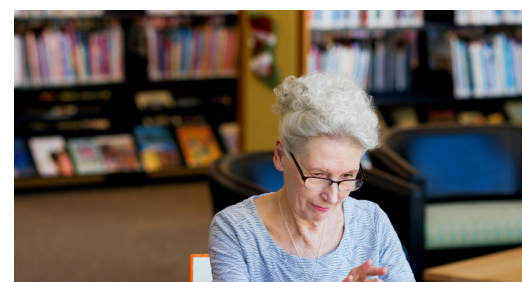




GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL TOOLKIT

RECOVER AND REVITALISE EDUCATION FOR THE COVID-19 GENERATION

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION
24 JANUARY 2021





Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. GWI, formerly International Federation of University Women, is in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1947 and is a nongovernmental organisation maintaining official relations with UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation. Graduate Women International
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Foreword

International Day of Education was introduced in 2018 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to celebrate the role of education in development and to demonstrate the world's political will towards providing quality education for all and achieving sustainable development by 2030. The 2021 theme "Recover and revitalise education for the COVID-19 generation" highlights the extraordinary and unprecedented education crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has led to a global learning disruption of unprecedented scale and severity. The closure of schools, universities, and other learning institutions as well as the interruption of many literacy and lifelong learning programmes, has affected the lives of 1.6 billion students in over 190 countries. (UNESCO)

As highlighted by UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, *"As a new year begins, now is the time to step up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery and the transformation towards more inclusive, safe and sustainable societies"*.

This Graduate Women International (GWI) International Day of Education Toolkit aims to celebrate the positive role of education as a tool for global change and raise awareness of the disturbing inequalities in education exacerbated globally by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this exclusive toolkit, GWI will also guide you along your path to strategic advocacy to promote education as a fundamental right and a crucial tool to build peaceful societies.

In every GWI member lies a powerful advocate. Now more than ever, each must see herself as an advocate for the protection and promotion of women's and girls' right to safe and quality education up to the highest level. Your commitment is critical to support the extraordinary individuals worldwide fighting for women's and girls' right to education every day. This interactive toolkit includes impactful and easy-to-use resources. GWI members and followers can participate in this international movement by creating their own strategic advocacy plan, tailored to their local and national communities' context and needs.

We urge you to widely share this toolkit as a guide to promote girls' education and raise awareness of current digital divide challenges.



Time for action! Get Involved with GWI

Education offers children a ladder out of poverty and a path to a promising future. But about 265 million children and adolescents worldwide, the majority of the girls and young women, do not have the opportunity to enter or complete school. Their right to education is being violated, and it is unacceptable. Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty, leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind. GWI, therefore, encourages all members, partners and friends to celebrate International Day of Education on 24 January 2021.

You can make a difference at the local, national and international by joining in the efforts of GWI and our NFAs:



- Advocate for women's and girls' education by **joining forces with a GWI affiliate in your area. [Click HERE to learn more about our membership and join us!](#)**
- Subscribe to the GWI Update newsletter: **[Click HERE to subscribe to the Update newsletter.](#)**
- Beginning 22 January, plan to FOLLOW, participate and share the GWI social media campaign that will offer three daily posts for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, each aimed to educate, raise awareness and galvanise support for women and girls' education worldwide. **Click on the icons to find and follow our social media pages.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events marking the 16 Days of Activism 2020 are likely to be held online. Take this opportunity to participate in any online training or information session that might be of interest to you, inform yourself, and spread the word around you! **Learn more [HERE.](#)**



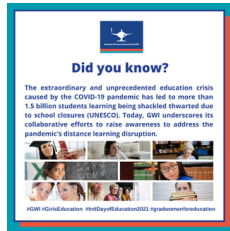
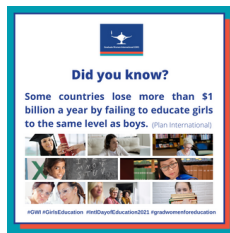
Go digital! Advocacy Materials



Ready-to-use Social Media Pack

GWI encourages the download and global sharing, on all platforms, of these ready-to-use social media graphics. A text version of each post is also available [HERE](#) : simply copy and paste to all social media platforms and join GWI in standing up with girls for their rights.

