



WorldYWCA

REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl

2016

REPORT

Contents

1. Background	3
1.1. Our vision.....	3
1.2. Our strategic priorities.....	3
2. Obstacles and barriers faced by girls in particular in effectively accessing education	3
3. Concrete steps the YWCA movement has taken to ensure the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl.....	6
3.1. Sustainable Development Goals – SDG 4	6
3.2. Short term approach.....	7
3.2.1. Education programmes and facilities	7
3.2.2. Schools	7
3.2.3. Partnerships	7
3.2.4. Leadership Academy	8
3.3. Long-term approach.....	8
3.3.1. Women rights programmes in SRHR and HIV and Violence Against Women	8
3.3.2. Advocacy Strategy	9
4. The challenges the YWCA is facing in implementing programmes towards the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl	10
5. Measures and implementations proposed by YWCA in order to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2030	10

1. Background

The World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) is a global movement founded in 1855, working for women's empowerment, leadership and rights in more than 120 countries and 20'000 local communities. Empowering women and girls is our way to change the world. Our members and supporters include women from many different faiths, ages, backgrounds, beliefs and cultures.

1.1. Our vision

In 2015, the YWCA movement adopted a new vision which will guide its work up until year 2035:

“By 2035, 100 million young women and girls will transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war; leading a sustainable YWCA movement, inclusive of all women.”

The World YWCA's Vision 2035 is designed to establish a clear objective for the World YWCA's activities and for the future sustainability of the YWCA movement. The Vision ensures that the World YWCA's commitment to amplify diverse young women and girls as leaders is scaled up and strengthened. Finally, the Vision ensures that the YWCA movement is sustained and that young women and girls become aware of- and can claim their rights.

1.2. Our strategic priorities

For the next 20 years, the YWCA movement will develop five Strategic Frameworks that will serve as blueprints for implementation of Vision 2035. Each Strategic Framework will cover a four year period and it will guide the YWCA movement towards achieving Vision 2035. Individual YWCA Member Associations will incorporate the essential elements of the Vision 2035, along with the Strategic Frameworks, into their own programmes and work. For the next quadrennial, we have three strategic priorities:

- Strengthening young women and girls' transformative leadership
- Realising human rights
- Sustaining the YWCA movement

2. Obstacles and barriers faced by girls in particular in effectively accessing education

- Community perceptions
 - Child marriage has a devastating impact on women and girls' personal development, future opportunities, economic empowerment, education, health and well-being. Child, early and forced marriages is often a guarantee that girls and young women are denied their right to an education and ability to develop life skills to live a fulfilling life where they have agency to control their circumstances. Most girls are married off before they go to school. There are a number of reasons why parents marry off their children:

- The major reason is poverty. Some girls are married off before they become a burden for the parents for example in India where a woman pays dowry to get married. In other settings for example in Africa, a girl is married off so that parents can receive dowry. It is also believed that once a girl is married the husband is expected to look after the whole family.
 - A girl may be offered to a husband as a replacement for their dead sister, aunt or cousin
 - Parents feel they are protecting the girls from sexual violence in conflict environments,
 - Parents feel that they are protecting girls' honour by marrying them off while they are still virgins
 - In some parts of India, girls are married off to be protected from honour killings
 - If a girl gets pregnant, parents are likely to force her to get married
 - Some girls are abducted for marriage
 - Some girls choose to get married
 - Disabled girls are at a higher risk of either married off or just left to be at home.
 - Most of the communities perceive boys more valuable than girls therefore families tend to send their boys to school, and keep the girls at home to do domestic work.
- Girls are often forced to drop out of school because:
- they are pregnant
 - a girl who becomes pregnant is denied access to return to her studies.
 - Returning to school is difficult because the girl still has to fulfil her parenting and household duties.
 - Re-entry into school after being pregnant is difficult both on a social and economic level. The pregnant girl will face discrimination from teachers and schoolmates. Access to free tuition will also be difficult.
 - parents unable to cope with the demands of schooling
 - cannot pay girls school fees
 - Cannot afford school supplies
 - Cannot afford sanitary pads for the girls
 - Cannot afford school uniforms
 - Cannot afford personal items like a tooth brush and tooth paste, a roll on or shoes
 - they have to support their families as become breadwinners to also support their siblings

