



UNITED NATIONS
TRANSFORMING
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SUMMIT 2022



Transforming Education Summit Leaders Day: Spotlight Session 5

Advancing gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education

Location: Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters, New York

Monday, 19 September 2022, 15:00 – 16:30 EST

Co-hosted by: Plan International, UNESCO, UNGEI Partnership and UNICEF

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

While progress has been made in recent decades, gender inequalities persist in education. Gains are also fragile as COVID-19, armed conflict, refugee and internal displacement, climate-induced disasters, and a growing backlash against gender equality and women's and girls' rights are reversing progress and widening inequalities in many contexts.

Are we fulfilling our promise to leave no one behind?

Without access to quality education, many children and youth, particularly girls, are unable to acquire the skills needed for life, work and leadership. Gender inequality, gender norms and stereotypes, and gender power imbalances also constrain girls' ability to apply the skills learned. Consider the following:

- Two out of three (67.5%) young people aged 15-24 who are not in employment, education or training are young women.¹
- Women account for 63% of all illiterate adults, a proportion unchanged in decades,² and new gender gaps are developing in digital literacy skills.³
- Women represent 26% of seats in parliament⁴ and – while the majority of teachers at most education levels – face a hard glass ceiling in education management and leadership positions.⁵

Boys in many countries are also failing to advance and complete their education. Boys are more likely than girls to repeat primary grades in 130 of 142 countries, indicating poor progression through school.⁶ In 73 countries, fewer boys than girls are enrolled in upper-secondary education, whereas in 48 countries, fewer girls are enrolled.⁷ In 2021, just over half of all children out of school were boys.⁸

Education can address gendered vulnerabilities like child marriage (one in five young women and one in 20 young men are married before the age of 18⁹), gender-based violence (15 million 15-19 year old girls have experienced forced sex¹⁰), early and unintended pregnancy (across the developing world, nearly 1 in 3 young women gave birth before age 19¹¹), and child labour (5-14 year old girls spend 160 million more hours every day on unpaid care work than boys of the same age,¹² and 1 in 10 children worldwide are engaged in child labour, 61% of whom are boys¹³).



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Education systems must make more explicit and active commitment to addressing the gender-based barriers, stigma and discrimination that hold learners back from fulfilling their right to education and future life, work and leadership opportunities. But action is also needed to harness education's power to unlock the potential of learners in all their diversity, end harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices, and transform institutions to achieve just, equal and inclusive societies.

PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

As the world gathers for a once-in-a-generation Summit on Transforming Education, the UN Secretary-General is galvanizing collective commitments and a renewed partnership for concrete transformative actions to advance gender equality in and through education. This spotlight session offers a space for a high-level dialogue among heads of state, leaders and key influencers to commit to accelerating progress on gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education.

More specifically, this Spotlight Session aims to advance gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education by:

- Sharing innovative catalytic and transformative actions undertaken through grassroots and national programmes to end harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices so that all learners can fulfil their right to education.
- Learning from world leaders and partners on the commitments they are making through the Transforming Education Summit to advance gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education.
- Calling on world leaders and partners to commit to advancing gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education, and to join a global platform to review progress towards gender equality and girls' education commitments annually – and to confront setbacks – to drive transformative leadership, accountability and action.

CALL TO ACTION

We need education systems that go beyond acknowledging and responding to gender disparities in participation and learning. We need education that transforms attitudes and practices and supports the realisation of gender equality. Without this, we will never meet our commitments to SDG 4 on inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning, and SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment.

This Spotlight Session of the Transforming Education Summit will launch a call to action (see **Annex**) to catalyze cooperation and transformative action to advance gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education. This call to action builds on the Action Track 1 paper on inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools,¹⁴ the Freetown Manifesto for Gender-Transformative Leadership in Education,¹⁵ related G7 and G20 declarations and communiqués,¹⁶ the Generation Equality Forum,¹⁷ and other normative frameworks and commitments made by governments around the world and their partners to girls' and women's education and gender equality.¹⁸

Like all Transforming Education flagships, the call to action will be promoted and championed in the coming months and followed up on and monitored under the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee, existing advisory bodies on girls' education and gender equality and a new Global Platform for Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment in and through Education.¹⁹



