The Working Group on Girls
CSW69 Adolescent Girls' Shadow Report for Beijing +30

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As preparations began for the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995, The Working Group on Girls (WGG) formed at the request of UNICEF and out of the need (and insistence of advocates) to recognize the particular realities girls around the world face: that by the time they become adults, many of their rights have already been lost during their childhood. Many lacked schooling and/or were prevented from attending due to household chores and family responsibilities, early marriage and child-bearing, and societal preference given to boys.

With strong leadership from women from the African regions, The WGG and women from all over the world collaborated, networked, strategized and met with numerous NGOs and government delegates to convince them that girls must be included in the Beijing Platform for Action. As a result of their strong collective advocacy, Section L on The Girl-Child was unanimously adopted by the 189 Member States. Since then, the Commission on the Status of Women has been mandated to review the Platform annually. The task of the WGG has been to maintain a strong voice to ensure that the rights of the girl-child are implemented. Since the first review in 1998, when 15 girls from all over the world came to the UN to voice their views on the issues affecting them, the engagement and empowerment of girls at the UN has been a hallmark of the Working Group on Girls.

As part of the mission of the WGG to ensure girls' inclusion as equal participants in all decisions affecting them and to ensure girls' needs and priorities are addressed, the WGG developed and distributed a toolkit and facilitation guide throughout the WGG networks for girls to lead local conversation circles with each other on Section L of the Platform for Action on the Girl-Child. These local consultations were hosted by and among girls from May 2024 through July 2024. A conversation summary reporting form was provided so that the information collected could be shared easily with the WGG, and subsequently UN Women, Member States, and other allies in the lead up to the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This CSW69 Adolescent Girls' Shadow Report encompasses the information received from these local consultations. **We hope that this report will inform Member States' declaration for CSW69 for Beijing +30 and subsequent actions for girls' rights and priorities at the local and regional levels.**

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Evident throughout girls' discussions, girls continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violations of their rights that prevent girls from exercising and enjoying their rights and developing their full potential. Many of the issues discussed cut across multiple strategic objectives in Section L of the Beijing Platform for Action.

This shadow report includes insights from approximately 670 participants, primarily between the ages of 10-19 from 18 countries. Girls' local reports highlight the many challenges faced by girls including discrimination, educational disparities, health barriers, economic exploitation, various forms of violence against girls, and biased family dynamics. Key points include the need to address discrimination in all facets of girls' lives, promote girls' participation in decision-making, respond to and eliminate violence against girls, enhance and ensure education opportunities, and strengthen the role of families in supporting girls. Additionally, the report calls attention to the importance of addressing emerging issues like Artificial Intelligence and gender equality, as well as girls' inclusion in environmental sustainability and climate crisis response mechanisms.

Outlined for each strategic objective are girls' recommendations and priorities for the implementation of Section L, with an emphasis on eliminating discrimination against the girl-child. Girls' recommendations cover various aspects such as promoting gender equality in education at all levels, changing cultural attitudes, implementing policies that promote girls' health and wellbeing, investing in disaggregated data collection, protecting girls from violence, and instituting accountability mechanisms for girls' rights. Highlighted throughout is the importance of education, awareness-raising, and participation of girls to combat discrimination and promote their well-being in society, including involving girls in policy-making.

Based on girls' reports, since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was established thirty years ago, *not one of the strategic objectives of Section L- The Girl Child has been achieved.* **Achieving the strategic objectives of Section L requires a concerted multi-stakeholder approach that includes girls' recommendations, involving committed and immediate efforts by multilateral institutions, all levels of government, civil society organizations, communities, and families to ensure girls can thrive throughout their lives.**

Participant Representation:

The WGG received reports from various community-based organizations, schools, and groups, who coordinated the local girl-led conversation circles (all groups are listed at the end of this report). In total, **40 local consultations were held with approximately 670 participants**, **primarily in the range of 10-19 years of age**, with 55% of participants reporting between the ages of 15-19 and 24.78% of participants reporting between 10-14 years of age. Of the groups reporting, there were 9.25% of participants under the age of 10 years. 25 conversation circles were hosted in person, 14 were held online, and 1 conversation circle held in a hybrid format. 39 of the 40 conversation circles were noted as being girl-led.

Participants included girls from 18 Countries: Australia, Brazil, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mauritius, México, Nepal, Paraguay, Perú, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, USA, Zimbabwe.

Responding to optional demographic questions, **220 participants identified as coming from a rural community**, and **100 participants reported coming from or living in a region affected**

by conflict. **148 participants identify as a member of a Native, Indigenous, or Tribal community**. Furthermore, **32 participants with disabilities** took part in consultations, and **53 participants noted they represent or are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community**.

Shadow Report Organization:

This report is divided into the following three sections. The first two sections are organized according to the nine Strategic Objectives of Section L within the Platform for Action. The third section provides further recommendations girls would like to see in Section L on The Girl-Child in light of critical issues affecting girls.

1. Girls' Reports on Existing Challenges to the Implementation of Section L: The Girl-Child
2. Girls' Recommendations and Priorities on the Implementation of Section L
3. Additions to Section L: Critical and Emerging Issues Affecting Girls
    3.1. Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality
    3.2. Addressing Environmental Sustainability and the Climate Crisis

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1. **GIRLS' REPORTS ON EXISTING CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION L**

    ○ **Strategic objective L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child.**

        ■ 50% of groups discussed strategic objective L.1.
        ■ Several responses noted that there is a **lack of awareness of the discrimination girls face, preventing society from seeing that there are issues girls face.**
        ■ Several groups discussed how money and finances play a part in the discrimination of girls.
            ● Some noted that **parents are more financially restrictive to their daughters than their sons.**
            ● Also, **parents are more willing to invest money in an education for their sons rather than their daughters.**
            ● Additionally, responses noted that **poverty itself often drives some discrimination. Families in poverty sometimes force their daughters into early or child marriages**, to receive financial gain from the dowries.

        ■ **Girls also face a lot of discrimination in their education.** Girls are sometimes discouraged, or banned from attending school.
        ■ Additionally, as a result of child marriages, many girls do not complete their education, and are not able to progress in society. Girls may not even finish their primary education.

- Furthermore, many **societies still view a woman's role to be a household caregiver. This prevents girls from being valued professionally and intellectually.** Some responses noted that **as a result of this**, **girls struggle more than boys to obtain job opportunities, and leadership roles.** One response noted that in their country, a prestigious medical school admitted to altering girls' entrance exam scores to ensure that more men became doctors.

- Girls are often put into unsafe or dangerous situations.
    - **Girls face harassment in many areas of society, including transportation, schools, at home, and more.** Girls feel they need to cover up on public transportation, wearing baggy clothing to avoid harassment.
    - **Additionally, girls face phsycial, emotional, and sexual violence.** Girls are subjected to beating, hitting, and verbal abuse. Girls are also still subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM).
    - Sexual harassment occurs in schools and other community spaces intended to be safe spaces. Also, sexual exploitation occurs.

- **Legal and institutional biases are present within many systems in society. These biases make it difficult for girls to receive adequate protection for their rights. Moreover, there is a lack of awareness and enforcement of laws put in place to stop gender based discrimination.**

- **Strategic objective L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.**

    - This strategic objective had the most responses out of all 9 strategic objectives, with 57.5% of responders discussing this objective.
    - **Cultural stereotypes around a girl's role in society are still very relevant. These gender stereotypes can be harmful to girls' mental health, making them feel worthless and minimized. Girls develop internalized misogyny as a result of culture stereotypes.**
    - **Girls often struggle with body issues and problems with their confidence.** Therefore, a lot of girls contrive their self worth from their appearance.
    - There is an **inadequate awareness around menstruation and female reproduction, causing stigma** around the issue.
    - Many responses note that **girls are expected to be at the home learning chores instead of receiving an education.**

- Other societies place too many expectations around women and girls. Even **girls who do go to school are expected to know how to do all domestic work, while being well-involved academically, whereas boys do not have the same expectations put on them.**
- **Girls are sometimes expected to be successful in school, yet submissive and quiet. Whereas boys are able to have fun, play sports.**
- **Parents and society expect girls to be calm and submissive.** Girls noted that even amongst themselves they replicate this expectation to be submissive and tolerant around their male peers.
- **Girls experience more pressure to be a good example for their younger siblings.**
- **Jobs have been very separated based on gender.** A number of responses discussed how **many jobs were seen as boy jobs or girl jobs.** Additionally, "boy" jobs are occupations that tend to require higher IQ, and are more respected. These jobs also pay more. **Women are placed into jobs like teaching, nursing, and jobs that align with the nurturing stereotype placed on women that are usually low paying.**
- The **media often perpetuates stereotypes** onto people in the real world, making them become relevant outside of social media and more.
- Often the **practices set in place to remove discrimination towards women and girls are not effective**, or are not enforced to a high standard.
- Women and girls face food insecurity, and there are negative attitudes around women needing food.

