

# Advancing Sustainable Education Outcomes for Girls Webinar



## International Day of the Girl Child 2023

**Theme: "Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being"**

### Background

The gender disparities in education translate to the marginalization and vulnerability of girls in attaining inclusive and sustainable education. The learning and education crisis being encountered in Africa is exacerbated by the social and economic constraints within society. Most girls in rural areas are unable to access basic education. Thus, there should be strategic shifts and interventions in the provision of equitable and inclusive education aimed at boosting accessibility and sustainable education delivery systems in Africa.

### The Webinar

The Kuyenda Youth Collectives hosted a webinar on Advancing Sustainable Education Outcomes for Girls on 25 October 2023. The webinar followed the commemorations of the International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC) themed "Invest in Girl's Rights, Our Leadership, Our Well-being." The Kuyenda Rural Youth Collectives' focus is to address the learning crisis through transnational education advocacy in Malawi Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The crisis impacts the girls' inclusive access to education and

retention. The webinar explores girls' plight in accessing education which is exacerbated by cultural and economic factors amongst others.

## Objectives

1. Enhanced knowledge, awareness, and commitment among stakeholders, to support girls' rights and well-being.
2. Strengthened partnerships and networks, between and among RYCs across the four countries and also with civil society organizations, government agencies, and private sector entities, for more coordinated and effective action on girl empowerment.
3. Recommendations and a call to action.

## DISCUSSION

### Based on your experience and research, what are the major challenges being faced by the girl-child in accessing and completing basic education?

#### Child, early marriages, and forced unions.

Child, early marriages, and forced unions (CEMFU) limit girls' attainment of sustainable education outcomes. The drivers of CEMFU are based on socio-economic and religious constructs. Child marriage cases differ as some girls are forced into marriages while others marry voluntarily due to peer pressure and other reasons. UNICEF (2023)<sup>1</sup> child marriage statistics note that in Malawi 7% of girls are married by the age of 15 and 38% are married by the age of 18. In Mozambique, 17% are married by age 15 and, 53% of girls are married by age 18. In Tanzania, 5% of girls are married by 15, and, 31% of girls are married by age 18. In Zimbabwe, 5% are married by

age 15 and, 34% are married by age 18. These statistics highlight the impact that child marriages have on education as most of the girls drop out of school and suffer health complications due to early pregnancies. Covid 19 posed a threat to the progress of elimination of child marriages as stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goal Target 5.3 aimed at eliminating all harmful practices such as CEMFU and female genital mutilation by 2030<sup>2</sup>. The closure of schools and the need for economic security by families led to girls being married off to ease financial burdens. Thus, girls' education is being affected by impacting greatly on their learning outcomes as they drop out of school.

## Poverty

Poverty is the main transnational education challenge being faced in the communities that hinder girls from acquiring basic education. Poverty entails a lack of funding and financial constraints to pay for tuition fees and buy basic school materials and resources such as books, shoes, and uniforms amongst others. Poverty propels the child early and forced marriages and unions as some parents marry off their children for economic gains. Poverty limits girls' education access and retention as families are unable to fund their fees due to financial constraints. Girls are the most affected due to the increased gender imbalances and traditional customs within society. World Bank (2023), states that in Malawi 70 percent of its population lives on less than \$2.15 a day and 90% of these reside in rural areas<sup>3</sup> and financial constraints in providing education for girls are inevitable.

## Patriarchy and Traditional Customs

The governments have made commitments to advance girls' access and participation

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF (2023), Child Marriage Data

<sup>2</sup> Ze Yar Min (2021), E-Handbook of Sustainable Development Goals Indicators

<sup>3</sup> UNCTAD (2023), Reducing inequality and poverty in Malawi: Policy analyses and options





in education to attain gender equality and improve learning outcomes. However, African society is dominated by patriarchal tendencies that champion gender biases affecting girls in attaining and completing their education. The boys are deemed superior to girls earning education priorities than girls. <sup>4</sup>SDG 4 target 5 denotes that there should be gender equality and inclusion in education ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable and persons living with disabilities. In rural areas, girls are vulnerable and do not have equal opportunities and support to pursue basic education. The patriarchal practices of society continue to limit women's access to the benefits of education increasing their oppression and marginalization, thus limiting their learning. Hence, engagements to keep girls in schools should be made to ensure they learn in a supportive environment suitable to thrive and aim for sustainable education.