- they have to take care of ill parents in the case of HIV/AIDs and other diseases
 - they have experienced gender based violence at home and at school
 - they have been abused by teachers and are afraid of going back to school
 - they low self-esteem and confidence
 - When schools are not conducive places for learning
 - No schools in the community
 - Not enough school teachers
 - Schools that are male dominated
 - Untrained teachers
 - No proper class structures
 - Most schools are very far away and pose a risk for girls to travel on their own
 - Lack of toilets at schools
 - Some schools are not safe spaces for girls
 - Not equipped with facilities for disabled children
 - Not enough schools for blind children
 - Discriminatory gender norms – In many communities' boys are considered more valuable additions to the family, therefore parents invest more in boys than in girls.
- Poverty
 - Most parents who cannot afford to send their children to school are because they cannot afford the school fees.
 - Some families have many children and in such cases, boys will be sent to school at the expense of girls
 - Most countries have reached gender parity in school education. However, transitioning into secondary school has been a challenge for girls because of the reasons above.
 - Domestic child labour – Girls are more often subject to domestic child labour. This has several reasons. The first reason is related to school fees. When families need to choose which children to send to school, they have a preference to pay the school fees after boys. Second, the family may be in a position that the parents are not capable of working, therefore they rely on their children. This reason is especially prevalent in areas, where the rate of HIV infection is high

3. Concrete steps the YWCA movement has taken to ensure the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl¹

The World YWCA was heavily involved in the consultations leading up to the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030. Achieving any of the SDGs by 2030 therefore requires a holistic approach. For the World YWCA, SDG4 which aims to ensure that equal access and the right to education is ensured and implemented is related to all goals of Agenda 2030. To realise Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, the YWCA movement works with a short-term and a long-term approach.

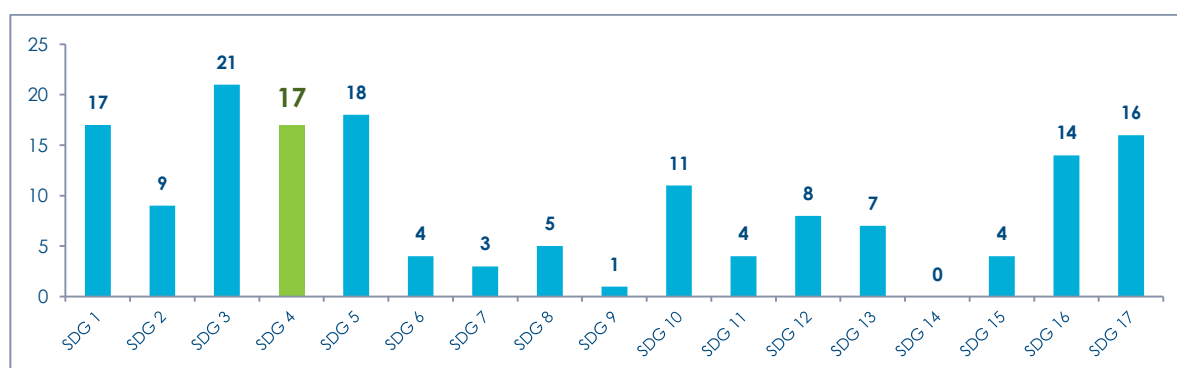
A Short-term approach of the World YWCA is to ensure the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education through the provision of educational programmes and educational facilities. Furthermore, as agreed by the constitutional body of the YWCA movement in 2015, the World YWCA Council, the World YWCA is working towards the launch of an accredited Young Women's Leadership Academy in 2019. The initiative is linked to the World YWCA's Strategic Framework to strengthen Young Women and Girls Transformative Leadership.