○ **Strategic objective L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.**

- 50% of groups discussed promoting and protecting the rights of the girl-child and increasing awareness of her needs and potential.
- **Deeply ingrained cultural norms and traditions within society often maintain gender bias. Often, efforts used to raise awareness can be resisted from community members who view such initiatives as an attack on or threat to tradition and culture.**
  - **Challenges start at the family level where girls do not have equal access to know their rights as girls, and these challenges persist at the community level.**
  - Religious expectations place a lot of pressure on women and girls to act a certain way.
  - Girls noted experiencing double standards as compared to boys.

- **Education and socialization:**

- **Lack of access to quality education hinders understanding and acceptance of gender equality.**
- **Furthermore, economic barriers faced in families result in the prioritization of boys' opportunities and education over girls.**
- Girls may be especially disadvantaged, limiting their ability to advocate for their own rights.
- Because of gender stereotypes and discrimination, girls grow up with self- images of being weak and stay loyal to the other gender.
- Furthermore, girls highlighted that some men and boys seek to perpetuate gender equality and that they have "weaponized incompetence," keeping girls uneducated.
- Girls grow up being shamed and underappreciated because of their gender, so they begin to see themselves as lesser than.
- Girls are socialized to project hate and insecurity on other girls.
- Society makes women compete with other women for different things, placing a divide between them.

- **Legal and Policy Gaps:**
  - **Laws protecting the rights of girls and laws to combat discrimination either do not exist or are not enforced effectively in some areas.**
  - Some politicians are aware of the challenges faced by girl children in our communities and have been supporting girls from poor families when they face difficulties, but many **politicians do not prioritize gender equality.**

- **Lack of awareness or knowledge among girls about their rights and available resources:**
  - **Many girls reported that girls are either unaware of their rights or do not have the freedom to exercise them.**
  - Some girls noted that they are aware of their rights and that there are various laws and policies set in place to protect them, but they do not understand how to take advantage of them.
  - Additionally, girls who are without an education are especially unaware of their rights.
  - While advocacy platforms for girls may exist in some communities, many girls are not aware of them. Platforms that do exist for the advocacy of girls are unapproachable, ineffective, or insufficient for girls to voice their concerns and needs.
  - Some of the girls, especially in schools, are aware of their human rights, such as the right to education, the right to be loved, to be given basic needs and the right to be heard and participate.

- ■ **Violence and Safety Concerns:**
  - ● **Girls often face threats of violence, including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and trafficking, which can deter them from seeking their rights and protection or participating in awareness programs.**
  - ● **There are issues with reporting of sexual assault cases because of a lack of trust in the police system.** Victim blaming occurs within the system, and rape cases are not taken seriously.
  - ● Police lack education and training on gender sensitivity and biases.

- ○ **Strategic objective L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.**

  - ■ 55% of groups discussed this specific strategic objective in eliminating discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
  - ■ **Harmful Gender Norms & Expectations Resulting in Discrimination:**
    - ● Gender stereotyping affects the cognitive development of girls as they are expected to take specific positions, and certain attitudes are expected of them.

  - ■ **Cultural practices that may cause the girl-child not to be allowed to go to school include:**
    - ● Fear of educating girls that it will make them more powerful over men, this hinders girls access to education and training.
    - ● Gender inequality in families that are poor so that they only educate their sons and leave out the daughters.
    - ● Girls may not be taken to school or prohibited from learning new technical skills which are categorized to be boy's skills, for example garage skills and entrepreneurial skills and training are sometimes referred to as special for boy children since they are the one who will be leading the families in the future.
    - ● Child marriages and teenage pregnancy prevent girls access to quality education, causing them to drop out of school, preventing them from pursuing their education and a career.
    - ● Trauma from past events like rape or Female Genital Mutilation prevent girls from attending school.

  - ■ **Girls' Experience of Discrimination:**
    - ● **Discrimination is internalized, learned from a young age** – enhancing discrimination from childhood between the natural role of a girl vs. the role of a boy –" We were taught as a kid (pink, ruffles, sparkles for girls, – muscle tees, blues for boys) instilling the differences between girls and boys early on.

- Girls dislike when boys make comments about stereotypes that are ingrained, especially in sports. Girls mentioned that they would like to play soccer and that it bothers them that boys think they cannot.
- Some girls feel that in their school they have almost the same opportunities as the boys, as some schools have a policy of inclusion of women and equal treatment for both sexes.
- In their own families and in their communities girls see how women are expected to do housework or study for careers related to caring for others, such as nursing or cooking.
- Girls see discrepancies between what is a mum's job and a dad's job - dads get rewarded for doing what is expected of mums.
- "What we see influences us as well (movies etc)- girls are taught to cook, manage the house affairs, cultural influences and traditional cultural values are difficult to change."
- Safety issues for women and girls lead them to sacrifice education/study as "we don't feel safe to get public transport alone or at night – we have to be more aware – we are taught to be scared when alone."

- **Challenges to Girls' Right to Quality Education and Training:**
  - **Eliminating discrimination against girls in education, skills development, and training involves addressing numerous challenges. These challenges are multifaceted and often interlinked, encompassing socio-cultural, economic, political, and infrastructural aspects.** Here are some of the key challenges faced by girls:
    - **Negative gender norms and stereotypes** limit access to quality education and opportunities.
    - **Cultural norms and expectations from parents diminish girls' confidence and opportunity to realize their potential.**
    - **Early Marriage and childbearing** prevents many girls from completing school.
    - **Family and household chores relegated to girls** decrease their time in school.
    - **Girls experience gender-based violence and harassment in school and in the community, including en route to school.**
    - **Trauma from past events, such as rape or female genital mutilation** interfere with learning.
    - **Lack of legal frameworks for protection of girls' right to education and training, and freedom from violence.**

- Poor families who are forced to limit who can attend school due to **inability to pay school fees or safe transport**, often give priority to boys.
- **Conflict and crises in their regions disrupt schooling.**
- **Poor sanitation and lack of menstrual products, toilet facilities, and clean water** decreases girls' attendance at school.

- **Accessing quality education is also difficult due to**:
  - **Lack of good teachers:** "Most teachers do not teach in school. They either introduce the topic and say it is an assignment, or they give out pamphlets for us to read on our own."
  - Schools lack discipline of staff (teachers) and also students.
  - Schools **lack libraries and science labs.**
  - Schools **lack enough space for practical instruction** even on agriculture.
  - There is a **lack of adequate and safe transportation** to school.
  - **Lack of access to schools in remote locations** is a significant problem.
  - **Digital education for girls and adolescents**, **and the challenges of the digital divide** is also problematic.
  - Boys are encouraged to participate in STEM and digital classes more than girls in public schools.
  - Boys' schools have more STEM education within the curriculum than girls' schools.
  - STEM classes and extracurriculars are often dominated by boys and can be less welcoming of girls.
  - This **inequality in STEM education** makes girls less likely to take these classes in school and to apply to these careers in college.
- When seeking employment, especially those educated in public schools that offer a basic education, girls often need to seek additional knowledge outside of school, such as complementary courses, internships and practical experience, in order to compete on equal terms with other better-prepared candidates.

- **From education discrimination to employment discrimination:**
  - Gender can significantly influence the academic and professional experience.

- **Girls experience sexism in hiring**- males of the same age are more likely to get interviews despite female applicants' related experience over competing male applicants.
- Male candidates are thought of as more capable, and men with lower qualifications are prioritized over women.
- **Girls noted that there is a lack of opportunities for women compared to men. Women are kept away from or are not informed of job opportunities that are not considered appropriate for women.**
- In some communities, girls noted that young women especially from a specific age are dissuaded from going into extracurriculars due to societal judgment and **pressure to get married and have children.** "No one will marry her after she turns 30," was referenced.
- **Women who attempt to enter courses for predominantly male fields of work face negative stereotypes and harassment** which contributes to the low female representation in these courses.
- Male-dominated workforces in manual labor jobs contribute to the stereotype that women cannot do such work or cannot do it well; women often experience harassment in these areas.
- **Women are not treated seriously in the workplace.**
- Even in **high posting government jobs the men with the same job are given more priority than their female counterparts.**
- **Women and girls do not receive equal pay for the same work as men and boys**- especially as they get higher in their field.
- **Women are the first to be expected to sacrifice her job when having children.**
- **Outings and celebrations are geared towards males** allowing them to create relationships and get ahead, whereas females struggle to make workplace connections.
- **Women are not being taught skills for networking** and often feel less confident and without resources to make connections with people in higher positions.
- **Promotions are influenced by common stereotypes of what 'female' jobs usually are, and women and girls may be passed over for certain promotions despite qualifications.**

- **Strategic objective L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.**
  - 22.5% of groups discussed eliminating discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
  - **Nutrition**
    - In many societies, **girls face disadvantages that affect their health and nutrition. There is a lack of awareness and education on balanced diet and good nutrition, as well as economic barriers in accessing equal health and nutrition.**
    - There are many cultural traditions that emphasize feeding boys rather than girls, leading to poor distribution of food within the family. **When there is limited food in the household, boys get the bigger portion** under the assumption that they require more energy in doing whatever they do.
    - This **leads to more malnutrition, anemia and other health problems in girls and women, and aggravates existing health problems.**
    - Girls who get pregnant early are not given enough nutritious food "as the family is already upset with them (for bringing shame upon the family)" which affects their health and that of their unborn babies. While mothers need more nutrition during breastfeeding, they are encouraged to eat less at this time to return to their pre-baby weight.
    - Girls also noted boys are more free to eat what they want, while girls are subject to stereotypes and expectations of their weight.