## Shortages of schools and learning infrastructure

The learning conditions in rural schools reduce girls' readiness to learn. In unsafe environments prone to sexual harassment and sexual and gender-based violence, girls commute for long journeys on foot to school because of a few schools in rural areas. The results of shortage of schools increase the student-teacher ratio the learning outcomes

are negatively impacted because of the large numbers of students. The infrastructure in schools is poor as there are shortages of classrooms and infrastructure like desks and chairs. The schools lack sanitation facilities like readily available water and changing rooms for girls to use during menstruation. The learning environment contributes to the reduction of girls' enrollment whilst some willingly drop out of school affecting their sustainable learning outcomes.



## Teaching and learning resources

Quality of teaching in rural schools: Teaching is often of poor quality and is poorly supported. Isolated conditions in rural areas fail to attract high-quality teachers. This situation is made worse because poor infrastructure obstructs support from advisory agencies. Not only are teachers served less by support services, but they often have fewer print, and formal schooling fails to connect with the needs of rural communities. The curriculum often has little relevance to rural life, community involvement is mixed, and low levels of literacy in the community, combined with traditional attitudes and practices, provide little support for the learning that students receive in school. Furthermore, formal schooling is sometimes at odds with prevailing religious or cultural practices in many rural areas.

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<sup>4</sup>Sustainable Development Goal 4: Targets, indicators and monitoring (2018)



## Lack of implementation of nutrition programs at school

The government has good policies in writing that are weakly implemented. Governments piloted nutrition programs and feeding schemes. Tanzania nutrition programs cover selected schools and in rural areas, the programs are not followed. In 2016, the Zimbabwean government initiated the supplementary feeding program in schools but there have not been any resources available to effectively implement the program. In Malawi and Mozambique, the government has partnered with civil society organizations to provide meals to students, and not all rural areas are under the feeding schemes. This impacts girls' education in that rural families cannot provide food for their children, and they attend school hungry. The girls opt to drop out of school making them vulnerable to early marriages and abuse.

## What effects does the education crisis have on the girlchild's development and learning outcomes?

### Girls school-related gender-based violence

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a barrier to girls' participation in sustainable education, SRGBV is violence perpetrated on girls and students on their way to school, in schools due to stereotypes and gender imbalances.<sup>5</sup> SRGBV includes verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, and cyberbullying. Girls are most affected because some male teachers make sexual advances in exchange for better grades and rejecting the offer results in punishment. Due to long distances girls encounter sexual harassment and assault walking from schools. This affects the learning outcomes for girls as the learning environment is unsafe leading to school dropouts and early pregnancies that affect the child's development and wellbeing.

### Limited Cognitive Development

Lack of access to quality education can hinder cognitive development, reducing their ability to learn, think critically, and solve problems effectively. Uneducated girls are often more vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, and child labor, as they lack the skills and knowledge to protect themselves.

### Social Inequality

Girls who miss out on education may experience increased social inequality, as education is a fundamental tool for reducing gender disparities and promoting social inclusion. Lack of education can hinder girls' participation in civic and political activities, limiting their ability to advocate for their rights and contribute to their communities. Education empowers girls by increasing their self-esteem and confidence. Without access to education, they may have limited decision-making power in their lives. Inadequate education can limit future economic opportunities for girls, trapping

<sup>5</sup>UNESCO and UN Women, (2016) Global Guidance on Addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence



them in cycles of poverty and limiting their financial independence.

