
29 October 2015

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this month's edition of Newsflash!

October 11th was the International Day of the Girl Child, with the theme “The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030”. This theme is fitting, as the international community prominently featured girls’ rights in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability, developed at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September. The international community has reiterated the importance of girls’ empowerment and education, especially in the new Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, which follow on from the Millennium Development Goals. This month’s Newsflash reflects these topics, with articles about goals for girls in the next 15 years, girls’ education and an interesting report on how one group in Zambia is improving community collaboration in facilitating access to and completion of education for adolescent girls.

Did you or your organization celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child on October 11th? If so, we would love to hear about it! How do you support girl children in your daily life and work? Your stories, feedback, and comments are always appreciated! Additionally, if there is a topic you’d like to see covered in a future edition of the Newsflash, let us know at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.

Sincerely,
The Firelight Team

(Article) 2015 International Day of the Girl Child- The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030

(Article) SDG 4: Why Should We Educate Girls?

(Resource) Good Quality Education for Adolescent Girls (ages 10- 18) for an AIDS-free Future

(Open for Applications) The Rhodes Scholars’ South African Forum

(Open for Applications) African Women’s Development Fund

(Article) 2015 International Day of the Girl Child- The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030

This year, as the international community assesses progress under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since their implementation in 2000 and sets goals to be achieved by 2030, girls born at the turn of the millennium have reached adolescence, and the generation of girls born this year will be adolescents in 2030. As we reflect on the achievements of the past 15 years and plan sustainable development goals for the

next 15, it is an opportune time to consider the importance of social, economic, and political investment in the power of adolescent girls as fundamental to breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination and to achieving equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

Adolescent girls have the right to a safe, educated, and healthy life, not only during these critical formative years, but also as they mature into women. If effectively supported during the adolescent years, girls have the potential to change the world – both as the empowered girls of today and as tomorrow’s workers, mothers, entrepreneurs, mentors, household heads, and political leaders. An investment in realising the power of adolescent girls upholds their rights today and promises a more equitable and prosperous future, one in which half of humanity is an equal partner in solving the problems of climate change, political conflict, economic growth, disease prevention, and global sustainability.

Over the last 15 years, the global community has made significant progress in improving the lives of girls during early childhood. In 2015, girls in the first decade of life are more likely to enrol in primary school, receive key vaccinations, and are less likely to suffer from health and nutrition problems than were previous generations. However, there has been insufficient investment in addressing the challenges girls face when they enter the second decade of their lives. This includes obtaining quality secondary and higher education, avoiding child marriage, receiving information and services related to puberty and reproductive health, and protecting themselves against unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease and gender-based violence. As the global community launches the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for implementation over the next 15 years, it is a good time to recognise the achievements made in supporting young girls, while at the same time aspiring to support the current and upcoming generation of adolescent girls, to truly fulfil their potential as key actors in achieving a sustainable and equitable world. In recognition of the importance of investing in adolescent girls’ empowerment and rights, both today and in the future, the theme of International Day of the Girl Child for 2015 is: The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030.

UN agencies, Member States, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders are called on to commit to putting adolescent girls at the centre of sustainable development efforts by making the following critical investments in their present and future:

- Invest in high quality education, skills, training, access to technology and other learning initiatives that prepare girls for life, jobs, and leadership.
- Invest in health and nutrition suitable to the adolescent years, including puberty education, menstrual hygiene management, and sexual and reproductive health education and services.
- Promote zero tolerance against physical, mental, and sexual violence.
- Enact and consistently implement social, economic, and policy mechanisms to combat

early marriage and female genital mutilation.

- Invest in the creation and maintenance of social and public spaces for civic and political engagement, creativity and talent enhancement.
- Promote gender-responsive legislation and policies across all areas especially for adolescent girls who are disabled, vulnerable and marginalized, and victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The commitment by the global community to realising the potential of adolescent girls will directly translate into the girls as powerful and positive change agents for their own empowerment, for advancing gender equality and for the sustainable advancement of their nations.

Source: United Nations

URL: <http://bit.ly/18A3wSc>

(Article) Sustainable Development Goal 4: Why Should We Educate Girls?

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goal 4, “Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning”, is essential not only for the growth of communities but the overarching need to educate women and girls. Looking at the 10 the targets under Goal 4, it is clear that a gender and equality perspective has been taken into account – for example, Goal 4.5 calls for ending gender disparities at all levels of education by 2030, and the language of many of the targets particularly talks of “girls and boys” and “men and women”. Still, despite the known inequalities in education between girls and boys, many people question as to whether or not the gendered perspective is necessary when speaking on the right to education.

When looking at the global status of girls and women, it becomes glaringly apparent that one of the major reasons underpinning the broader problem of gender inequality is the unequal access to education facing girls and women. Denying girls and women of their right to education impedes on them achieving progress in other areas. Currently about 62 Million girls around the world are not in school. Of these girls about half are adolescent. It is common in many countries for girls to either drop out or be taken out of school before they reach the 6th grade. Keeping girls from school often leads to the violation of many of their other basic rights, for example in the form of child labor or early marriage – and, later in life, hinders women’s access to meaningful work and ability to earn a decent income. Education isn’t just about education, but about girls’ and women’s ability to take control of their lives and their futures outside of the school as well.