A Long-term approach realizes that for a successful implementation and realization of the right to education by every girl, creating an enabling environment is a necessary precondition. Therefore the YWCA movement developed an advocacy model engaging in local, national, regional and global level advocacy activities. Such a model works to ensure that government commitments are implemented through the enforcement of legislation, while also working on empowering young women and girls with knowledge and confidence to seek and claim their rights both individually and collectively.

3.1. Sustainable Development Goals – SDG 4

All operational countries of the YWCA are currently working on addressing different SDGs. There are 17 Member Associations (MAs) contributing directly to SDG4.

MAs contributing to the SDG's, survey assessment



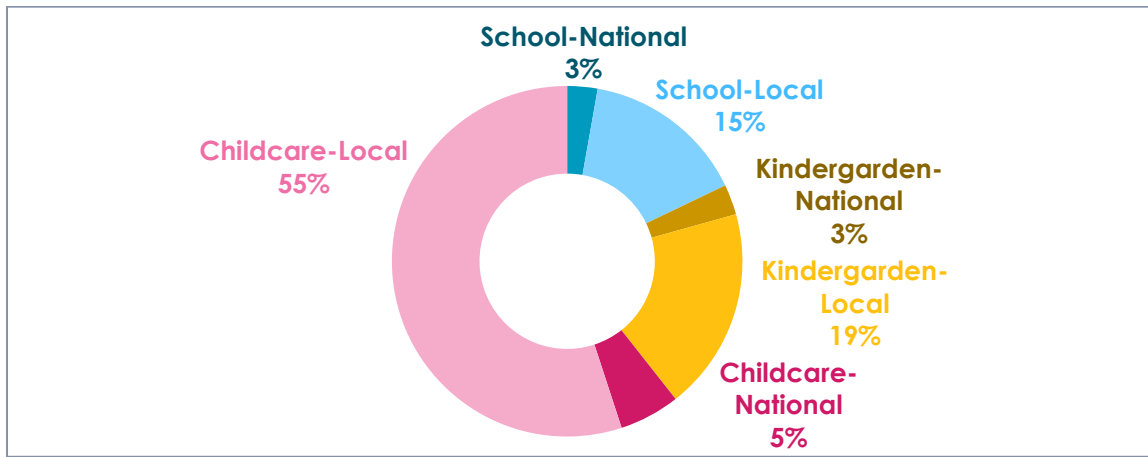
¹ Data on YWCA programmes are gathered from the data source of the 2011-2015 four years questionnaire, which was complemented with a series of on-line discussions.

3.2. Short term approach

3.2.1. Education programmes and facilities

MAs view education as a corner stone to creating a world with justice, gender equality and peace. MAs in Asia hold regular education programmes on gender equality that start with children aged three to six and continue up to secondary school. In Korea the education focuses on gender equality from a young age. In Japan, the YWCA holds education programmes for young people to learn about the past to create a peaceful and better future.

Comparing childcare facilities, which belong to local branches of the movement to the childcare facilities run by the national associations we find that the local branches own the majority of the childcare facilities. The movement holds mainly facilities for younger children that are kindergarten or other type of childcare, and only about 1/5 of the facilities are schools (18%).



