**Call for Input: Report on how climate change can have an impact on the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl**

Felm wishes to express its gratitude to engage in dialogue with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights concerning the right to education of every girl and how climate change may hinder the realization of this right. In our input we have focused on elaborating the findings in Tanzania and Cambodia.

***The most important barriers for girls to their equal enjoyment of the right to education due to climate change:***

Through its work, Felm together with its partners has witnessed how girls, particularly in vulnerable communities, face numerous barriers to education as a result of climate change. The communities’ capacity to invest in education can be low, which can further decline due to climate change related challenges. Traditional gender norms and roles may increase girls’ caregiving responsibilities during climate-related crises, hindering their ability to attend school consistently, or challenges can be linked to inadequate infrastructure as presented below.

In Tanzania, Felm and its partners have witnessed that in remote areas, the adequacy of infrastructure still poses challenges for the children, especially the girls. For example, in one of Felm’s project areas the community and houses were connected to school by a bridge. After flooding, the bridge collapsed, and it became challenging for children to access the school. The parents allowed the boys to cross the river by boards and continue their education, but for safety reasons the girls were kept at home, waiting for the bridge to be rebuilt.

Moreover, the distance to school from home may become an obstacle due to climate change. In Tanzania, Felm’s partner has reported that the walking route to the nearest school may become challenging during the hottest time of the dry season as well as during the rainy season when the streams are often flooding. It becomes hard for the students to arrive at school on time and hence, this affects the teaching and learning process. Early in the morning, during the first morning lessons often few students are present. The teacher can wait for the latecomers or start early but repeat the content for the latecomers. In worst case, the latecomers miss the teaching completely provided during the early hours of the school day.

The temperature also plays a role in children’s learning process. During hot weather the classrooms are very hot, and the students are tired, particularly during the afternoon lessons. Their level of participation is low. There might be challenges to access propriate amount of water, particularly if the water source is not near the school. For example, in the project area in Tanzania, one of the schools uses tap water originating from Mount Meru, which is available 3-4 days per week and during the dry season even less. The school has one water tank, able to store 5000 litres of water. This affects the availability of drinking water and preparation of food. During such times the school survives by asking for water from neighbors. Female students are sent to the neighbors to fetch water in buckets in the morning and in the meantime, boys do other activities such as clean the environment. The time allocated to these assignments decreases the active learning time.

The impacts of climate change may also harm the vital school facilities, for example by damaging or destroying washing facilities that are essential, among others for menstrual health management. Moreover, during the dry season there are challenges with sanitation: the toilets can be dirty due to the insufficient supply of water to wash the toilets.

In Cambodia, the government is striving to promote gender equality and equity in all sectors and development. Although the promotion has helped the girls to extend their opportunities, including pursuing after education, challenges remain that tend to be accelerated due to climate change. In some areas where Felm and its partner organization are working and free education is available and promoted, the long distance to school from home and safety along the way to school, particularly for the girls who live in remote areas, can still become barriers to their possibilities to exercise their right to education.

***The most important existing gaps and challenges in education to empower all girls to contribute to the climate change agenda, including in their adulthood:***

In the context of environmental education, with special focus on the performance in science subjects – which are core subjects of environmental education – and mathematics, Felm and its partner in Tanzania have found that students, both boys and girls, perceive science and mathematics as difficult subjects. The generally poor background in mathematics and science subjects from primary school intensifies this attitude. Students rarely receive any encouragement from teachers or parents to choose and study science to certain level and there is a low quality of career guidance in schools. Moreover, Felm together with its partner organization has observed that there is an acute shortage of science and mathematics teachers in all schools located in the project area and some schools have been recruiting teachers with no training in pedagogy or teaching methodology. Some available science and mathematics teachers have low pedagogical competence in these subjects. Due to heavy workload and disproportionate salary, the few qualified and available science and mathematics teachers may lose their job commitment and seek employment opportunities elsewhere, for example in vocational colleges.

Moreover, many schools in Felm’s and its partner’s project area lack science laboratories, and those which have laboratories, have not enough laboratory equipment nor laboratory technicians. As a result, laboratory work has not been done properly. Instead of laboratory-based learning, teaching in science subjects has focused on theory only.

The reasons behind lower performance of girls in science and mathematics are many. Felm together with its partner organization has observed that some girls perceive science and mathematics as subjects for boys only, which tends to be a traditional way of thinking. This has resulted in avoidance or paying less attention to these subjects. Combined to a low quality of career guidance in schools, girls are not encouraged to study science subjects and mathematics. Some male students and even some teachers may also undermine girls’ ability to learn for example physics and mathematics. This has led to a situation in which girls are more motivated to pursue careers related to arts subjects and not those related to science and mathematics.

Moreover, there are very few female science and mathematics teachers in all schools of Felm and its partner's project area. As a result, the schools lack female role models who could inspire girls to learn the subjects. Also, compared to boys, girls often have not enough time to study at home, including those girls who could otherwise concentrate on science and mathematics. Traditionally girls are expected to participate in the domestic work at home during evening time and weekends.

***Concrete measures taken to empower all girls through education to contribute to addressing climate change***

Through its work, Felm and its partners have observed that climate change education and learning of climate change related skills need to be integrated in the curriculum. Girls need to be encouraged to study science and mathematics, which also requires supporting women teachers to specialize in these subjects and act as role models to girls. It is vital to tackle persistent gender stereotypes also more broadly in the societies that hinder girls’ wishes to pursue certain careers. It is particularly important to increase the possibilities of the most marginalized girls such as girls with disabilities to have an opportunity to study science and mathematics. Schools can provide opportunities for girls to take leadership roles in projects that may support their willingness to act in those roles also in the future.

In Tanzania, Felm and its partner organization have invested in increasing the gender equality in teaching through teacher training in university: improving gender responsive pedagogy in secondary education is a key element in the project called *PITA*. Through advanced training, teachers have acknowledged the importance of encouraging girls and learned ways of identifying and tackling learning difficulties. The teachers have been motivated to change their teaching methods and program which has led to significantly better learning results.

Furthermore, as there is a lack of systematic approach to multidisciplinary pedagogy in environmental education in secondary schools in Tanzania, the PITA project developed a multidisciplinary environmental education model by supporting both pre-service and in-service teacher education. PITA project aims at integrating language supportive pedagogy, gender responsive pedagogy and multidisciplinary approach to environmental education into teacher education programmes in Tanzania. This is done through the annual teacher education curriculum development process which takes place at Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA)/ Faculty of Education, Humanities and Science (FEHS), and is monitored by Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU).

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