  - **Healthcare information and access**
    - **Girls often do not have the freedom to access free healthcare** because they are dependent on men in the family for leave and money.
    - **Access to sexuality and health education among children is often limited, preventing girls from making informed choices about their bodies and health.** Though efforts have been made in access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health and rights, not every girl has enough knowledge and access. Where there is sex education, it is often inadequate and information is often segregated by sex.
    - **Without information on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), girls risk long-term implications: disruption of their education, chronic health risks, and high rates of female mortality.**

- **There are not enough peer education and outreach programmes that are being implemented.**
- **Most health centers are not comfortable for girls. They have no privacy and most of the professionals are men.**
- **Girls noted a lack of trust and confidentiality in the people providing health services**, as they are familiar people from the same area, being afraid they would spread information, "for example if a girl were to need a condom or pills, or if they tested HIV positive, they sometimes feel embarrassed and instead end up pregnant or contracting the HIV virus."
- **Girls also noted the struggle to obtain information about menstruation and accessing menstrual products.** Menstrual products are not affordable, therefore girls living in poverty are forced to use unsanitary items like cloth or tissue paper, which has caused infections and created other health risks.
- Additionally, in some cultures, an **understanding of female health is limited.**
- Some responses noted that **mental health support for girls was difficult to find, as girls feel they are not listened to.**

○ **Strategic objective L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.**

- 20% of groups discussed eliminating the economic exploitation of child labour and protecting young girls at work.
- **Child labour remains a significant issue in many countries.**
- **Girls are often exploited in domestic work.**
- Some children still cultivate big chunks of land, carry heavy loads on their head, and work for long hours.
- **Employers take advantage of youth, paying less for younger staff members doing the same job.**
- **Employment laws are inconsistent, differing in States and Territories.**
- **Girls are employed in bars to attract male clients.**
- Girls are employed in domestic house work for the benefit of their family/parents and removed from school in order to earn the family money to pay for their farming activities.
- **Girls are still considered to be the weaker sex than boys and considered as not being able to perform some tasks, hence paid lower than their male counterparts.**
- Girls are considered lazy because they are not aggressive as their male counterparts, which causes them to be paid lower than the boys.

- Ethical facets, cultural beliefs, and politics influence the prevalence of child labor.
- **People use children for work because they are cheaper to hire and are not aware of their rights.**
- Children are employed in mining because there are exceedingly small spaces to which they are sent, and the risk of fatality is big.
- The families of these children usually do not object because they are **usually from poor backgrounds** and require money.
- Girls and boys in the area often work in their free time to pay for things or courses outside of school.
- **Girls are sometimes victims of harassment in the workplace**, as their bodies have already developed- **they can feel the stares of older men or even their own bosses.**
- **They do not feel able to speak out because they are afraid of losing their jobs.**
- There are cases of underage girls in the area who go out to work in the streets on the orders of their parents, or even accompanying them.

- **Strategic objective L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.**

    - 40% of groups discussed eradicating violence against the girl-child.
    - **Girls experience violence in public, in school, at home, at workplaces, on their phones, offline and online, including physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and economic violence and abuse.**
        - **Girls highlighted a normalization of violence against girls.**
        - **Violence against girls is perpetrated by family members, teachers, peers, and strangers, including verbal and physical abuse, noting that most perpetrators are males, and are sometimes in positions of power or influence.**
        - Girls noted that some local authorities also violate citizens' rights within the context of the question on violence against the girl-child.
        - Kidnapping and trafficking are also threats girls face.
        - **The culture of violence can be experienced from one generation to the next.**
        - **Discrimination against girls and gender stereotypes contribute to violence against girls, as do depictions of violence in the media, including social media.**
        - **Girls noted that harassment by boys at school often targets girls' body image and that the objectification of girls and depictions of girls also contributes to negative self perception.**
        - Girls noted discrimination and favoritism in school and at home in the context of the question on violence against girls.

- Girls noted **discrimination due to marital and parental status.**
- There is a **lack of awareness within the community on the different forms of violence** and where and how it can occur.

- **Tech-facilitated violence against girls:**
  - **Many girls noted having been victims of cyberbullying.**
  - Girls highlighted that it is **challenging to assess violence or abuse that happens online** as the victims will normally not share their experiences.
  - **Online violence can happen anytime, anywhere, through texting or social media, including sexual harassment and psychological abuse**.
  - Online violence is often perpetrated **by perpetrators whose identity is unknown.**
  - The **effects of online violence and harassment affects girls mental health,** leaving girls stressed, anxious and fearful.
  - There is **often no way to stop perpetrators of tech-facilitated violence,** even if teachers or parents are informed, except in some cases by blocking a perpetrator's phone number.
  - **Girls also reported being targeted through Artificial Intelligence (AI), including the manipulation of girls' images, impersonation of people and voices for the purposes of manipulation.**

- **Prevention and Response**
  - **Preventing and responding to violence against girls is not prioritized by governments.**
  - The **response mechanisms and support services for survivors of gender-based violence and specifically violence against girls are inadequate.**
  - The implementation of government rules and policies are weak. There is **not a well organized and coordinated system to prevent, control, and manage violence against girls.**
  - **Mechanisms for speaking up about violence are inadequate, if they exist at all, and girls do not feel safe reporting violence.**
  - There are **often no safe spaces to go to for girls who experience violence.**
  - There is a **fear in reporting violence** sometimes because of stigmas, outcomes, as well as taboos around medical care.
  - Girls noted that there are **few or no laws to protect them online or to penalize the companies who allow online abuse.**
  - **Online safety education is not common practice.**

- There is a **lack of accountability by authorities in responding to violence against girls, including in school, online and by social media platforms.**

○ **Strategic objective L.8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.**

  ■ 17.5% of groups discussed strategic objective L.8, in addition to 62.5%of groups who discussed girls' financial and digital literacy, which is a critical component of girls' participation in social, economic, and political life.
  ■ **The promotion of girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life, and the means by which to participate remain limited.**
  ■ **Girls experience educational barriers to their participation in social, economic, and political life. Many girls still lack access to quality education due to poverty, cultural norms, and geographical barriers.**
  ■ Girls noted that **discriminatory laws, gender-stereotypes, cultural beliefs around gender roles, stigmas of specific career-choices, absence of democracy, patriarchy, male-dominated party executives, lack of equality in leadership positions and lack of prioritization of girls' empowerment inhibits their participation in social, economic, and political life.**
  ■ **Girls often have limited access to information on important issues** that broaden their horizons.
  ■ Girls are often **excluded from discussions about topics such as politics, traditions and business, due to gender stereotypes and socio-cultural norms, perpetuating the cycle of marginalization and limiting their ability to participate in decision-making processes.**
  ■ In many cases, parents still prioritize boys' participation in political and economic debates over girls, increasing the barriers girls face in development and increasing the knowledge, skills and confidence to ensure their voices are heard and influenced.
  ■ **Due to socio-cultural norms, domestic roles for girls over career development are often prioritized for girls.**
  ■ Girls highlighted that they are **not given a chance to be leaders or acquire higher positions especially in offices, political parties, or in their families, whereas boy children are given these opportunities.**
  ■ Girls expressed they are **not given space to elevate their voice, so they grow up thinking they can not do anything because they are powerless** and they have to get instructions from boy children and men.
  ■ There is a **lack of or skewed representation of girls pursuing finance.** Girls also confront a "palatability of representation" to meet societal

expectations of traditional femininity in a non-confrontational nature while still being a ''girl boss.''

