EGMUN 2018

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**Committee:** Commission on the Status of Women

**Topics**:

1. The question of ensuring access to education for all women and girls in all member nations

Official Report Regarding Status of Women

Women and girls in developing countries are often denied opportunities for education. Lack of education limits prospects, decreases family income, reduces health, puts women and girls at risk of trafficking and exploitation, and limits the economic advancement of entire countries. Girls’ education is a strategic development priority. Better educated women tend to be healthier, participate more in the formal labour market, earn higher incomes and marry at a later age. All these factors combined can help lift households, communities, and nations out of poverty.

Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community. In the poorest countries of the world, 50% of girls do not attend secondary school. However, research shows that every extra year of school for girls increases their lifetime income by 15%. Improving female education, and thus the earning potential of women, improves the standard of living for their own children, as women invest more of their income in their families than men do.Yet, many barriers to education for girls remain.

**Present situation regarding the Status of Women**

Girls face barriers to education caused by poverty, cultural norms and practices, poor infrastructure, violence, and fragility. Poverty continuously remains the most important factor for determining whether a girl can access an education. In many countries, fewer girls than boys graduate from secondary school, and at the universities women are underrepresented in engineering, manufacturing, construction and the sciences. This contributes to subsequent gender differences in the areas of employment, productivity and income.

It is important to address the ongoing problem with lack of access to education for women in mainly developing countries. According to UNESCO, 130 million girls between the age of 6 and 17 are out of school and 15 million girls of primary-school age will never receive any schooling. Education gives girls the potential to earn better wages, raise healthier and more educated children, and have a voice in her community. An extra year of primary school education boosts girls’ eventual wages by 10%–20%. An extra year of secondary school adds 15%–25%.

Low educational attainment for girls is associated with higher rates of fertility and population growth. This in turn reduces levels of human capital wealth per person, especially in low income countries that have high population growth. E.g. As girls in the developing world receive seven years of education, they marry four years later than anticipated and has 2.2 fewer children.

Studies by United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) shows low educational attainment for girls can have pervasive potential impacts ranging from lower earnings and standards of living to lower psychological well-being and agency for girls and women. Possibly in part because educational investments at the secondary level provide an option value to continue investing to acquire further skills later in life, the benefits from education are much larger at the secondary than at the primary level. Countries need to ensure all girls can go to school and acquire foundational cognitive and socio-emotional skills while in school. While the public and private cost of providing universal quality primary and secondary education for all girls could be far from negligible, the potential returns to this investment could be much larger. Increasing investments in girls’ education in return effects the economy positively as it can lead to reduced poverty, greater political participation, increased agency and assertion of their rights at the household and community levels.

Organisations such as the World Bank Group (WBG) has joined with governments, civil society organizations, multilateral organization, the private sector, and donors to advance multi-sectoral approaches to overcome these challenges. Working together with girls and women, the WBG focus includes:

* Providing conditional cash transfers and scholarships;
* Reducing distance to school;
* Targeting boys and men to be a part of discussions about cultural and societal practices;
* Ensuring gender-sensitive curricula and pedagogies;
* Hiring and training qualified female teachers;
* Building safe and inclusive learning environments for girls and young women; and
* Ending child/early marriage.

**Extra links to look at if necessary (delegates):**

* <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>
* <http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Missed-opportunities-high-cost-of-not-educating-girls-World-Bank-July-2018.pdf>

**Links used to draft this paper:**

* [https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/women's-rights/women's-economic-rights](https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/women%27s-rights/women%27s-economic-rights)
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>
* <https://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/international/expertise/display.cfm?tid=1004&id=756>
* <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation>
* <http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/Missed-opportunities-high-cost-of-not-educating-girls-World-Bank-July-2018.pdf>
* <https://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/economic-opportunity-women-its-good-business>