[Click HERE](#) or on the graphics below to download our full social media pack



In 2020, GWI collected interviews from its many members worldwide in a mosaic video. The participants were asked to answer one of the following questions: What is the role of education today? What more can be done to improve education for women and girls in your country? Why are you a member of GWI? **We invite you to view and share this video to celebrate our international network of graduate women's century of experience in advocating for safe access to quality, lifelong education for all women and girls worldwide.**



[Click HERE](#) to view the 2020 GWI International Day of Education Video



Education: a human right and the key to sustainable development

The right to education is enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.

The 2030 Agenda and its centrepiece, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), call for transforming how societies interact with the planet and each other. This transformation requires new technologies, new ways of structuring societies and economies and, above all else, innovative and equal educational opportunities.

[Click HERE to learn more about the link between education and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development](#)

The GWI international network of graduate women is brought together by one core belief: that every woman and girl have the right to equal access to education in all domains and at the highest levels. We advocate for education as both a fundamental human right and a key enabler to achieving economic growth and sustainable development.

Education for all forms integral part of the 2030 Agenda in its SDG4 on quality education. Yet, education plays a crucial role in eradicating poverty, developing skills and improving living standards. Therefore, without education, sustainable development becomes impossible. Women are not only half the world's population but also often disproportionately affected by many of the global challenges they face, especially education barriers. This positions women and girls with a unique set of experiences, needs, and perspectives that must be recognised and addressed as we seek to realise a more just and sustainable future. Girls and women, both young and ageing, are sources of knowledge, expertise, and solutions that must be considered.

"Education is at the heart of sustainable development. We need education to reduce inequalities...Let's prioritize education as a public good; support it through cooperation, partnerships and financing...in order not to leave anyone behind, we must start with education."

António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, at the opening of the First International Day of Education

GWI celebrates education and echoes digital divide challenges



GWI hails the vitality of innovative and promising learning methods stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, GWI insists that if the education sector is to "recover and revitalise" inequalities in digital education must be addressed now rather than later in a post-COVID 19 world. To this end, GWI forges forward and calling for action worldwide by inviting governments, the private and public sectors, non-governmental organisations and civil society to participate in efforts to reduce the digital divide.

[Click HERE to read our full International Day of Education 2021 Press Release](#)



"As a century-old organisation committed to lifelong education, GWI acknowledges the promising possibilities of distance learning as a means towards equal and inclusive access to education that's critical for women and girls. At the same time, however, GWI is focused on being part of the solution to overcome the digital divide in education."

**Terry Oudraad, GWI President
2021 GWI International Day of Education Press Release**

Without access to the right technology, millions of learners worldwide, especially women and girls, will be unjustly prevented from the education opportunities offered by distant learning. In a world where almost half of the population does not have Internet access, the pandemic has revealed first-hand, the limitations of such disparity. Reliable and inexpensive connectivity is required, especially in remote places if digital learning is to thrive.

GWI stresses governments' need to ensure that e-learning will not broaden existing digital inequalities and urges them to reduce such imbalances by ensuring equal access to digital tools and skills.

Building back better post-COVID-19 means closing the gap in the technological divide. The use of educational technologies must accompany large-scale enterprises of expanding Internet connectivity. Mobile phones alone are not enough to guarantee digital inclusion. Many online activities, such as job searches, creating a curriculum, school education for children or training courses for adults, need adequate tools to be carried out.