- Girls also noted that they are **not given a chance to own wealth or inherit anything**, for example a house or a farm because of discrimination.
- **Girls emphasized that women have to work twice as hard to be accepted and considered good enough to be given leadership opportunities to overcome gender stereotypes and norms**, and that due to the lack of women in the field or leaders to look up to **because of this discrimination, women do not feel welcome and girls are not encouraged to go into these fields.**
- Girls pointed out the **detracted focus on women and girls pursuing certain fields, such as STEM** careers, which is critical for economic participation.
- Girls also highlighted that **women in politics are often not respected.**

○ **Strategic objective L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.**

- 35% of conversation circles discussed strengthening the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.
- **Girls still experience discrimination within the family.** Some of the key challenges girls face in the family include: **negative cultural and social norms, early marriage and childbearing, domestic responsibilities, violence and abuse, economic constraints, and lack of parental awareness and support.**
- Girls are subjected to **high discouragement from families**. When girls are encouraged that they have the ability to do anything boys can do, there is a lack of practical implementation or support.
- **Favoritism is shown to boys**– a girl child can be denied a certain service to give a chance to a boy child to finish first. For example, both a girl and boy child can perform well on the last examination to go to another level of education, but a girl can be denied and stopped to give that chance to a boy to continue with studies since the family economic status is low.
- Some girls noted that some families deprioritize caring for the girl child because of the notion that if she marries, she will go to another family.
- **It was noted that parents still assign the majority of household chores to girls, whereas boys are given greater freedom** and that boys only help if the girl is sick or away from home.
- **Teaching and training within the household is still based on negative gender norms and stereotypes**– for example, girls are taught how to keep the home clean and how to cook, whereas boys are taught to do

things that require more physical energy. Girls are raised with the idea that they will be taking care of the family when they have children.

- **Girls and women's care work goes undervalued and unappreciated.**
- **Girls noted that they feel a difference in upbringing in the family**-parents see daughters as support, and hope that they can be an example for younger siblings. Girls feel the pressure to stand firm in uncomfortable moments, even though they do not necessarily see themselves as examples.
- **Girls noted their freedom is also more restricted because of threats to girls' safety in the community.**
- Another challenge is that **parents do not encourage their daughters to study stereotypically male dominated fields.** Parents sometimes give incentives for female children to pursue studies and careers that do not have as heavy of an academic lift or that are traditionally considered feminine.
- There is also **discouragement of girls and young women to pursue high-earning careers** because of harmful traditional norms that prioritize marriage prospects, fearing women who earn more than men will not be able to marry.
- Girls noted that although many parents are beginning to understand gender equality and encouraging girls to join STEM fields, some parents still lag behind. Girls noted that in many families it is also seen as okay if girls struggle in STEM classes, while it is not seen as okay if boys struggle in STEM.
- Girls stated they are **not listened to in their families.**
- Girls noted that the **stereotypes and traditional cultural norms are passed down from generations**, and if they challenge these norms they are seen as defying the older generations' ideology.
- In family interactions, girls pointed out that boys are often allowed to get away with being ruder than girls.
- Girls noted that **puberty is a challenge for girls in their families**.
- **Girls and women still face gender-based violence in the family** and face pressure from society to stay in violent, abusive situations.
- **Girls and women's mental health is not taken seriously in the family.**

2. GIRLS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION L

- **Strategic objective L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child.**

    - **In Education:**
        - Departments of Education should set up programs to educate communities on gender based discrimination.
        - In schools, programs should be set up to educate students on menstruation to remove stigma.
        - Sexual assault in schools should be eliminated.
        - Additionally, several responses noted that conversations about domestic violence and sexual assault should be started in order to educate students on how to recognize and avoid dangerous situations.
        - Educators should promote a safe space in classrooms, in order for girls to have access to safe adults.
        - Schools should promote girls to become comfortable with technology, in order to adapt to a changing world.
        - Educators should encourage girls to take on leadership roles, so that girls' voices can be heard.
        - Additionally, educators should promote female leaders in the classroom so that girls can have positive role models.
        - In general, girls should be encouraged to complete a certain level of education in order to progress in society.
        - Zero tolerance policies should be enacted in schools for gender based discrimination of any kind. Discrimination against girls should be met with consequences and counseling services should be provided.
        - Educators should be put through gender awareness training. Schools should implement services to young girls who are mothers or wives, and provide them with support in order for them to complete their education.
        - Educators should encourage girls to excel in school exams and assignments.

    - **In Society:**
        - Education and information about gender based discrimination should be readily available in societies.
        - Furthermore, communities should encourage conversations with diverse groups to foster understanding and acceptance.

- Cultural attitudes, traditional societal norms, and normalized behavior that harm, embarrass, or subject women and girls should be examined, challenged and addressed.
- Men should be encouraged to engage in discussion on female issues.
- Additionally, communities should educate citizens on consent.
- Parents should be educated on the harm of child marriage and preventing girls from recieiving education.
- Parents should be educated and invest in their daughters' education and future, in order for girls to have support in society.
- Parents should be educated to discuss topics that are deemed taboo, so that girls feel they have support from their families.
- Girls should be encouraged to participate in income generating activities, in order to have financial independence. Several participants noted that girls should have equal access to the same financial resources given by their parents as boys do.

- **In policy and policy implementation:**
  - Justice systems must be strengthened.
  - Many responses noted that governments should enact laws that prohibit gender based violence, sexual assault, child marriage, FGM, and other laws that can protect girls and women in society.
  - Moreover, these laws should be enforced heavily upon implementation, in order for the legislation to be effective.
  - Stricter laws should be implemented to protect women if original legislation is ineffective or incomplete.
  - Governments should hold perpetrators of sexual assault accountable in court.
  - Additionally, governments should create communities and shelters to support women who are victims of domestic violence or assault, and should encourage sexual assault survivors to report the crime. Create support networks and public policy strategies that facilitate access to help.
  - Many responses indicated that governments should set up programs that educate citizens on discrimination. Training programs should be implemented to educate the public about underlying bias and harmful stereotypes.
  - If child marriage is still legal in a society, there should be programs put in place to support young wives or mothers, financially and emotionally.
  - Educational scholarships should be created for girls in order to encourage female education, and remove the financial barrier that girls face with education.

- Governments should provide girls with vocational skills to ensure that they will be able to obtain job opportunities.
- Government and non-government should improve empowering girl children to raise their economic status and improve the spirit of being independent.
- Furthermore, governments should ensure that educational policies do not discriminate against girls.
- Introduce, implement and strengthen initiatives to support teen mothers.
- Menstrual products should be more accessible and affordable to girls. Schools should provide products, as well as other public places.
- Additionally, malpractices within the medical field that discriminate against girls and women should be eliminated.

- **Data Collection**
  - **To eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and to improve equality for girls, it is crucial to collect comprehensive and reliable data across various dimensions of their lives. Collecting this data with a gender perspective could allow us to identify areas that require greater attention and thus implement programs to improve equality for girls.**

  - **Disaggregated data collection and analysis should include:**
    - Demographic data, including age, gender, region.
    - Data on the fulfillment of girls' rights.
    - **Education:**
      - Data on girls' access to education, what types of education, data on the availability and quality of educational resources, including textbooks, teaching materials, and technology
      - Data on school enrollment, attendance, performance, and completion rates for girls.
      - Data on girls' withdrawal from school, including reasons for withdrawal, and follow-up measures to further understand and address the cause of withdrawal.
      - Data on literacy and numeracy levels and skills.
      - Data on girls' financial literacy, digital literacy and STEM education, as well as girls' access to and use of technology.
      - Data on girls pursuing secondary education.

- **Health**
    - Data on access to health centers.
    - Data on girls' access to healthcare services, including reproductive health services, vaccinations, and mental health support.
    - Data on prevalence of illnesses, incidence of disease, rates of infections, chronic illnesses and health conditions.
    - Disaggregated nutritional status information on nutritional status, including rates of malnutrition, anemia, and other dietary deficiencies.
    - Data on access to menstrual hygiene products and facilities, and knowledge about menstrual health management.
    - Health Outcomes Rates of adolescent pregnancies, maternal health outcomes, and prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
    - Data on girls' mental health, including on depression and anxiety, self-image, and eating disorders.
- **Cultural and social norms**
    - Data on societal norms and attitudes towards girls.
    - Data on cultural attitudes and practices that impact gender equality, such as gender roles, preferences for sons.
    - Data on negative attitudes towards girls and women, where/how stereotypes are still formed, what boys are taught.
    - Data on perceptions of gender equality and attitudes towards girls' rights.
    - Data on time girls spend doing household chores per day.
    - Information on the level of encouragement and support from families and communities for girls' education, health, well-being and empowerment.
    - Data on the impact of specific programs and interventions aimed at improving gender equality and the well-being of girls.
- **Protection and Safety Violence and Abuse**
    - Prevalence of various forms of violence and abuse, including domestic violence, gender-based violence

and harassment, sexual violence, and exploitation, including trafficking.