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Programme

| Monday 19 September 2022 | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 15.00-15.15 | <p>Welcome and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Maria Nguyen, SDG4Youth Network Representative, Co-lead TES Action Track 1 <p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UNESCO |
| 15.15-15.18 | <p>Video message</p> <p>Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians, SDG Advocate</p> |
| 15.18-15.25 | <p>Presentation of the Call to Action to advance gender equality and girls and women's empowerment in and through education</p> <p>Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director, UNICEF</p> |
| 15.25-16.25 | <p>Leaders panels</p> <p><i>Moderated session in two parts where leaders reflect on good practice and how they will advance commitments to gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education</i></p> <p>Leaders Panel 1: Leaving No One Behind</p> <p><i>Panel 1 will consider how we can fulfil our promise to address gender-based barriers, stigma and discrimination that hold learners back from fulfilling their right to education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President, Federal Republic of Nigeria H.E. Evelyn Wever-Croes, Prime Minister of Aruba, Kingdom of the Netherlands Ms. Malala Yousafzai, 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and UN Messenger of Peace to promote girls' education Ms. Laxmi Nepal, Founder, Access Planet Organization, Nepal, and Member of the Global Feminist Coalition for Gender-Transformative Education hosted by UNGEI Ms Mairo Mandara, Founder and Board Chair, Girl Child Concerns <p>Leaders Panel 2: Transforming attitudes, practices, systems and lives</p> <p><i>Panel 2 will consider how to realise gender equality in and through education by transforming attitudes, practices and education systems – and the lives and futures of learners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Pap Ndiaye, Minister of National Education and Youth, France Ms. Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS Ms. Mariel Reyes Milk, Founder and CEO, Reprograma, Brazil, Laureate 2021 UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education Ms. Mari Pangestu, Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank Ms. Alexandra Palt, CEO, Fondation L'Oréal, Chief Corporate Responsibility Officer, L'Oréal Group <p>Moderated by: Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, CEO, Lego Foundation</p> |
| 16.25-16.30 | <p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Executive Director of UN Women</p> |



REFERENCES

- ¹ International Labour Organization (ILO). 2021. [Young people not in employment, education or training](#). Technical brief 3. ILO/SIDA Partnership on Employment. Geneva, ILO.
- ² UNESCO. 2022. [Global Education Monitoring Report 2022: Gender Report. Deepening the debate on those still left behind](#). Paris, UNESCO. Most recent data from 2020.
- ³ UNESCO. 2020. [Global Education Monitoring Report 2022: Gender Report. A new generation: 25 years of efforts for gender equality in education](#). Paris, UNESCO, pp. 20-21. For example, among 10 low- and middle-income countries with data, women are less likely to have used a basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet in the 7 poorest countries, while parity exists in the 3 richest countries.
- ⁴ International Parliamentary Union. [IPU Parline: Global data on national parliaments](#). Data as of 1st July 2022.
- ⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). [UIS.Stat website](#). In 2020 (most recent year), globally, women represented 94% of teachers in pre-primary, 67% in primary, 55% in secondary and 43% in tertiary education in 2018.
- ⁶ UNESCO. 2022. [Leave no child behind: Global report on boys' disengagement from education](#). Paris, UNESCO.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ UNESCO and UIS. 2022. [New estimation confirms out-of-school population is growing in sub-Saharan Africa](#). Factsheet 62 / Policy Paper 48 Paris, UNESCO and Montreal, UIS. It is estimated that 244 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 were out of school in 2021. This includes 119 million girls and 126 million boys. Boys represent 51.6% of the total.
- ⁹ UNICEF. 2019. [Global Programme to End Child Marriage](#). New York, UNICEF.
- ¹⁰ UN Women. 2021. [Facts and figures: Prevalence of violence against women and girls](#). New York, UN Women.
- ¹¹ UNFPA. 2022. [State of the World's Population 2022. Seeing the unseen. The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy](#). New York, UNFPA, p. 30. Young women are defined as women aged 20-24.
- ¹² UNICEF. 2022. [Gender norms and unpaid work](#). New York, UNICEF.
- ¹³ International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2021. [Child labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward](#). Geneva, ILO and New York, UNICEF.
- ¹⁴ The Thematic Action Track 1 paper on [Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools](#), including a sub-thematic paper on gender-transformative education, was developed through a multi-stakeholder process involving over 200 representatives from governments, civil society donors, policymakers, civil society groups, young people, teachers' networks, education advocates, academia, the private sector and philanthropies.
- ¹⁵ The [Freetown Manifesto for Gender-Transformative Leadership in Education](#) was developed by 13 African Ministries of Education with inputs from civil society and multilateral organizations like UNGEI, UNICEF, UNESCO and the Global Partnership for Education.
- ¹⁶ This includes the G7's 2018 [Charlevoix Declaration](#), the G7's 2019 [Gender at the Center Initiative](#), the [G7 2021 Communiqué](#) (particularly paragraphs 66-75); and the G7's 2022, [Development Ministers' Communiqué](#) (paragraph 23), as well as the G20's: [2021 Ministerial Declaration](#), and the [2020 Education Ministers' Communiqué](#).
- ¹⁷ The Generation Equality Forum launched in 2021 a 5-year [Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality](#) designed by six Action Coalitions that identified critical actions required to achieve gender equality in areas from gender-based violence and technology to economic and climate justice.
- ¹⁸ This includes: the [Safe Schools Declaration](#); the [Safe to Learn Call to Action](#) developed by the Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children; commitments made through the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and the resulting [School Meals Coalition](#); and other resolutions.
- ¹⁹ This Platform will be launched during the Transforming Education Summit to convene governments, donors, partners and civil society to monitor progress against the Summit and other commitments, highlight gaps in progress at the country level, and encourage transformative action on girls' education and gender equality in and through education.