As the demand for digital skills grows, exponentially governments must put into place infrastructure for training across all sectors and all levels of education. Hence, GWI insists on the crucial importance of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 on the power of partnerships: governments must partner with telecom industries to come up with development plans. There is a critical need for closer collaboration between Ministries of Education, education institutions, Ministers responsible for energy and connectivity, and digital industries to ensure the distance learning system's sustainability. GWI calls for education (SDG4) and equality (SDG5) to be put at the heart of all efforts, as quality education will help reduce inequalities within and between countries, communities, and populations (SDG10). Education is essential to advance all 17 SDGs, and its necessary shift towards more digitalisation is made evident by the pandemic.



Furthermore, the ongoing pandemic has stressed the vast discrepancy in home e-learning environments and working conditions between men and women. Women working and studying remotely are more likely than men to spend time on housework and care work, preventing them from solely concentrating on work or studies. GWI urges states to ensure decent working conditions to all women and girls.

The provision of decent learning conditions must be completed with a necessary follow-up of all students learning remotely. In this sense, GWI states that distance learning should not replace face-to-face lessons, as women and girls are at higher risk of dropping out. Studies build identity and strengthen essential social bonds, which are at the core of integration in societies.

The pandemic is the largest shock to education in history, and the magnitude of this shock is not yet realised. Without remedial action, when students return to school the World Bank estimates a \$10 trillion dollar loss in earnings for the current generation of students.

GWI unites women graduate voices worldwide; women who are staunch advocates for the empowering potential of education, in-classroom or online.

GWJ calls on the Human Rights Council (HRC)



GWJ has maintained special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1947 and works closely with the United Nations. GWJ is an active participant every HRC Held in Geneva.

GWJ's HRC45 written statement, cosponsored by the Canadian Federation of University Women, Women Graduates-USA, FAWCO, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Latter-day Saint Charities and Zonta international addresses distance learning and digital technologies as a strategical and challenging turn towards inclusive access to education for women and girls stresses the need for government to ensure that e-learning will not broaden existing digital inequalities. GWJ acknowledges some promising possibilities of distance learning, but, at the same time, GWJ is concerned about e-learning challenges. Without access to the right technology, millions of learners worldwide, especially women and girls, will be unjustly prevented from the education opportunities offered by distant learning.

"As a century-old organisation committed to the advancement of women and girls through lifelong education up to the highest levels, GWJ acknowledges the promising possibilities of distance learning as a means towards equal, safe and inclusive access to education for all. At the same time, however, GWJ warns that implementing distance learning necessitates overcoming crucial challenges",

GWJ, HRC45 written statement

[Click HERE to read our full HRC45 statement](#)





Develop your own Strategic Advocacy Plan

Without concrete steps toward global, concerted action, words are at risk of falling empty. This is why GWI created the Fall 2020 International Advocacy Webinar Series, "Putting the pieces together and raising women's voices through strategic advocacy in the changing world". The series increased membership's knowledge of GWI's advocacy work and provided key resources and tools to build their own, grassroots strategic advocacy plan on key, current issues affecting women and girls globally: GBV and the challenges of remote learning.

The following pages provide the basic grounds for designing your own Strategic Advocacy Plan for women and girls' education. Whilst International Day of Education provides a global focus on the many barriers to education around the world, there is a vital need for year-round, multilevel efforts for all women and girls around the world to be able to fulfill their fundamental right to safe and inclusive education up to the highest level.

For more details, we invite GWI members to view the GWI Fall 2020 International Advocacy Webinar Series recordings. In regard to Education and COVID-19 and for more details on the GWI Strategic Advocacy Plan for today's distance learning challenges, we invite you to view the following webinar recordings:

- 5 November 2020 Webinar: [How to create a Strategic Advocacy Plan for Today's Distance Learning Challenges \(GWI Members Only\)](#)
- 19 November 2020 Bonus Webinar Developed by the GWI Education Committee: [Education and COVID-19, what are teaching and schools to be like going forward? \(GWI Members Only\)](#)

Strategic Advocacy is about:

Achieving specific outcomes, not just
raising awareness of problems

Developing strategies based on
research and analysis rather than
guesswork

Choosing approaches and deploying
resources where they will have the
most impact

The foundation for a successful
Strategic Advocacy Campaign is
based on three guiding principles:

Gathering Evidence

Mobilising Resources

**Monitoring, Evaluation
and Learning**

Step 1 - Analysing the Situation

- Clearly define the issue
- Assess the current status, analyse and familiarise yourself with current laws and policies.



Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, children's learning was already in crisis. Half of the 10-year-olds in the middle- and low-income countries were unable to understand a simple written sentence and more than a quarter-billion children were out school. The COVID-19 compulsory social distancing has created an unprecedented dependency on technology, forcing drastic and widespread adaptation of education methods to digital platforms, and is sharpening inequities and affecting schoolchildren in poorer countries particularly hard.

On the upside, the crisis has stimulated innovative approaches to education and training from radio and television to take-home lessons. Distance learning solutions have been developed globally due to some governments and their partners' quick responses, including recognising the essential roles played by educators. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) advancement make education more flexible and accessible, allowing disenfranchised populations to cross the systemic barriers they face to access quality lifelong education . Multiple studies have further highlighted the benefits of virtual education from the learner's perspective: e-learning requires 40 to 60% less time to learn than in a traditional classroom. It allows students to work at their own pace and focus on interest concepts .

On the downside, vulnerabilities, brought to light by COVID-19, include low levels of digitalisation and long-standing structural weaknesses: lack of infrastructure, the availability of online platforms, inadequate teacher training, economic stress, parental support or poor living conditions including the lack of electricity, and the availability of quiet, private spaces, and equipment in the home all leading to the widening gap in the distribution of learning.



Without access to the right technology, millions of learners worldwide, especially women and girls, will be unjustly prevented from the education opportunities offered by distant learning. In a world where almost half of the population does not have Internet access, the pandemic has revealed first hand, the limitations of such disparity. Reliable and inexpensive connectivity is required, especially in remote places if digital learning is to thrive.

According to UNICEF, at least 31 percent of schoolchildren worldwide cannot be reached by remote learning programs, whether through the internet, TV, or radio.

Step 2 - Set Goals and Impactful Objectives



It is evident that strategies and challenges are needed to ensure inclusive access to digital technologies to ensure equal access to education for women and girls during and after COVID-19.

A simple, clear-cut goal: Eliminate the technology gap in education globally such that best distance learning practices reach children and youth, especially girls and young women, who are most at risk

Step 3 - State the socio economic political impacts on the issue in your community

In an era of networked societies, COVID-19 school shutdowns affect women and girls, particularly, putting them at higher risk of dropping out, losing their fundamental human right to education, and jeopardising their present and future academic and professional opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing disparities in education by reducing opportunities for many of the world's most vulnerable populations to continue their education – those living in rural areas, girls, refugees, persons with disabilities and displaced persons. This loss of opportunities may extend well into the next generation erasing decades of progress.

Remote learning reinforces the urgency of providing appropriate support to least prepared children, especially those at risk of becoming disengaged and eventually dropping out, especially girls. These children will be less equipped to deal with everyday life as more and more daily tasks require technical knowledge and use. Their adaptability and employability will be severely hampered and their ability to achieve decent living standards due to lower-income earnings over a lifetime.

Although girls are facing unprecedented challenges, a range of innovative approaches are emerging to promote their resilience. Throughout the world, girls are leading the way to facilitate remote learning, share vital information, inform effective service provision, and engage in efforts to prevent and respond to violence. Adolescent focused programming is also being tailored to support girls from diverse

backgrounds to build back more inclusively. GWI highlights the powerful potential of adolescent girls and of the critical importance of investing in them. When coupled with supportive community structures and necessary resources, girl-led action can be both impactful and cost-effective within the context of COVID-19 and beyond.

