

Press release: UK leads calls to reach most marginalised girls with quality education

Alongside the leaders of France, Canada, Kenya, Niger and Jordan, the Prime Minister Theresa May asked delegates at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to join the commitment to ensuring all girls can access 12 years of quality education and learning by 2030.

Currently, 90% of primary school children in low-income countries are unable to read or write. This next generation has the potential, energy and ambition to lift themselves out of poverty and transform their countries, yet millions of children leave school without a basic education.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

“By denying girls an education we deny them a voice, we deny them choice, we deny them their future.

“I am calling on everyone here to join our campaign (Girls Education Challenge). To commit to the individual, collective and governmental action that is needed to break down barriers to girls’ education.

“To increase girls’ access to schools and learning. And to ensure that every girl, in every corner of the world, can access the 12 years of education they need to unleash their potential, to embrace the opportunities before them, and to help change the world for the better.”

To tackle this crisis the Prime Minister announced nine new projects supported by UK aid that will specifically target the most vulnerable and marginalised girls.

These nine projects, which part of the second phase of the Department for International Development’s flagship Girls Education Challenge, will support more than 170,000 of the world’s most marginalised girls including up to 3,500 girls with disabilities.

The UK is a world leader on education. Over the last three years DFID has spent nearly £700 million a year on education on average through bilateral programmes. Over this time (since 2015) DFID supported 11.4 million children to gain a decent education, of which at least 5.6 million were girls.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt also announced further UK aid support to help tackle the global learning crisis and better target development support.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

“Girls have the power and potential to play a transformational role in their

communities, societies, economies and political institutions. Yet over 130 million girls around the world are currently missing out on school.

“To tackle this crisis and reach the most marginalised girls, we need to fully understand the current global situation and identify who is being left behind. UK aid is focused on gathering the right data to help us find out what children are learning and the progress being made.

With a quality education girls can go on to get jobs and help lift their families out of poverty, helping countries move beyond aid dependence. This is a win for the UK and a win for the developing world.”

At the UNGA event, Ms Mordaunt announced UK aid support to improve education data and analysis. This will allow a better understanding of those who are in the greatest need, and help track collective progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The data gathered through this programme will be crucial in identifying where and how to target UK aid and global support, as well as monitor the progress we are making towards the Education Goal.

This will lead to the development of policies and programmes which are better able to improve and monitor children’s learning, including marginalised groups such as girls and children with disabilities, which can be tracked and monitored effectively.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Ms Mordaunt announced a £7.8 million worth of UK aid support to improve education data and analysis helping the UK and partners to better understand who is in most need and track collective progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The projects (in Ghana, Somali, Nepal, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Malawi) announced by the UK Prime Minister will support up to 171,723 girls including 13,146 girls with disabilities.
- Over 130 million girls around the world are missing out on school. In conflict-affected countries girls are twice as likely as boys to be out of school. Girls have the power and potential to play a transformational role in their communities, societies, economies and political institutions. In conflict-affected countries girls are twice as likely as boys to be out of school.
- In order to tackle this crisis and achieve the education Sustainable Development Goals, we need to fully understand the current global situation and where the gaps are in existing learning levels. Currently, there is insufficient data to understand who is learning and what progress is being made.
- DFID’s flagship Girls’ Education Challenge focuses on getting girls into school and learning. The first phase (GEC I) directly provided quality education for over a million marginalised girls. It has also benefited many

more girls and communities through 37 different projects in 18 countries across Africa and Asia, many operating in conflict and crisis.

- At the G7, the PM pledged an additional £187 million of UK Aid funding to the second phase of the GEC, to support 427,779 girls who we have already supported into school to continue their education through primary, secondary school and training – providing them with the opportunity to get twelve years of quality education. This announcement built on the announcement made at CHOGM in April, where the PM pledged £212 million to get almost one million girls in developing countries across the Commonwealth learning. This means that in total the UK is now supporting over 1.5 million girls around the world, through the second phase of the GEC programme.

- The UK recently committed £225 million to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for the period 2018-2020, to keep 880,000 children in school each year for three years, train 170,000 teachers and build 2,400 new classrooms. The UK has also founded and contributed £30m to Education Cannot Wait, of funds for education in emergencies.

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