## School Absenteeism

With schools located in remote areas many girls, find it hard to travel to school and get there on time hence they need to stay either in hostels or dormitories of which many rural schools lack enough dormitories leading to students missing class sessions and hence creating difficult learning environment for girls-girls becoming tired leading to poor grades and girls failing their exams. Also, many girls don't have access to changing rooms while in school. This is strongly contributing to girls' school absenteeism during monthly periods.



## What role do boys and men play in supporting sustainable education outcomes for girls in their community?

## Introduction

In African society, the gender constructs are underpinned by harmful and cultural practices increasing the marginalization of women and girls limiting their agency. Education and learning priorities are given to the boy child. Boys and men have a critical role to play in supporting better education outcomes for girls in their communities. Active participation of men and boys in eliminating the infringement of girls' rights that impact their well-being, an assessment of the local communities or context should be done to find the approach to involve men and boys in girl child education advocacy.

## Establish male advocacy groups.

The creation of male advocacy groups is a collective action to establish an enabling environment for girls' education advocacy pushing for change. The advocacy groups support the network and establish advocacy strategies for gender-inclusive education and equal learning opportunities for all. The advocacy groups are crucial as men's voices are amplified illuminating the challenges being faced by girls in accessing education and championing policy reform on inequality issues. The advocacy groups can advocate through engaging in creative arts like drama and poetry on the impacts of impeding girls' access to education and human rights.

## Awareness and Education Campaigns

Boys and men play a significant role in raising awareness through championing girl education campaigns. Community-based and media campaigns can impact change in the mindset of locals and expose the social norms and customs that hinder girls from attaining sustainable education.



Advocacy programs on school sexual and gender-based violence, child early and forced marriage unions and patriarchal practices, and other causes can be done to educate communities and provide foundations for research in policy reform. The awareness campaigns eliminate the existing stereotypes of girls and inform new narratives that challenge the societal norms on educating girls. Men and women can collaborate to support an enabling environment to advance girls' education advocacy inclusive and gender-sensitive curricula that address the specific needs and challenges faced by girls.

## Mentorship and Support

A major role that men and boys can play is providing mentorship and support. Men and older boys can serve as mentors and role models for girls, encouraging them to pursue their education and career goals. Men can guide girls in the pursuit of education and create spaces for exposure and growth. Fathers and brothers can provide emotional and financial support for girls' education, helping with school fees, uniforms, and supplies. Families can also engage in parent-teacher programs to be more involved in the pursuit of education for their girl children. Males can promote female teachers by encouraging the hiring and retention of female teachers can serve as positive role models for girls and ensure a more inclusive learning environment.

## Infrastructure development and maintenance by providing manpower services

Men can actively participate in community efforts to improve educational infrastructure and promote safe learning environments for girls. Men can give their time and skills towards building infrastructure and maintaining the school premises.

## What role does national EMIS play in policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, and responses to girls' education?

### **Presentation by Mrs. Judite Sambo representing the Ministry of Education Mozambique**

*O Sistema Nacional de Informação de Gestão da Educação (EMIS) desempenha um papel importante na formulação de políticas, na monitorização e avaliação e ainda na resposta às estratégias que o MINEDH desenha a favor da educação das raparigas pois, permite:*

- *Planificar o acesso à educação para todos, em especial para a rapariga e assegurar que ela tenha educação primária gratuita e obrigatória e ainda garantir que a educação secundária esteja disponível e acessível a todos sem discriminação. A gratuidade de educação visa, em parte, responder a questão da pobreza que é uma das principais factores das desigualdades de género e afeta mais rapariga e mulheres em geral.*
- *A planificação da construção de escolas mais perto das comunidades;*
- *A colocação de professoras em escolas atribuindo casas com condições mínimas para residirem e que possam servir de exemplo nas comunidades para a educação da rapariga.*
- *A atribuição de bolsas de estudos para as raparigas provenientes de famílias carenciadas (pobres);*

- *O reforço do mecanismos de retenção e conclusão de nível de ensino das raparigas através de abordagens de ensino e aprendizagem sensível ao género, actividades de habilidades para a vida e promoção de ambientes seguros e protector para a rapariga.*
- *A protecção das alunas grávidas e a sua segurança constituem uma das prioridades na educação e recentemente*

