likely to acquire foundational skills than those belonging to the richest households. In fact, across all regions and at all levels of schooling the percentage of children gaining mastery increases with household wealth.
- In MICS Africa countries, children from the poorest households finish primary school with reading levels comparable to where the richest children in other regions start.
- There are persistent structural disadvantages for the poorest children that cannot be attributed solely to classroom variation.
- The above suggests that leaving no child behind and delivering learning acceleration for all requires prioritizing children from the poorest households everywhere.

Submitted by:

Maureen E. Byrne, Ph.D.; UN Rep/NY; Graduate Women International (GWI)

Empowering women and girls through lifelong, quality education and training. GWI, formerly International Federation of University Women (IFUW), in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