Step 4 - Identify your allies

There is a greater probability of success if you advocate along with other individuals and groups as this creates a unified request with greater impact on law and policymakers. Allies are people or groups of people who have the same interests as you or the capacity to help you. Allies are essential because you can accomplish much more if people support you who believe in the cause and willing to share resources and information to achieve a common goal. Collaborate and form partnerships. Work in coalitions with groups whose philosophy and goals resonate with yours. Together, pooling staff and resources, all parties involved in the coalition should be better equipped to take on campaigns and work for change.





Step 5 - Develop your plan

Identify your targets and influences: focus points.

The main target audiences for advocacy work will usually be decision-makers and influencers: the secondary audience. These are the individuals or groups who have access to the decision-makers and who may influence them. Influencers may become partners in the advocacy plan. When talking about your issue with someone you are trying to influence to join your cause, allow space for argument. Seeing issues from other perspectives only makes your advocacy stronger as you will better handle opposition. Encourage speaking and listening in all its forms.

Identify focal points (influencers and targets)

Government leaders and legislators: community, local, state/provincial, federal

Other community organisations

Social support systems

Develop your message

Since advocacy means openly supporting a certain viewpoint of a target group of people, the language you use should be specific to the cause and meaningful to everyone. Avoid the use of acronyms and short forms unless they are readily and universally understood. Your language is meant to persuade entities to grant specific rights, make policy changes, provide money or create new laws for the good of your cause. You might want to change the way people look at the issue by creating a reliable and consistent messaging stream and in addition, motivate community members and policymakers to get involved. Use appropriate language.



Recommendations

Considering the urgent need to include women's and girls' higher education as a critical stake in response to the current crisis and in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, made the following recommendations to the UN HRC in September 2020 and the Commission on Social Development (2021) urging Member States to:

- Invest in infrastructure for training staff and students, especially women and girls, in the use of IT services and digital devices.

- Partner with higher education institutions to enquire about the possibility for students to follow online classes in decent conditions, and safe and secure environments (access to the Internet, to a personal computer, information about the working environment).
- Dedicate funding to ensure decent learning conditions for all students displaced from their education, especially to women and girls.
- Develop specific supports for educators to enhance their digital instruction skills.
- Partner with private and public sectors to provide the necessary material (computer, digital devices) to those who cannot afford it.
- Ensure e-learning is augmented with digital face-to-face meetings as social exchange and coursework follow-up.
- Encourage women and girls to seize the opportunity of e-learning to undertake higher-level education and training.
- Provide a program of subsidies or bonuses to those in situations of economic difficulty for the acquisition of devices with an Internet connection.
- Ensure that all asylum seekers in reception centres have Internet access and the appropriate devices to achieve this.
- Optimize use of radio and public television as platforms for delivery of education.
- Improve access to electricity in all areas rural and urban.

Step 6 - Use appropriate tools for your target audience



Use tools that are effective for your focal points:

- Emails
- Social media
- Print media, including articles
- Editorials
- Open letters
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face meetings
- Town meetings
- Position papers
- Radio and TV



About GWI

GWI is a membership-based international NGO located in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in some 60 countries with our NFAs and Independent Members. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1947 and maintains official relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

GWI operates with a small yet dedicated staff consisting of an Executive Director, a Junior Office Administrator, and a host of committed interns and volunteers. Additionally, our work is only possible with the support of our tireless Board of Directors: Terry Oudraad, President, GWI; Vice Presidents Veena Bathe (Legal and Governance), Eileen Focke-Bakker (Membership), Glenda Hecksher (Marketing), Louise McLeod (Advocacy and Education), Basak Ovacik (Fundraising) and Treasurer, Katharina Strub.



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GWI 5 November 2020 Webinar: How to create a Strategic Advocacy Plan for Today's Distance Learning Challenges (GWI Members Only) <https://vimeo.com/484494530>

GWI 19 November 2020 Bonus Webinar Developed by the GWI Education Committee: Education and COVID-19, what are teaching and schools to be like going forward? (GWI Members Only) <https://vimeo.com/478035705>

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and girls through
lifelong education
since 1919*

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