*A Lei sobre o Sistema Nacional de Educação – 18/2018, de 28 de Dezembro, sublinha a importância de tomar várias medidas para garantir que as escolas proporcionem um ambiente protector e propício para as raparigas reduzindo os riscos, especialmente os de violência sexual.*

Translation: The National Education Management Information System (EMIS) plays an important role in policy formulation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as responding to the strategies that MINEDH has designed in favor of girls' education, as it allows for:

- Plan access to education for all, especially for girls, and ensure that they have free and compulsory primary education and ensure that secondary education is available and accessible to all without discrimination. Free education aims, in part, to respond to the issue of poverty, which is one of the main factors in gender inequalities and affects girls and women more in general.
- Planning to build schools closer to communities.
- Placing female teachers in schools and giving them houses with minimal conditions in which to live, so that they can serve as role models in the communities for girls' education.

- Awarding scholarships to girls from disadvantaged (poor) families.
- Strengthening retention and completion mechanisms for girls through gender-sensitive teaching and learning approaches, life skills activities, and the promotion of safe and protective environments for girls.
- The protection of pregnant students and their safety is a priority in education and has recently been prioritized by the National Education System Law.
- The National Education System (Law-18/2018, of 28 December) underlines the importance of taking various measures to ensure that schools provide a protective and supportive environment for girls by reducing risks, especially those of sexual violence.

## **Dr. Kujeke Presentation**

*Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education*

### **Zimbabwe**

The use of Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) is to collate the data that has been collected through ED 46 tools in Zimbabwe. The ED 46 tools cover demographic information, school identification details, enrolments, teacher details, facilities, textbooks and curriculum, education finance, and school administration. The schools complete the forms and DSIs verify accuracy. To capture data there has been the decentralization of the EMIS leads to districts. The collected data on enrollment shows the patterns and participation rates of learners which can give variances in terms of dropout rates by sex.



The dropout rates highlighted in EMIS show that girls drop out more because of early marriages or marriages have given rise to a policy that allows this very similar to come back and rejoin the school system. The government is working towards a program to reenroll dropouts in schools to facilitate the retention of girls in the education system. The child brides or girls that return to schools are associated with labeling which increases their vulnerability in learning institutions and leads them to not pursue education. Some girls lead families and care for the handicapped thus marrying early to improve the poverty situation at home.

EMIS also provides information on the distribution of learners by provinces, districts, schools, subject areas, and categories. More data is provided on the pass rate and the area of studies where girls engage more. For instance, data shows that fewer girls study STEM subjects, and policies and programs are initiated to push girlchild learners to participate in science, technology, engineering, and maths. To advance sustainable learning outcomes for girls the government is working towards the introduction of the Lifelong Education Policy, a non-formal education initiative aimed at providing accelerated learning or second-chance education to girls who cannot access formal education or drop out due to various reasons. The government provides education finance through the Basic Education Assistance Module, a national school assistance program aimed at assisting vulnerable children and orphans.

## THE WAY FORWARD

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### **What can be done to address the learning crisis being encountered by girls to improve sustainable education outcomes?**

#### **Education Financing**

To provide sustainable education outcomes for girls, equitable education financing should be attained. Education funding should be increased to meet the increasing school enrolment and demand for infrastructure, learning materials, and non-financial incentives like meals and health programs. Financial constraints present a challenge to girls completing their education in rural areas due to their marginalization and poverty. The government should increase the national education budget to about 20% to meet the learner's and teacher's needs. More investment towards education should be made through private sector engagement and community financing models to establish scholarships and bursaries for girls. The provision of school fees and basic learning resources will help keep girls in school and allow for an improved increase in access to basic education. This reduces education inequalities improving sustainable learning outcomes for girls.