- Data on girls' safety.
- Data on harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Data on girls' treatment at the family level in terms of decision making, social issues, inheritances issues and whistleblowing to prohibit violence against girl children.
- Reports of bullying and safety concerns in both educational settings and public areas.
  - **Legal Protections**
    - Data on girls' access to legal protection.
    - Data on the enforcement of laws and policies protecting girls from violence and exploitation.
    - Data on accountability and follow up from government and non government sectors in enforcement of laws and rights against violations.
  - **Political and Civic Engagement**
    - Data on girls' and young women's participation and in political and civic activities, including leadership roles and their representation in public life
    - Information on girls' involvement in decision-making processes at home, school, and community levels.
    - Data on girls' participation in different development activities and in different services.
    - Data on access to and use of digital technologies, including the internet, mobile phones, and computers.
  - **Economic Participation**
    - Data on girls' and young women's participation in the labor
    - Types of employment and wage statistics disaggregated by gender and age, as well as unemployment data.
    - Data on girls' access to financial and economic opportunities, including access to banking, credit, and other financial services.
    - Data on equality of opportunities in any field.
    - Data on male-dominated workplaces opening up places for specifically girls and women.
    - Data on household income and poverty levels

- **Additionally, in respect of girls' right to be heard on all matters affecting them, information must also be obtained from surveys, interviews and focus groups with girls to provide a better understanding of girls' experiences, their lifestyles, aspirations, the issues and obstacles they face, their needs and the cultural practices that create their own paths. These spaces must involve active listening and girls' participation in the development of solutions to problems and what they would like to see improved.**

- **By collecting and using this diverse data with a gender perspective, policymakers and practitioners can develop evidence-based intervention plans that address the root causes of gender inequality, support girls' well-being, and enable girls to succeed in all aspects of life.**

- **Strategic objective L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.**

  - Awareness should be raised in communities about gender equality.
  - Educate parents around why their daughters deserve equal treatment.
  - Access to reproductive health should be improved.
  - Governments should become involved in situations with a risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), and FGM should be prevented.
  - Menstrual products should be readily available at more public places.
  - As mentioned in the previous strategic objective, child marriage should be prevented. Legally, governments should create legislation that depends on both parties having consented to the marriage.
  - Girls' confidence should be built up.
  - Girls and women should support one another.
  - Girls should be exposed to different female role models who break gender stereotypes.
  - Educate communities about the benefits of girls in STEM.
  - Parents should ensure boys learn how to do domestic and caregiving work as well.
  - Empower girls to love work and show them how to be successful at it.
  - Support girls to form savings accounts.
  - Ensure that teachers give students equal treatment based on their gender.
  - Have educators sit down and talk to boys about female discrimination and cultural issues that girls face.
  - Consent should be learned and taught in schools.

- Harassment in school should not be tolerated. Should harassment be committed, punishment should be strong enough to deter boys from repeating offenses.
- Males should be involved in community programs for girls empowerment and equality.
- Communities should actively break down the stereotypes of girl jobs vs. boy jobs. Also, they should showcase women who have been trailblazers in fields that have fewer women.
- Education on all members of society should occur on the negative impacts on girls body image and mental health as a result of social media.

- **Strategic objective L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.**

  - **Public Awareness and Support for Girls' Rights:**
    - Education is a powerful tool in the fight for gender equality.
    - Spread, educate, and promote actions in favor of equal treatment for girls and to raise awareness of girls' rights and potential using social media and various platforms to reach a broad audience, while also fostering more intimate spaces for reflection and analysis.
    - Engage local community leaders, elders, and influencers in discussions to gain their support and promote gender equality as a community value. Approach the topic with respect for local traditions and customs, finding ways to align gender equality with cultural values.
    - Create online platforms to promote girls' and women's rights that are engaging and safe, free from online harassment.
    - Equip girls with the knowledge of their rights.
    - Establish mentorship and life skills programs to educate girls about their rights and how they can reach their full potential.
    - Implement more social projects that address girls' rights.
    - Promote awareness campaigns aimed at schools with low budgets, as well as investing more in education to improve its quality.
    - Guarantee access to the internet and cell phone signal in rural areas.
    - Support effective, inclusive laws to protect girls' rights and opportunities.
    - Interrupt sexist and discriminatory language.
    - Include women and girls in decision-making.
    - Engage men in the discussion as to why gender equality makes the community stronger.

- Engage men in the fight to end violence against women and children.
- Increase funding to eliminate discrimination against girls and women.
- Support non-profit organizations that are focused on ending harassment, violence and exploitation of girls and women.
- Support events that highlight girls' and women's achievements.
- Increase media coverage on equality of opportunities.
- Information and support should reach parents.
- Encourage families to ensure equal access for both girls and boys within the family in all aspects - socially, economically, educationally and healthily, without exception, the same treatment given to boys, should be also given to girl children equally.
- To ensure boys become better allies for gender equality, it is essential to start at home. Parents must address and support attitudes against sexism and promote gender equality from an early age.

- **Education:**
  - Keep girls in school.
  - To strengthen girls' capacity, self-confidence, and self-awareness, education and training should be supported by parents or family, ensuring they have the necessary resources for personal growth.
  - Scholarships and academic support should be provided to help girls continue their education.
  - Reading clubs, writing workshops should be organized to enhance comprehension, analysis, and communication skills; opportunities for girls to support each other through recreational, artistic, sports, and educational groups.
  - Provide healthy development and growth spaces, access to health services, education, and personal development training for girls
  - Create safe spaces where girls can discuss their issues and receive support.
  - Integrate gender studies into the school curriculum to educate children from a young age about gender equality and rights.
  - Programs should include awareness talks on responsible sexual behavior for adolescents.
  - Address underlying financial issues faced by families that contribute to economic bias, prioritizing boy's education and opportunities.
  - Provide scholarships and financial aid to support girls' education and reduce the economic burden on families.

- Offer vocational training and skill development programs for girls to enhance their economic independence, nurture respect and upskilling.

- **Political Engagement, Legal Protections and Policy Reform:**
  - Politicians should be made aware of inequalities girls face.
  - Girls must also be given a chance in policy decision-making forums and meetings with politicians so that they can express their thoughts and opinions and discuss challenges they are facing.
  - The UN must support girls to petition their government to implement policies on gender equality.
  - Promote engagement in peaceful protests and demonstrations for girls' voices to be heard.
  - Organize events and programs to raise awareness about the situation.
  - Enact legal reforms and the effective enforcement of existing laws to protect girls' rights.
  - Advocate for stronger legal protections and policies that safeguard girls' rights and ensure their implementation and enforcement, including inheritance laws for girls.
  - Ensure that child protection policies and frameworks are in place to protect the girl child.
  - Put strong leaders in supervisory roles to protect girls, and impose strict measures for protection.
  - Introduce a special police force that would specialize in helping girls know their rights and help make sure they are not violated.
  - Educate the Police to deal with rape and other sexual or gender-based violence.
  - Educate communities about existing laws and rights to empower girls and their families to seek justice.
  - Educate parents on how to support their children who have been assaulted.
  - Provide services and safe spaces where girls can seek support, share their experiences, receive counseling and guidance, and ensure their parents are safe people to talk to.
  - Establish helplines and support networks for girls facing violence, abuse, or discrimination.

- **Strategic objective L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.**

- **Education and training for girls, including skill development programs, easy access to jobs, and opportunities for female entrepreneurship were highlighted as essential steps towards empowerment.**
- Educate families to make them understand why gender equality in education is important for girls and for the community.
- Help the parents understand that educating their daughters is not useless and that they have as much potential as their sons. The usefulness and necessity of secondary education should be emphasized!
- Direct family members to ensure that all educational opportunities, skills development and training is equally provided to girls and boys without favoritism.
- Make quality education and training available to all by offering economic support for fees, transport, supplies, books, uniforms, etc.
- Give leadership roles to both girls and boys in schools, and equal opportunity to take courses and train in non-traditional areas.
- Provide training in financial, economics, technological knowledge and skills, as well as understanding political systems.
- Ensure equal access to STEM coursework and training; address negative gender stereotyping and harassment in STEM.
- Provide more role models and mentors in STEM, finance, and politics.
- Offer health education that includes sex education, classes on women's history and social justice in our country, funding for field trips and assemblies that shed light upon gender equality.
- Allow both genders to participate in sports, all extracurricular activities and educational activities
- Make menstrual care products affordable for more girls to acquire them - In some communities it is necessary to make the products free.
- Promote online platforms that help connect women to people in the workplace in order to accelerate their careers – allowing for more engagement for women.
- Ensure fair employment practices and legal protections- (girls who are of legal age to work) should be employed on merit, if they have the skills and the experience, they should not be discriminated against.
- Ensure that girls and women can safely travel to work.
- Establish vocational training centers and create partnerships with businesses to provide internships and job placements for girls.
- Establish emergency education programs: Scale up contingencies education facilities in the regions in conflict so that young girls will be able to access education from the new facilities proposed.
- Educate female teachers and other educators to be gender-responsive in learning procedures to accommodate girls.

