



Call to Action

Advancing 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,ⁱ the Freetown Manifesto for Gender-Transformative Leadership in Education,ⁱⁱ related G7 and G20 declarations and communiqués,ⁱⁱⁱ the Generation Equality Forum,^{iv} and other normative frameworks and commitments made by governments and partners to girls' and women's education and gender equality.^v

Like all Transforming Education flagships, it 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 in and through education and a new Global Platform for Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment in and through Education.^{vi}

We call on all to advance gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education by taking action in the following areas:

Governments at national and sub-national levels shall:

- Put gender equality at the heart of education sector plans, budgets and policies, identifying gender disparities and their underlying factors from the early years and beyond, and including and increasing budgets, strategies and commitments that transform harmful gender norms in pedagogy, build the institutional and human capacity of education sector staff, and advance other context-specific priorities.
- Ensure gender parity and non-discrimination at all levels and in all subjects of education, and in teaching, education and ministerial leadership positions. This includes supporting women teachers with fair and equal compensation, safe housing, transport and other resources needed to work in remote areas, and other efforts to break the glass ceiling in educational leadership and administration.
- Remove gender bias and stereotypes from curricula, teaching and learning materials and ensure all teachers and learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to examine, challenge and change harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices, unequal power relations, gender discrimination and wider intersecting inequalities. This includes early learning materials, as evidence shows that gender stereotypes and norms are understood and embedded in children as young as two years of age.



- Ensure safe, gender-transformative and inclusive learning spaces, including school-based water, sanitation and menstrual hygiene management facilities, education programmes and mechanisms to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence, and comprehensive sexuality education. Address immediate needs in the context of COVID-19 and the global hunger crisis, and take medium-term efforts, particularly in emergency and crisis contexts where vulnerabilities are most pronounced.
- Transform data systems to better collect and understand the intersections between gender and other intersecting characteristics such as minority status or disability that intersect and lead to marginalization, inequality and learning poverty, and use data to take targeted action to leave no one behind. This includes citizen-inclusive data from households on out-of-school children, and action to address the intersectional gendered norms and expectations that lead to exclusion.
- Support coordinated, cross-sectoral, intersectional and intergenerational collaboration across Ministries, civil society, grassroots youth organizations and other actors working on education, health, nutrition, gender, protection, youth, employment, economic, social and climate justice to safeguard rights and promote equal educational pathways, formal sector employment and related outcomes.
- Invest in focused interventions that support marginalized girls' access to 12 years of safe and quality education as one of the most cost-effective and impactful social and economic investments possible. Engage boys and men in efforts to challenge gender inequality and gender norms and stereotypes, and address boys' disengagement from education.
- Systematically and meaningfully integrate children and young people in consultations and decision-making aimed at advancing gender-transformative education, applying targeted measures to ensure participation of the poorest and most marginalized.

The international community shall:

Bilateral and private sector donors, international finance institutions, and foundations:

- Finance the implementation of equitable, effective and evidence-based responses that aim to close gender disparities in all aspects and all levels of education, promote women's leadership, and change harmful gender norms, attitudes and practices.
- Integrate gender-responsiveness into public expenditure monitoring to identify the effects of education spending on girls and boys, reorient spending to redress imbalances and restructure expenditures to promote gender equality.
- Fund and partner with feminist global regional and grassroots organizations and young activists to organize, collaborate and collectively advocate to governments and multilateral organizations to ensure gender-transformative approaches in and through education.



United Nations and other multilateral organizations:

- Ensure evidence-based monitoring of progress towards national, regional and global benchmarks built on accountability, national ownership, participation and transparency, within the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee, the Global Platform for Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment in and through Education and other established mechanisms.
- Expand capacity development, strategic guidance, gender-transformative leadership, knowledge sharing and monitoring of efforts to advance gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education with the meaningful engagement of gender and rights experts, children and youth.
- Support countries to increase the availability and use of disaggregated data, gender assessments, gender budgeting and other means to inform planning, costing and implementation.

Broader development community including civil society, young people and academia

- With national and global gender and rights experts, build a knowledge base on core components of gender-transformative approaches and how to make education institutions gender equal.
- Civil society organizations increase internal capacity and expertise, and financial resources in order to embed gender equality in education strategies, programmes and initiatives.
- Prioritize localized agendas and build networks and alliances that centre initiatives and efforts coming from grassroots organization and movements addressing gender inequality and girls' and women's rights in and through education.

Endnotes

ⁱ 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.

ⁱⁱ 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 GPE.

ⁱⁱⁱ 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](#).

^{iv} 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.

^v 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

^{vi} 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.