#### **Implementation of School Re-entry Policies and Advancement of Informal Education**

Interventions for high dropout rates of girls from formal education should be put in place. The Ministry of Education and key stakeholders should develop strategic

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learning programs that target the girls and youth who drop out of school. The learning gap when girls drop out of schools in rural areas reveals their vulnerability in society and they are prone to abuse and violation. Education is a basic human right hence, informal learning through accelerated learning programs should be formalized to provide girls with learning and skills development opportunities. The accelerated learning opportunities should be integrated with the labor markets. The gap between education and employment in Africa limits economic development and growth. Thus, the introduction of informal education is to be a bridge focusing on technical skills attainment for self-sustainability for girls.

The Ministry of Education should reshape the school re-entry programs to allow girls to return to mainstream education and provide psycho-support for pregnant girls and teen mothers. The Ministry of Education in Malawi revised the readmission policy for primary and secondary education in 2016 aimed at improving access, retention, and completion of education beneficial to girls. Tanzania issued guidelines to reinstate students who drop out of primary and secondary education due to various reasons.

The Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe amended the Education Policy in 2020 by putting the School Re-entry Policy targeted at keeping girls in schools to achieve better learning outcomes. In Mozambique, the government issued a national decree that pregnant girls are to attend night-shift school to continue with their education, but no policies have been introduced to protect and keep teen mothers and pregnant girls in school. Although the governments have taken the initiative to reform and reamend School Re-entry Policies, there has been poor implementation of the policies as the school environment is not favorable for girls as they continue to drop out of school. Effective counseling and psycho-support services should be available for girls in

schools but schools in rural areas do not have skilled personnel and there is a shortage of teachers affecting the retention rates and learning outcomes of girls.

## **Introduce Education Finance Trackers**

Education financial trackers should be developed to provide comprehensive information, reliable and transparent data on education spending from the government, donor funding, and household levels on all education levels. Tracking education expenditures is essential to account for the money being spent on education fees, infrastructure, and other necessities. The tracker helps in the monitoring and evaluation of the education system's financial pulse and the design of effective national education plans to ensure the delivery of quality and inclusive education for all. It aids the government in allocating funding and resources to needy areas to enhance the efficiency and equity of education boosting the education outcomes for girls who drop out of schools. Funding strategies responsive to girls and school needs should be initiated to improve learning outcomes and curb the high dropouts in rural schools.

## **Education Management Information System (EMIS) in Zimbabwe**

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is significant in the collection and analysis of educational data producing relevant, accurate information on education statistics, the learning environment, and the outcomes of education. The use of EMIS is effective in monitoring the achievements of sustainable development 4 on quality education. Linking EMIS and sustainable education outcomes for girls, SDG4 target 5 states that by 2030 there should be the elimination of gender disparities in



education promoting equal access to all levels of education and vocational training. EMIS provides disaggregated data by sex which is crucial in gender statistics. The collected data reveals the data according to age is crucial in analyzing the age group of girls dropping out of school and linking it to possible causes. To assess the learning outcomes, statistics on enrolment and attendance are provided which monitor the enrolment and drop-out rates of girls from school. Thus, EMIS plays a crucial role in informing the statistics of school dropout rates and initiating interventions to keep girls in school and improve their learning outcomes.

## **Law codification and reform on child early marriages and forced unions.**

The government should reform early marriage policies and laws and criminalize the act because it distracts the attainment of education outcomes for girls. Advocacy towards policy and legal amendment of law and customary law in dealing with child marriages and pregnancies should be enhanced. There should be the implementation of child protection laws that act upon school-related gender-based violence and early and forced unions. The country's policies state that the marriage age is 18 and no child should be pledged for marriage before that age. However, there is a gap in the implementation of the policies because of customary laws and traditional practices that conflict with existing laws. There is no stipulated punishment for pedophiles and perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence.

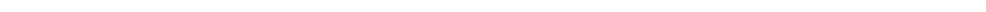
## **Mentorship and Skills Development Programs for Girls**

Mentorship programs should be established

to encourage girls to continue the pursuit of education. Mentorship of girls is significant as it empowers them to learn from mentors who are succeeding in the area. Where girls are mentored, they attend school and learn new skills improving their talents and providing the foundation of their career advancement to break cycles of poverty and promote their independence. The goal of mentorship is to improve girls' agency and provide them with role models revealing the benefits of education. The mentorship programs help reduce girl dropouts and improve their school retention rates. This is crucial in the advancement of sustainable education as they improve their academic performance and improve their career aspirations.