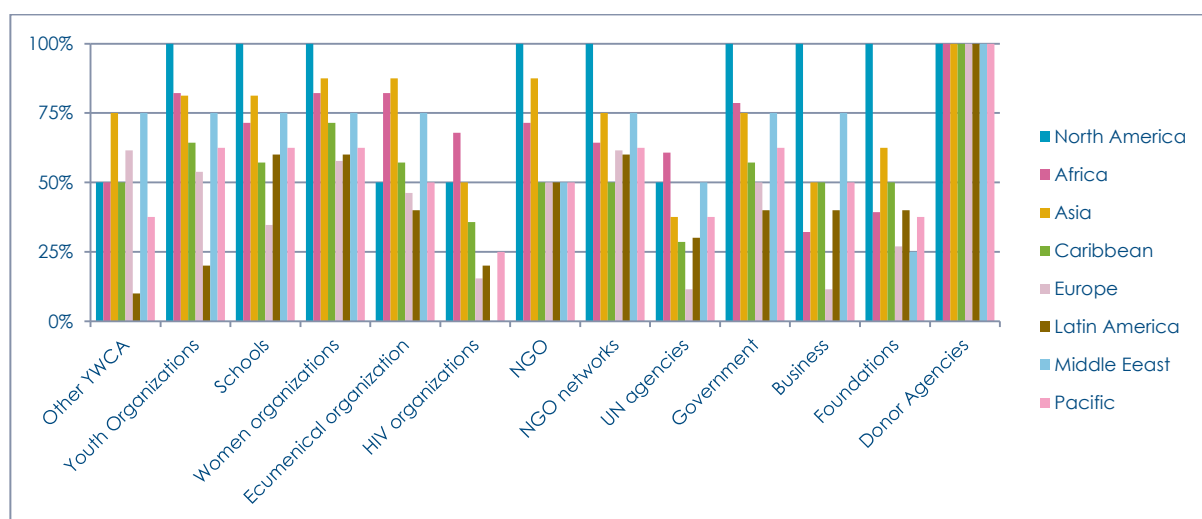
3.2.2. Schools

Out of the 108 affiliated member associations, only 18 members own schools affiliated either to local or to the national level branch. On total, the YWCA owns 64 schools. Analyzing the distribution of schools across the YWCA movement, India and Bangladesh have the most schools affiliated to YWCA local branches. While the local branches of India own 20 schools, the local branches of Bangladesh own 13 schools and 1 school affiliated to the national member association. All other Member Associations own much less schools, with a maximum of four.

Comparing the regions, Asia has the most schools, 39 affiliated to local branches of the YWCA movement, and one affiliated to the national association. Africa region has the second most schools, with eight local level and eight national level educational institutes. Middle East has six schools affiliated to local branch and Latin America has one. The Caribbean has one national level school. Three regions have no schools; these are the Pacific region, Europe and North America.

3.2.3. Partnerships

A number of YWCA MAs (66 out of 108) are collaborating with schools in their countries. Further, 71 MAs collaborate with different youth organizations. However, the number of partnerships between fellow member organizations should be increased. Only 57 member associations collaborate with other member associations within the YWCA. The possibility of partnering with UN agencies could be further explored by most regions. All countries partnered with donor agencies.



3.2.4. Leadership Academy

The YWCA will launch a YWCA International Leadership Academy in 2019 thereby contributing SDG4.

3.3. Long-term approach

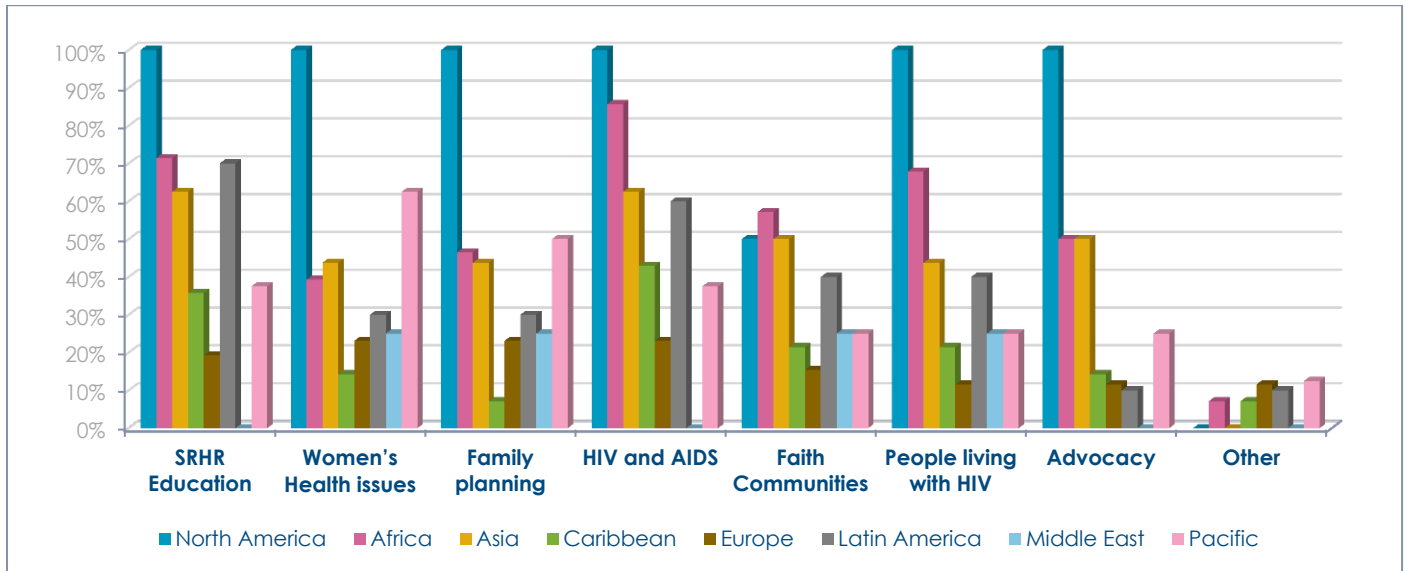
3.3.1. Women rights programmes in SRHR and HIV and Violence Against Women

