

Communique of The G(irls)20 Summit



Toronto, Canada
June 15 – 18, 2010

Preamble

We, the 21 delegates of the first ever G(irls)20 Summit, know that girls and women have the potential to play a pivotal role in building communities and countries and being catalysts for economic progress around the globe.

We come together in the days before the gathering of the leaders of the world's most powerful nations at the G-8 and G-20 meetings to be the voice that reminds the leaders of the importance of eliminating barriers for girls and women everywhere, and to mobilize change-makers worldwide to add their voices to ours.

We are here because:

We know that education opens doors for girls and women, yet nearly 40 million school-aged girls worldwide are not in classrooms.

We know that 14 million girls age 15 to 19 give birth each year, and that pregnancy is the leading cause of death in that age group.

We know that newborn children in least-developed countries are 14 times more likely to die in their first month of life, yet when girls and women work and earn an income they help forge a pathway out of poverty for themselves and for their families.

Many who have come before us have identified the barriers to girls and women making a contribution to progress around the world. The UN has drafted the Millennium Development Goals we need to work towards. We came together in Toronto to chart a way there.

In our deliberations we addressed the subjects of Education; Child and Maternal Health; and Economic Opportunity and discussed ideas that have been shared by girls in 190 countries who participated in a global online conversation in advance of our meeting.

We focused on solutions over the three days of the Summit and collectively, we have agreed upon a set of recommendations. We call upon the leaders and change-makers in our countries, and beyond, to admit that girls and women are an essential part of the solution to global challenges by considering, building upon and adopting these recommendations.

On the subject of Education

Access

1. We assert that there is an opportunity to support universal access to primary and secondary education & non-formal education. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
2. Support policies and change laws to make education free and compulsory
3. Establish a standard term for compulsory education
4. Fund the necessary facilities to provide education as a national priority
5. Leverage all public and media resources to both teach and promote education as an important long-term investment for girls in society

Educators

6. We assert that the level of professionalism and commensurate salaries are directly proportionate to the quality of teaching. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
7. Implement compulsory training and raise the standards of graduation requirements for teachers and educators
8. Raise the average compensation for teachers according to their qualifications and results
9. Mandate regular school inspections and supervision of educators

Curriculum and Learning Tools

10. We assert that a more gender sensitive and relevant curriculum would empower girls and women to reach their full potential. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
11. Re-visit the portrayal of girls and women in textbooks like history books
12. Equip students, including girls, with necessary and relevant skills for income earning opportunities, either through internships and placements or vocational training for relevant industries in schools
13. Mandate course diversity and gender sensitive curricula
14. Introduce training in self-defence and self-respect
15. Put sexual and reproductive health on school curricula to help girls to have control of their own bodies and reduce their vulnerability

Community Benefits

16. We assert that people in underprivileged parts of developing countries would be more inclined to send their children to school if they were incentivized to do so. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
17. Introduce benefits and incentives for school children including:
 - a. Meals
 - b. Agricultural gardens
 - c. Vocational training institutes
 - d. Housing for students
 - e. Bicycles
 - f. Subsidized goats
 - g. Play pumps (child-friendly structures that pump clean water through play)
18. Provide government subsidies for families who send all youth (including girls) to school
19. Deploy local campaigns of teachers and community leaders to communicate the incentives and benefits of sending girls to school

Safety

20. We assert that there exists a lack of safe and supportive school environments due to violence, sexual assaults and lack of sanitary resources for girls. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
21. Require the presence of school security patrols
22. Introduce sanitation and other resources for girls and women in the school system including gender segregated washrooms, sanitary pads and painkillers.

On the subject of Maternal and Child Health

Health and Sexual Health Education

1. We assert that the lack of comprehensive health and sexual health education for both sexes from an early age in schools contributes to higher pregnancy and mortality rates. We call on leaders and change-makers to:
2. Implement comprehensive health and sexual health learning in schools
3. Educate girls to be self-confident, inform them about their rights, and empower them to refuse forced sex
4. Change existing health and sexual health curriculum from abstract lesson plans to specific, effective and direct instruction
5. Raise awareness of the possible implications of sexual intercourse including pregnancy and childbirth
6. Provide education on prenatal care, childbirth and childcare

Unplanned Pregnancy

7. We assert that girls and women should have easy access to contraceptive methods as well as control over their reproductive and sexual health, and that maternity is a choice. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
8. Ensure that religious beliefs do not increase the vulnerability of girls and women
9. Challenge harmful traditional practices like child marriage, which leads to children being involved in early sexual activities when not physically ready to give birth
10. Ensure education about, and access to, both male and female contraception, and safe abortion

Health Systems

11. We assert that maternal and child death could be prevented by increasing the number of skilled workers and implementing widespread and well-equipped medical centres and mobilization of health services. We call upon leaders and change-makers to:
12. Provide appropriate salary and education for healthcare workers
13. Focus on knowledge transfer and train healthcare workers to educate their patients
14. Provide incentives for healthcare workers to serve in high need areas
15. Encourage community and partner participation in prenatal care
16. Work to educate respected community leaders about safe practices and basic medical knowledge
17. Deploy mobile medical centres (tents, trucks).

On the subject of Economic Opportunity

Societal and Self Value

1. We assert that changing the societal perspective that girls and women are inferior to boys and men defined by their bodies and their motherhood, and encouraging girls and women in challenging that perspective, would reduce the double burden and open up opportunities. We call on leaders and change-makers to:
2. Use educational tools like life orientation courses in primary schools to teach respect to boys and encourage self-respect in girls
3. Create role model mentorship programs by encouraging and incentivizing those who have achieved secondary or post-secondary education to return to their communities as mentors
4. Legislate universal childcare policies (including paternity leave) so women are not restricted to being mothers
5. Encourage media to support portraying an alternative image for girls and women

Business Development

6. We assert that women in many countries, especially in developing countries, are not able to be economically productive because of obsolete and misinterpreted cultural practices and traditions and that reducing both economic and cultural barriers to women setting up small businesses would have a beneficial effect on economies. We call on leaders and change-makers to:
 7. Develop markets in small villages and rural areas, including handicraft, spices, sewing, tailoring, etc.
 8. Introduce vocational training for girls and women as well as skill building institutes
 9. Reduce registration fees and simplify registration processes for small business
 10. Provide more women with access to capital, whether through micro-finance or other governmental means
 11. Make small business development advice available to more girls and women
 12. Provide financial literacy training at the community level
 13. Identify and promote alternative employment opportunities for women who only have the sex trade as an income-earning option

Employability

14. We assert that initiating an effort to teach employable skills and self-preservation starting as early as primary education and opening up opportunities in the job market would lessen restrictions that currently exist due to maternal responsibilities. We call on leaders and change-makers to:
 15. Recognize the double burden women face by exploring monetary return and access to childcare centres
 16. Establish carefully constructed course curricula for training to be distributed around the world on multiple platforms.