- Educate girls to lead advocacy efforts in their communities, supported by the government.
- Strengthen girls' financial literacy and skills to engage in income-generating activities and savings.
- Give girls more scholarships and awareness about the future opportunities that being educated might provide them.

○ **Strategic objective L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.**

- **Overcoming this profound gender gap requires a multifaceted approach. Expanding access to sex education, challenging cultural stereotypes, and empowering girls to make decisions about their own health care can help eliminate problems that affect their bodies and minds. Increased investment in youth services and community-based measures that directly benefit girls is also critical to protecting their health and nutrition.**

- Governments should ensure free or affordable access to healthcare services, which include reproductive health services, regular checkups, mental health care, and more.
- Governments should invest in community outreach programs and provide funding and expand access to health education and healthcare access.
- Community based programs should address health challenges faced by girls, including girls' sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, and mental health, to empower and educate girls how to make informed decisions about their bodies.
- Inclusive community workshops and campaigns should be implemented to educate everyone on sexual and reproductive rights and the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence, including online violence.
- Spread awareness that sexual and reproductive health is a normal part of a girl's and woman's life and should be normalized to discuss. Encourage parents to talk to their children about sexual and reproductive health to create a safe environment for them to talk about their issues if they occur.
- Services and programs intended to educate and inform girls about their health should be easy to access geographically. Services should be brought closer to girls residences.
- Mental health awareness should be promoted and counseling should be available and accessible.
- The amount of mental health providers for girls should be increased, and the government should provide more resources to these programs.
- Introduce digital tools to educate and connect girls about their health.

- Parents and caregivers should educate girls on the importance of health. Additionally, they should inform girls about sexual and reproductive health in order to create safe spaces.
- Education around sexually transmitted diseases and prevention, including HIV/AIDS, should be available, and services should be accessible.
- Information around pregnancy and breastfeeding should be readily available and the conversation should be destigmatized.
- Make period products free and accessible. Provide free menstrual products in schools, and refill products regularly.
- Ensure that proper water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are available to girls to manage their periods.
- Functional youth centers should be opened with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
- Employees of community or government programs should receive proper training to prevent further discrimination or harm.
- Health professionals should go through training programs on how to work with female patients. Additionally, girls should have privacy available, as well as the option to have a female doctor.
- Expand education on what healthy and nutritious food is and what is affordable.
- Cultural biases that lead to unequal access to food should be addressed, and discussion is needed to change dated practices.
- Equal access to food and water should be available to girls: Parents should distribute food and water evenly in the household, instead of giving more food to the male children.
- Expand education on what healthy and nutritious food is and what is affordable.
- Create more awareness around the harms of diet culture through social media.
- Initiatives should be started to educate girls in the importance of their health, such as being active, and eating nutritious food.
- Nutrition programs should be started in schools to ensure that girls are being fed nutritious meals.

○ **Strategic objective L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.**

- **Educate and Spread Awareness**
  - Childhood labor is often a result of unawareness among parents. Traffickers mostly target children of such parents who are illiterate and such children end up being in the pithole of child labor.
  - Educating children is essential.
  - Raise awareness on labor laws, policies and services.

- A strict law is extremely essential to curb the situation of child labor.
- Encourage parents to enroll their children in school, as there are still many parents who consider earning money more important than education.
- School should be made free for all, or poor families should be given scholarships for children to be able to attend school.
- Remind parents and caregivers that protecting the girl child is their responsibility.

- **Enact and enforce laws and policies to eliminate child labour and protect girls who are of legal age to work:**
  - Stop people from employing children who are not of legal age to work in homes, shops, factories, and other workplaces.
  - The minimum age to work at a factory or mine should be increased to the eighteen to protect brain development.
  - Push for strong prosecution/punishing of the perpetrators of child labor. Strong control measures should be put in place especially for those who do not observe the law.
  - Raise awareness on existing reporting mechanisms (toll free numbers, structures, etc.), and ensure confidentiality in reporting.
  - Authorities should conduct regular inspections to ensure that employers are complying with the law and observing all the related regulations and protocols, ensuring that there are written contractual agreements between employees and employers.
  - Provide trainings and orientations for beginners to inform them of their rights and responsibilities regarding the job.
  - Policies to protect workers must be strengthened.
  - All complaints filed by women and girls should be investigated.
  - Equal wages for girls of minimum working age should be ensured.
  - Safety committees should be put in place to address safety concerns.
  - Period cramps should be considered a valid reason for work leave.

- **Responsible citizens should take preventive measures:**
  - Communities should make ethical investments, advocate for labeling initiatives to certify products, stop buying items from a shop that has employed a child for work, and eradicate child labor.
  - Partner with NGOs- participate in various movements and campaigns organized to achieve tangible outcomes.
  - Advocate for girls who are employed as domestic house workers when they are below working age.

- Report whenever child labor is suspected or confirmed. Sensitize the community on the dangers of child labor and encourage them to not be bystanders but rather report such incidents through the existing reporting channels.

  ○ **Strategic objective L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.**

    ■ In addition to 40% of groups discussing eradicating violence against the girl-child, 57.5% of groups discussed how girls can be better protected online, noting girls' right to "a safe, inclusive, and empowering online experience."

    ■ Girls noted, **"the responsibility for eradicating violence against the girl child lies with everyone: governments, institutions, communities and individuals. Only in this way can we build a fairer and safer society for all."**

    ■ **Prevention**
      ● Raise awareness in general on the different types of violence and prevention of violence and abuse against girls in all spaces, as well as response mechanisms.
      ● Include boys and men in education on prevention and response and their role in respecting girls and protecting girls from violence, learning the signs of abuse, and stopping the culture of violence.
      ● Host programs wherein boys are learning from girls about violence prevention and response.
      ● There must be structural changes in education and culture to deconstruct gender stereotypes that perpetuate and normalize abusive behavior via education and the media.
      ● Educate the community about the dangers of harmful traditions.
      ● Challenge harmful practices- speak out against violence and work to transform attitudes towards harmful practices
      ● Promote gender equality and girls' empowerment at home and in society to ensure girls grow up in safe environments free from abuse and discrimination.
      ● Institute well-organized systems to protect girls from violence.
      ● Put in place well-orchestrated government and law-enforcement safeguards, regulations, and systems to prevent violence against girls, including tech-facilitated violence.
      ● Improve girls safety by increasing safety of transportation to school, walking in streets, parks, and other spaces.
      ● Encourage social media platforms to enforce stricter content moderation policies and introduce accessible and effective

reporting mechanisms for those who experience violence on their platforms, where girls can express their concerns without fear.
- Introduce child-safeguarding departments across sectors.
- Governments must work with technology companies, developers, and NGOs to ensure online services, programs, tools, and digital environments are safe and designed to protect children.
- Online platforms must improve their tools for detecting harmful content.
- Implement, strengthen, and advocate for strong laws against cyberbullying, harassment and online exploitation.
- Develop, institute, and enforce strict penalties for violence against girls, including tech-facilitated violence.
- Support and enforce data protection regulations that safeguard children's personal information online.
- Introduce task forces in every community to prevent trafficking.
- Implement school-based programs that teach self-defense and introduce reporting mechanisms for gender-based violence.
- Make information about gender-based violence prevention and response available through NGOs.
- Provide comprehensive digital literacy and safety education for all, including through public awareness-raising campaigns and education, that teach how to navigate the internet safely, recognize potential threats, protect personal information, and understand privacy settings. Parents and caregivers should also be educated about online risks and how to support their children in staying safe online.
- Integrate online safety education into school curricula and conduct regular workshops and seminars for students and teachers.
- Encourage the use of safe browsing tools and secure search engines designed for children.
- Encourage peer support programs where older students mentor younger ones about safe online behavior.
- Ensure online safety policies are implemented in educational institutions and digital safety education is promoted in schools.
- Limit access to certain harmful content, including through age restrictions, parental controls, and special tags of harmful content.
- To address harmful gender norms and stereotypes online, change or restrict software which allows unrealistic body images or label photos online that have been retouched. Filter comments that promote negative perceptions of girls and women. Introduce age-restrictions for certain apps that could influence how children see themselves.

- In response to the question of how girls can be better protected online, some groups also suggested having open conversations about sexual and relationship education.
- Foster spaces of trust, where girls feel comfortable talking about their experiences browsing online, whether positive or negative.