## **Education Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns**

Community engagements and advocacy campaigns lead to breaking down barriers associated with the gaps in education. Education advocacy in societies raises awareness of girls' rights and their impediments encouraging the society to be involved in pushing for girls' education. Having advocacy networks within communities promotes the safety of girls as their quest for education is supported by all society members doing away with unequal social and gender constructs that affect girls' education access and retention. The advocacy campaigns can educate the communities on eliminating early child marriages and school-related gender-based violence and discrimination against girls. These will improve the advancement of sustainable learning outcomes for girls as they will have full support from their families and communities.







## How can the government and other partners strategically invest in sustainable education outcomes for girls?

### **Ms. Chisukwa Chikondi**

*Ministry of Youth  
Malawi*

The Ministry of Youth in Malawi is playing an integral role in the drive to support girls' education. Through synergies with UNICEF Malawi, the ministry implemented a literacy program girls' program. The program was completed in four districts, and it provides second-chance education to young girls, adolescent girls, and young women in the communities. The program enrolled illiterate girls and provided basic numeracy and literacy skills to them. The program enrolled 5095 young adolescent girls and young women and 4010 amounting to 68% graduated and completed the training. The

1085 girls who did not graduate encountered climate change-related issues as cyclone Freddie destroyed some learning centers and the outbreak of cholera saw the closure of the learning centers. The program was operational in 14 Districts but due to the challenges encountered, only four districts were left operational. The program has improved the learning outcomes for girls as they have been emancipated and empowered and about 181 girls returned to mainstream education to attain their certificates contributing to advancing the sustainable outcomes of girls in Malawi.





## Parent-teacher Communication Program

The Ministry of Youth is piloting the parent-teacher communication program to improve communication between parents and teachers to help improve education outcomes for girls. The ministry is implementing parent-child communication improving the communication between parents and their children. The initiative encourages open communication on sexual reproductive health issues in efforts to curb teen pregnancies and early marriages as Malawi's culture is conservative on these issues. Thus, these open engagements allow the community to learn from mother groups that assist in life skills education together with the students, parents, and teachers.

## Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Malawi's Ministry of Youth is working with the Ministry of Education to provide girls and youth with comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). CSE encourages girls and youth to exercise their sexual reproductive health rights. This helps teenagers to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and avoid teen and early pregnancies avoiding contracting HIV or other STDs. Sexuality education works to change societal and cultural norms of conduct that tend to perpetuate toxic masculinity and patriarchal dominance improving the learning outcomes for girls and youth.

## Mrs. Judite Sambo

Ministry of Education and Human Development

### Mozambique

*O Programa Quinquenal do Governo 2020-2024, o Governo inscreveu como Prioridade I, no âmbito da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano: "assegurar o acesso e participação equitativos de todas as crianças, até ao final do Ensino Primário (EP), com foco na integração de crianças com necessidades educativas especiais (NEE) e redução das disparidades regionais e de género".*

*A crise da educação no desenvolvimento e nos resultados de aprendizagem das raparigas tem efeitos muito negativos: a rapariga torna-se vulnerável e corre o risco de sofrer vários tipos de violência. Por exemplo alguns dados de pesquisas das organizações da sociedade civil indicam que a violência é frequente tanto na escola como em casa (ROSC, 2015). Outra pesquisa sobre as Percepções dos Alunos sobre o Assédio Sexual e Abuso Sexual nas Escolas Secundárias revelou que 64,45% de rapazes e 59,5% de raparigas, dos 1200 alunos entrevistados, já ouviram falar de casos de violência sexual nas suas escolas e 12% sabia de alguém que desistiu da escola devido ao assédio e abuso sexual (CESC, 2017). Dados do Instituto Nacional de Estatística sobre a Violência Doméstica referentes ao período de 2014 a 20163 revelaram que a violência contra a criança aumentou significativamente.*