Educating a girl results in something refereed to as “the multiplier effect”. Educating girls has been proven to have a positive effect on a country’s GDP, and girls and women reinvest on average reinvest 90 percent of her income into their family. This investment means not only a generation of stronger women but stronger, healthier and more productive families and communities. Countries in which girls are enrolled in secondary

school have lower rates of maternal and infant mortality, lower rates of HIV/AIDS and better child nutrition. The education of girl results in the education of nation.

Educating a girl has the potential to catalyze success for many of the other ambitious Goals and targets of the newly adopted Sustainable Development Agenda. When girls are educated they have the ability to break the cycle of poverty through the skills and knowledge they gain, and girls' education has been proven to be one of the best ways to protect girls from child marriage and early pregnancies. The "Girl Effect" estimated that if every Ethiopian Girl finished school it would add almost US\$4 billion to the Country's Economy. This is money that can be invested in health services, environmental sustainability, improving institutions and infrastructure and the preservation of resources. Educating girls also allows for those girls to become leaders in their society and work toward the other Sustainable Development Goals. As we look into the future, towards the achievement of the SDG goals by 2030, it should be obvious to everyone that these goals cannot be reached without the participation of girls and women – and that these Goals will never be realized until every single girl and woman has full and equal access to education, everywhere in the world.

Source: Girls' Globe

URL: <http://bit.ly/1i17srk>

(Resource) Good Quality Education for Adolescent Girls (ages 10- 18) for and AIDS-free Future

The following is an excerpt from a report by the Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA) on a collaborative intervention with Community Action Groups to increase the number of early mothers reclaiming their school places. To download and read the full report (18 pages), click here:

"This intervention provide practical insights on how community members as stakeholders of the schools in their communities can form a fully functioning and productive group that meets the needs of the school in supporting girls retention, performance and completion in the education sector.

Since 2010, Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE), has made a long-term commitment to involve the local communities through Community Action Groups (CAGs) in the decision-making processes in schools as they relate to the advancement of the Zambian child in education. This intervention provides practical insights on how community members as stakeholders of the schools in their communities can form a fully functioning and productive group that meets the needs of the school in supporting girls retention, performance and completion in the education sector. The intervention builds the capacities of school community members (Mother and father mentors) through already existing school Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) in ensuring greater and inclusive

social participation, accountability and transparent of community members in supporting female participation in education.

FAWEZA enhances the capacity of CAGs in curbing teenage pregnancies, child marriages, facilitating re-entry of teen mothers, monitoring school attendance, and providing psycho social counselling support to girls who are at risk. Community members are also made aware of existing affirmative education and gender policies in order to cascade awareness to other community members in order for them to start claiming these rights within their own local contexts. This intervention further mobilizes communities to rescue girls living in high risk rented lodgings due to distance girls which they have to cover from home to school and provide them with safe lodging (currently there are 120 girls in 6 safe houses). Through this intervention, community involvement has also seen the construction of six girls' hostels at Jembo, Sanje, Nanga, Solwezi Technical, and Kyawama Secondary Schools, rehabilitated Kasenga Girls School and currently renting 06 Safe houses for girls.

The Community members also help in tracking learner absenteeism rates, dropout cases, providing psycho social support parents of teen mothers to reclaim their school places. The overall aim of this intervention is to promote community responsiveness, transparency and accountability in decision making and effective use of resources by duty bearers at school levels. In the period 2013-2014, with funding support from UNICEF, FAWEZA working with Community Action Groups managed to reach out to 51,000 out of school children and retrieved a total of 2900 girls who reclaimed their school places after dropping out among them were also teen mothers in the two provinces of Muchinga and Western. The above interventions are currently supported by UNICEF, DANIDA and World Vision International in 96 schools across the country."

Source: United Nations' Girls' Education Initiative

URL: <http://bit.ly/1RsJeCu>

(Open for Application) The Rhodes Scholars' South African Forum

RSSAF gives small grants of up to £1,500 to programmes of economic, political and social development in sub-Saharan Africa. Priority is given to projects less likely to secure funding from large donors and to projects with which Rhodes Scholars or other Oxford students/staff are associated. This is an important link as it allows us to maintain contact with organisations that receive grants. Please note that RSSAF also gives priority to organisations that have not received RSSAF funding in the past, however previous recipients of RSSAF grants launching new projects are invited to apply.

We welcome emails with specific questions to rssafgrants@gmail.com. *Please be sure you have read through our FAQ first.* We are receiving a high volume of inquiries and so the FAQ may provide you with more timely information than an email.

Deadline: Saturday, 1 NOVEMBER 2015, 23:59 GMT

For more information, please visit The Rhodes Scholars' South African Forum.

URL: <http://bit.ly/1W9BTi0>

(Open for Application) African Women's Development Fund

AWDF's grantmaking ensures resources reach the hundreds of African women's organisations that are working in diverse ways to improve the lives of women and African society at large.

Our grantmaking is innovative, flexible and creative. Through our grants we support both established and small, locally based women's organisations. We also provide specialised funding to facilitate learning and networking opportunities and to celebrate the contributions and achievements of many un-sung African heroines.

AWDF focuses its grants in six specific program areas: Women's Human Rights (WHR), Economic Empowerment and Livelihoods (EEL), Health and Reproductive Rights (HRR), Governance Peace and Security (GPS), Arts Culture and Sports (ACS) and HIV/AIDS. These are defined by the different facets of work that ensure that the needs, aspirations and contributions of African women are recognised, supported and valued.

Deadline: None

For more information, please visit African Women's Development Fund.

URL: <http://bit.ly/1OWBh9J>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

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