One of the key programme areas of the 2015-2019 strategic framework is Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and HIV. There are 74 countries working within the SRHR and HIV key programme areas. One of the main causes for girls dropping out of school is on sexual violence and the fact that girls do not understand their bodies. Therefore most of the YWCA MAs have programmes on SRHR and HIV and Violence Against Women.

Below is the representation of the regions working within more focused programme areas. The figure demonstrated the percentage of countries within the region working in the areas.

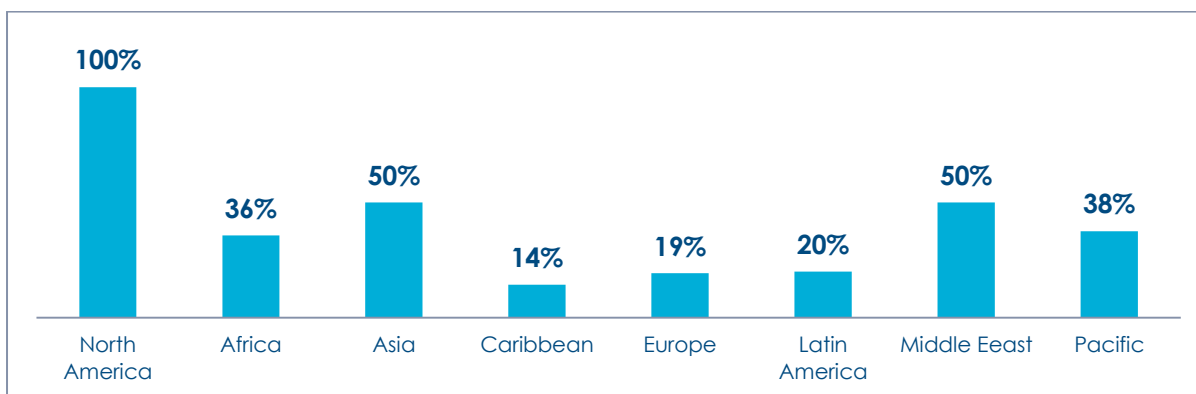
- Almost 86% implement projects within SRHR and HIV related to HIV and AIDS. African countries are also active in CSE and they work with people living with HIV. There are significantly less countries in Africa region implementing projects on family planning and projects related to women health.
- About 60% of the member associations from Asia work mainly within the areas of SRHR education, HIV and AIDS. About 50% of the Asian countries work in advocacy and with faith communities. About 40% of the Asian affiliated countries work in the other sub areas.
- In the Caribbean region, almost 43% of the countries work on HIV and AIDS related projects, followed by SRHR education (36%). 21% or less countries work in the other related sub areas.
- Only ¼ or less of the European MAs work in any of the SRHR and HIV related programme areas.
- Most of the Latin American MAs (70%) implement SRHR education projects and HIV and AIDS projects (60%). The proportion of countries in the other sub areas is much less, 40% and below. Only one Latin American member association does advocacy work around SRHR and HIV.
- MAs from the Middle East do not work in on SRHR projects, HIV and AIDS, and advocacy projects. 25% work within the other sub areas.