*Em estes moldes o Governo de Moçambique, tem procurado dar um grande enfoque na provisão de educação para todos, sem nenhum tipo de discriminação. Consubstanciado na Constituição da República, no seu artigo 92, em Moçambique, "a educação constitui direito e dever de cada cidadão", sendo que, o Estado deve promover a extensão do acesso à educação e à formação profissional contínua, em*



*igualdade de condições, a todos os cidadãos, especialmente a crianças incorporando o aspecto de género. Este direito à educação é promovido e disponibilizado através do Sistema Nacional de Educação, cujos princípios foram estabelecidos pela Lei no 6/92, de 6 de Maio e demais legislação em vigor.*

**Translation:**

In the Government's Five-Year Programme 2020-2024, the Government has set as Priority I, within the scope of Education and Human Development: "ensure equitable access and participation of all children, until the end of Primary Education (PE), with a focus on integrating children with special educational needs (SEN) and reducing regional and gender disparities".

The education crisis on girls' development and learning outcomes has very negative effects: the girl becomes vulnerable and runs the risk of suffering various types of violence. For example, research data from civil society organizations indicates that violence is frequent both at school and at home (ROSC, 2015). Another survey on Students' Perceptions of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse in Secondary Schools revealed that 64.45% of boys and 59.5% of girls, out of the 1,200 students interviewed, had heard of cases of sexual violence in their schools and 12% knew of someone who had dropped out of school due to sexual harassment and abuse (CESC, 2017). Data from the National Institute of Statistics on Domestic Violence for the period 2014 to 2016 revealed that violence against children has increased significantly.

The Mozambican government has endeavored to focus on providing education for all, without discrimination of any kind. Article 92 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique states that "education is the right and duty of every citizen", and that the state must promote the extension of access to education and continuous

professional training, on equal terms, to all citizens, especially children, incorporating the gender aspect. This right to education is promoted and made available through the National Education System, the principles of which were established by Law No. 6/92 of 6 May and other legislation in force.

## Emerging Themes

### Climate change and education

Climate change has a direct impact on education. The increasing unfavorable climate conditions impact the delivery of quality education and sustainable learning outcomes for children, especially girls. Extreme weather conditions and events impact the availability of water and destroy the infrastructure and schools. Girls are disadvantaged in pursuit of their education as they collect water from long distances due to the occurrence of drought and low rainfall. Inadequate water supply affects girls' learning outcomes as there is unfavorable sanitation in schools when girls are menstruating. This directly affects girls learning outcomes as they are forced to stay home, leading to their dropouts. Violent weather conditions lead to the distraction of schools and infrastructure and girls drop out of schools due to the distraction of roads and bridges as they travel long distances to schools. Thus climate change directly impacts education sustainability for girls.

### Child-headed households

There has been an increase in the rise of child-headed families. Children adopt the parental role when their parents die. The children pick up the responsibility to care for themselves or the siblings left behind. Girls are most affected as they drop out of school to work part-time jobs to fend for their siblings and basic commodities. Girl



children picking up parental roles are vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence. The girls are susceptible to school dropouts and poor learning outcomes in school because of financial and socioeconomic hardships. Due to no education finance, children drop out of school and are forced into marriages or some opt for the streets where they are more vulnerable.

## Conclusion

In the 2023 celebrations of the International Day of the Girl Child, the Kuyenda Collective webinar presented the challenges, effects, and opportunities in advancing sustainable education outcomes for girls. The emerging themes are evidence of the gender gaps in accessing quality and basic education is wide, especially in rural areas where most families live below the poverty datum line and patriarchy presents gender imbalances in education attainment. The recommendations raised reveal advocacy efforts to promote a sustainable education for girls. Thus, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure the promotion of a safe learning environment and respect girl's rights and social rights to eliminate cases of violence and early marriages that affect their learning outcomes.



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