- **Response**
  - Establish comprehensive support services for gender-based violence survivors, including hotlines, counseling, support groups and legal aid.
  - Make more services readily available and accessible to those who experience violence and raise awareness about those services.
  - Ensure that response systems are well-coordinated.
  - Provide access to resources and support, including support groups, for those who experience online harassment and abuse.
  - Girls need safe places to go if they experience violence of any kind.
  - Trusted adults must be made available for girls to talk to and share their experiences, including in schools. Counselors and therapists should be more accessible to support girls' mental health.
  - Mechanisms to report violence must be readily available and accessible to girls, including tech-facilitated violence. Girls must be made aware of reporting mechanisms, including how to report abuse or harmful content online, and be encouraged to report.
  - Initiatives should be started to encourage girls to report violence or assault anonymously that is not directly related to law enforcement so that girls feel safe reporting.
  - Survivors must be listened to and believed, and reports must be documented and accounted for through proper case management.
  - Parents must support girls in their reporting and defense.
  - Local leaders must be firm in ensuring girls' rights are ensured in defending and protecting them from perpetrators of violence.
  - School authorities should take girls' cases seriously, and cases should be reviewed at the highest level with parent involvement.
  - Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and judicial systems to handle gender-based violence cases effectively.
  - Social media platforms must take prompt action in responding to and eliminating violence against girls, including reporting violence to law enforcement.
  - Government and law-enforcement response to violence against girls, including online violence, must be swift.

- Perpetrators of violence against girls must be prosecuted and held duly accountable.
- Laws should be implemented to ensure social media and cell phone companies release the names of perpetrators of tech-facilitated sexual abuse and violence against girls to law enforcement.
- Conduct regular assessments of online safety programs and initiatives to ensure they are effective and address emerging threats.
- Legislation must be put in place to protect girls in the context of AI.
- Establish mechanisms for girls to provide feedback on their online experiences and the effectiveness of safety measures.

○ **Strategic objective L.8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.**

■ **Overcoming the challenges in promoting girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic, and political life requires concerted efforts and diverse approaches to girls' empowerment that address cultural and social issues and gender inequality.**

■ Invest in, protect, and ensure girls' right to education.
■ Improve girls' access to information. Girls need access to information on important issues to enable girls to broaden their knowledge and perspectives.
■ Provide girls with a platform to participate in social dialogue.
■ Promote gender equality in the family. Parents should allow their daughters, like their sons, to participate in discussions about politics, business, and other topics. This can help girls develop confidence and cooperation, allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings.
■ Create community organizations and institutions dedicated to promoting gender equality and girls' participation, including girls' political participation, which can provide an important platform for girls' voices to be heard and their leadership fostered.
■ Build and strengthen the capacity and impact of community organizations working to promote and advocate for girls' rights and participation to expand their impact and support their success.
■ Recognize that over half of the population consists of women and girls and that their views and opinions are important for the development of nations.
■ Encourage girls and women to pursue political careers and participate in politics.
■ Invest in youth leaders who want to expand their access to knowledge.

- Shift gender norms to create common ground for participation, which will pave the way for a more equitable and prosperous future.
- Create and maintain space and programs for girls to participate in civil society, including in local groups in and out of school and at the global level, to be engaged in issues that matter to them.
- Involve parents and communities in combating gender stereotypes so that girls can be equipped with the knowledge and skills to thrive in the digital age and achieve financial independence, ultimately strengthening overall health and health promotion.
- Incorporate compulsory financial education and economics into school curricula, and programs outside of school, including for girls, to develop their financial skills and knowledge and promote their financial independence.
- Financial education should be age-appropriate, interactive, and fun and include budgeting, spending, saving and investing, understanding credit, and accessing financial services, as well as business and entrepreneurship training.
- Match girls with mentors who can provide guidance, support, and practical advice on managing finances and entrepreneurship.
- Encourage the formation of savings and investment clubs in schools and communities. Provide initial funding and resources to set up these clubs, where girls can learn about saving, investing, and managing money through practical experience.
- Promote community education for everyone, and provide free access to online and offline courses and resources focused on digital skills and financial management. Ensure digital and financial education resources are accessible and tailored to various skill levels and age groups.
- Mandate and integrate continuous digital literacy programs in schools and outside of school, including ensuring free digital access to the internet and technology devices, programs, and systems, starting in primary school and through all levels of education.
- Digital literacy education should be age-appropriate, interactive, and fun and include digital safety- cybersecurity and online privacy, critical thinking to think critically about the content encountered online and discern credible information from misinformation and manipulative content, and information technology education on how to use computers, the internet and various software, coding, and programming.
- Invest in training programs for teachers to ensure they are equipped to teach digital literacy effectively. Conduct regular workshops and provide resources for teachers to integrate digital tools into their teaching methods.

- Ensure girls' in rural, urban, and underserved areas have access to digital literacy programs and education by also improving and providing consistent and reliable access to electricity and the internet, as well as technological devices.
- Expand digital access to homes and community spaces, such as libraries and digital learning centers with access to technology and free digital literacy classes.
- Improve access to digital and financial products tailored to rural girls' needs and benefits.
- Promote the use of solar-powered devices accompanied by training.
- Facilitate pathways for girls to find sustainable jobs in their futures.
- Organize workshops and seminars led by female role models.
- Establish mentorship programs pairing girls with female mentors in politics, in business, in tech, and in the financial industry.
- Highlight female role models in technology to inspire girls and show them the possibilities in digital careers.
- Encourage collaborations between the government, tech companies, and NGOs to provide resources and expertise for digital literacy programs.
- Partner with community organizations, mentoring programs, and role models in STEM to encourage girls to explore STEM and entrepreneurship while building the confidence to expand into digital and financial fields.
- Establish and invest in programs, groups, clubs, spaces, and initiatives for girls, such as coding clubs and technology workshops, to foster interest in technology and to hone their digital and financial skills.
- Involve and educate parents on the importance of digital literacy and encourage them to support their daughters' learning.
- Launch national campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of digital literacy for girls. Use various media platforms to promote success stories and provide information on available resources and training programs.
- Partner with tech companies and local businesses to donate equipment, to create educational content, and to offer free hands-on training, workshops, and internships for girls.
- Partner with financial institutions and local banks to provide financial education and management programs, workshops, and training sessions.
- Develop user-friendly mobile apps and online platforms that provide interactive financial education resources, such as courses, quizzes, and simulations on various financial topics.
- Offer training programs that teach girls how to use digital financial services, such as mobile banking and online payment systems. Partner

with fintech companies to provide practical workshops and create educational materials.
- Provide scholarships and grants for girls to enroll in advanced digital and financial literacy courses. Work with educational institutions and NGOs to identify eligible candidates and fund their education.
- Organize national competitions and hackathons focused on digital and financial literacy challenges. Engage girls in creating innovative solutions to real-world financial problems, offering prizes and recognition for the best ideas.
- Appoint digital and financial literacy ambassadors to promote these skills among girls in schools and communities. Select and train ambassadors who can conduct workshops, give talks, and mentor other girls.
- Promote women-led businesses and investments and promote girls' entrepreneurship, and offer corporate internships and programs for young women and girls to enter the financial sector to help break sociocultural norms that inhibit their participation.
- Promote the development and employment of more female teachers in male-dominated fields, particularly STEM fields.
- Invite women speakers in male-dominated fields to share their experiences with girls.

- **Strategic objective L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.**

  - **Strengthening the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child involves addressing several challenges that girls face, both within their families and in the broader societal context.**
  - **The family plays a foundational and crucial role for promoting gender equality and empowerment and improving the status of the girl-child.**
  - **Challenge and address traditional notions and societal and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality and prevent girls from being who they want to be.**
  - **Engage with communities to raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality and the importance of supporting girls' education and aspirations.**
  - **Include girls in communication** and peaceful dialogue about their status in the family and in society.
  - **Girls should be encouraged to pursue their goals independent of any stereotypes or traditional norms.**
  - **Educate and sensitize parents and caregivers on gender equality, equal rights, and the importance of equality in the family, and encourage them to support their daughters' self-development.**

- Develop and distribute parenting guides that emphasize the importance of gender-sensitive parenting practices and provide tips on raising confident, empowered daughters.
- Parent sensitization for gender equality can also be done in parenting books, through kids' cartoons, and community support group or class settings with both parents and caregivers attending the sessions that promote a critical approach to traditional gender roles, emphasizing the stereotypes that harm girls, and teaching parents how to empower their daughters and support them despite discrimination, while also showing their sons how to support women and girls as allies.
- **Promote and prioritize girls' education.** Parents have a role in improving the status of girls' education.
- Provide financial literacy programs for families, emphasizing the importance of investing in girls' education and future economic independence.
- Offer career counseling services to help parents understand the various career options available to their daughters and support them in making informed decisions about their future. Share examples and invite women professionals of various careers to also break down stereotypes and barriers girls face.
- Foster strong partnerships between schools and families to create a supportive environment for girls' education and development, with regular communication and collaboration on girls' progress.
- Teachers can also serve as a support for girls in pursuing their goals through parent-teacher communications and events about future careers for their children and the importance of supporting their children's choices for their own futures, without discrimination.
- Parents can encourage girls at all ages to pursue male-dominated fields through their studies.
- Parents can support girls in STEM by encouraging them in these fields and giving them examples of females who have successfully completed secondary school and studied STEM subjects like female pilots, engineers, IT Specialists, and tutoring their daughters in STEM fields if they are able to. Parents can show girls showing movies, books, videos, and places that bring these fields to life and make them seem accessible and intriguing. They can also help girls sign up for free STEM courses either in-person or online sponsored by organizations, libraries, or schools.
- Families can also support girls to pursue their goals through engaging with women teachers, politicians, professionals, and organization presidents that can serve as role models and challenge traditional stereotypes in our communities.