- Most MAs from the Pacific region implement projects related to women health (63%) and family planning (50%). Affiliated countries from the pacific represent themselves in all other sub areas.



3.3.2. Advocacy Strategy

Advocacy is an important strategy for all YWCAs. MAs implement their strategies in different ways as well. Out of the 79 responding countries, only 34 associations have an advocacy strategy (43%). All North American associations are equipped with an advocacy strategy. In Asia and Middle East regions, only 50% of the associations have an advocacy strategy, while other regions could benefit from further capacity building.



In 2015, the YWCA movement was present on many platforms advocating for the right to education. This was done through:

- Influencing the global agenda and decision-making on women's rights at the African Union Summit, the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

- Strong advocacy in the area of Violence against Women with a focus on advocating to end early, child and forced marriage. This included intense work with the African Union, which in 2015, formally adopted a common position on ending child marriage in Africa. More work was done with faith leaders in many countries to help end harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Actively promoting SRHR for girls and young women - In 2015, the World YWCA continued championing access to information and health services on sexual and reproductive rights for girls and young women. This included participating in the Commission on Population and Development (ICPD).

4. The challenges the YWCA is facing in implementing programmes towards the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl

- Limited financial resources
 - The YWCA would like to expand to other, more remote areas to reach the grassroots level. Most of the affected population lives in rural, difficult to reach remote areas. To reach them however involves higher expenses of traveling, accommodation, and the translation to local languages. The YWCA is working in several conflict and post conflict countries where providing the safety and security around project implementation is increasing the cost.
 - The donor environment is changing where NGOs are now subject to more rigorous reporting that support and require strengthened accountability measures. Donors are also reducing funding from development and diverting it to humanitarian sectors. This has affected women's rights organizations, which remain under-funded. This also leaves women's rights organization with major funding gaps.
 - Difficult political context – conflict and post conflict countries
 - Working in fragile countries like South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Benin has been challenging and implementation of activities delayed.

5. Measures and implementations proposed by YWCA in order to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2030

- Schools
 - It should be also mandatory for schools to teach life skills and provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education. In Myanmar for example girls drop out schools to learn vocational skills to be able to do income generational activities.
 - Countries should increase the number of accessible primary schools, especially in rural areas. Accessible schools would reduce the safety risk for girls commuting between their schools and home.

- Countries should increase the number of affordable secondary schools especially in rural areas. Increasing the number of secondary and tertiary schools would also allow access for girls.
- Increase the number of trained female teachers, especially in rural areas. In Tanzania, for example there is one school in every village according to government statistics. However, the number of teachers is very low; therefore, some schools are understaffed, and run by one teacher working with the headmaster/headmistress of the school.
- Equip schools with basic necessary structures like sanitation stations/toilets. This would reduce the number of girls who drop out of school when they start menstruating.
- Introduce school feeding projects where students receive one hot meal every day. This initiative would improve the proportion of children enrolled in the school in areas of extreme poverty.
- Laws
 - Make secondary education free to allow a smoother transition into secondary school.
 - Make re-entry into school or educational system available for young mothers who dropped out of school because of falling pregnant.
 - Implement child marriage laws and build in accountability measures to monitor countries implementation.
 - Record all birth registrations to ensure that no child is left behind when it comes to education and population census
- External conditions
 - Address poverty. Economic empowerment programmes have to be introduced starting from introducing financial literacy and entrepreneurship programmes in schools from a very young age.
- Outside of school training programmes
 - Empower school governing bodies. Offer night school for parents. Literate parents are likely to send their children and keep them in school.
 - Implement CSE in all schools so that its part of the curricula



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