- Encourage parents to offer a wide range of toys, games, and activities to both daughters and sons, avoiding stereotypical preferences based on gender.
- Families should listen to girls. Families should be a safe space for a girl to openly communicate and express herself and share her grievances.
- Families supporting girls should be highlighted as role models to others.
- Integrate education in schools to promote gender equality across generations.
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls through promotion and representation and celebration of girls' and women's achievements, neutral schools and universities, supportive career guidance, diversifying educational textbooks to represent different cultures, traditions, and ethnic groups, promoting genuine content, and fostering support among girls.
- Introduce family-oriented community institutions and workshops focused on positive parenting techniques, child protection and helping families in conflict, with trained social workers who conduct home visits and raise awareness on raising healthy families free from violence.
- Parents should teach their sons to behave properly and also teach them the life skills required to take care of the home.
- Women and girls should stop having to need permission to do everything first from their relatives then from their husbands.
- Males need to be taught to get consent and that they have no right to invade a woman's or girl's personal space.
- Normalize menstruation in the family, especially with boys so that they will be informed and educated.
- Normalize mental health and well-being in the family.

3. **ADDITIONS TO SECTION L: CRITICAL AND EMERGING ISSUES AFFECTING GIRLS**

   ○ **Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality**

   - 55% of groups discussed how gender equality can be promoted in Artificial Intelligence (AI).
   - **Biases in AI that perpetuate gender inequality**, **must be addressed.**
   - **Implement regulations for AI that require transparency from tech companies, including social media companies.**
   - **A range of approaches are needed to promote gender equality in AI:**
     - Advocate for laws and regulations that promote gender equality in technology sectors. Support policies that require companies to report on gender diversity and inclusion metrics.

- Establish and enforce ethical guidelines for AI development that include gender equality principles.
- Increase general community awareness about AI and the impacts of AI on gender equality through education, public campaigns, advocacy.
- Raise awareness about the importance of girls and women in STEM.
- Encourage and support girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) from an early age, including through coding and AI education to develop unbiased algorithms that prevent gender discrimination.
- Increase the representation of women and girls in STEM education and studies.
- Offer continuous learning and professional development opportunities focused on AI and technology for women.
- Governments and educational institutions can play a crucial role to support and encourage young women's interest and participation in AI projects by investing and executing programmes that boost the participation of women in AI such as skills development programmes in AI for girls and women, scholarships, educational and research grants, training, workshops, internships, professional support and mentorship programs.
- Develop AI curricula that highlight the contributions of women in the field. Integrate gender studies into AI and technology courses to raise awareness about gender biases.
- Ensure that the AI industry, including AI research and development teams have diverse representation and talent that include women.
- Foster an inclusive, diverse, and equal workforce in AI through unbiased and fair recruitment and hiring, support, retention and compensation to create an environment where women can thrive and contribute to the development of revolutionary AI technology. Promote female engineers working in AI to give them more opportunities to flourish.
- Encourage transparency in AI decision-making processes to ensure accountability.
- Implement rigorous testing to identify and mitigate gender biases in AI algorithms. Conduct regular audits of AI systems to ensure they are fair and unbiased.
- Acknowledge and address gender bias in AI systems, such as algorithmic bias and data inequality, as well as by assigning gender neutral names to digital assistants.

- Develop AI technologies that are free from gender biases. Foster inclusivity, and ensure diverse representation in the development and application of AI technologies.
- Use diverse datasets that represent all genders to train AI models. Ensure that data collection methods do not reinforce existing gender biases.
- Tech companies should use rigorous review processes and multiple data collection methods, and include standards designed to reduce gender stereotypes and discrimination in AI applications.
- Implement monitoring and enforcement of gender equality in AI.
- Support research into the impacts of AI on gender equality and advocate for changes based on findings. This includes studying how AI affects different genders and ensuring that AI technologies benefit all segments of society.
- Partner with organizations and influencers to promote gender diversity in tech.
- Collaborate with tech companies, academic institutions, and nonprofits to promote best practices in gender equality.
- Participate in global initiatives and forums that focus on gender equality in AI.
- Highlight and celebrate the achievements of women leaders in AI. Create platforms for women in AI to share their experiences and insights.
- Address stereotypes and biases in media portrayals of women in tech. Encourage media outlets to portray diverse and inclusive images of AI professionals.

- **Addressing Environmental Sustainability and the Climate Crisis**

  - 55% of groups discussed how girls can be involved in addressing environmental sustainability and the climate crisis.
  - Governments must recognize that we all must work for the climate crisis.
  - **To engage girls in the work of environmental sustainability and combating the climate crisis, a multifaceted approach is necessary.**

  - **Education and Awareness Raising:**
    - Provide girls with quality education and access to information on the impact of climate change and environmental sustainability. Provide appropriate technology and resources.
    - Integrate environmental education into school curricula, focusing on climate change, sustainability, and conservation. Develop age-appropriate modules and hands-on activities that teach girls about environmental issues and solutions.

- Include the knowledge from indigenous peoples for environmental protection and conservation.
- Launch campaigns to raise awareness about climate change and sustainability among girls and young women.
- Use social media, workshops, and community events to educate and inspire action on environmental issues.
- Establish programs that train girls in environmental leadership and advocacy skills. Provide workshops, mentorship, and opportunities for girls to lead environmental projects and campaigns.
- Encourage girls' participation in sustainability projects related to their schools like gardening initiatives, recycling programs or alternative energy experiments to facilitate their leadership
- Promote peer education programs on climate change and sustainability.
- Encourage girls to pursue STEM education with a focus on environmental science and technology.
- Offer scholarships, internships, and mentorship programs in environmental fields to inspire and support girls.
- Develop training programs that prepare girls for careers in the green economy.
- Partner with businesses and educational institutions to offer training in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and other green industries.

- **Participation in Policy-Making**
  - Include girls in policy discussions on climate change and sustainability. Climate change disproportionately affects women and girls, so they should have a seat at the negotiating table.
  - Involve girls in programs focusing on climate change, sustainability, and climate solutions.
  - Create platforms for girls to participate in local, national, and international environmental policy-making processes. Girls' should be given safe spaces to raise their concerns and feel that their opinions and recommendations are taken seriously.
  - Involve girls in youth advisory councils, public consultations, and climate summits to ensure their voices are heard.

- **Practical and Collective Engagement:**
  - Encourage girls' participation in environmental education programs and clubs and support girls' involvement in local and global environmental campaigns and advocacy.

- Provide platforms for girls to share their ideas and solutions for sustainability.
- Create accessible flexible grant programs that support the development and implementation of girls' sustainability initiatives, as well as girl-led climate actions at the community level.
- Support and fund community-based projects led by girls that focus on environmental sustainability. Encourage girls to design and implement projects such as tree planting, community gardens, and waste reduction programs.
- Promote the formation of eco-clubs and green teams in schools and communities. Provide resources and support for these groups to conduct environmental activities and raise awareness among their peers.
- Connect girls with global youth networks focused on environmental sustainability. Facilitate participation in international programs, exchanges, and virtual platforms that promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- Establish awards and recognition programs to celebrate and support the environmental efforts of girls. Highlight and reward outstanding projects, leadership, and innovation in sustainability by girls. Funding and Grants: Policy: Provide funding and grants specifically for environmental projects led by girls.
- Lobby policymakers and local authorities for stronger environmental regulations,renewable energy initiatives, and sustainable development policies.
- Encourage recycling programs and initiatives that promote the reuse and repurposing of materials to reduce waste.
- Girls can also drive change as consumers, for example, by not overconsuming, considering ethical issues before buying.
- Promote female leadership in environmental organizations and initiatives.
- Provide appropriate technology and resources to promote more sustainable farming and conservation practices.
- Reduce poverty to help individuals better adapt to the effects of climate change.
- Investing in women and girls for far-reaching benefits for communities and countries.
- Girls' voices should also be promoted through various outlets so that they can be heard when speaking out against climate injustice or proposing possible solutions; allowing their words to gain exposure will empower everyone—both other young girls and policy makers—to get involved.

- Create mentorship programs where professional women working within green industries or fields related to energy, conservation, or environmental politics are connected with girls to help them see role models and practical ways for pursuing a passion around environmental work long-term.
- Foster partnerships between schools, communities, and environmental organizations to create opportunities for girls. Collaborate on projects, provide internships, and involve girls in environmental research and advocacy efforts.

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