**Call for submission for a report on how climate change can have an impact on the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl**

**Reference: WHRGS/HRC/RES/54/19**

1. **The most important climate-related barriers for girls to their equal enjoyment of the right to education.**

Climate action and access to quality, inclusive education for girls and marginalised children are inextricably linked. Just as positive climate action can support girls to stay in school, the harmful impacts of climate change can be the source of severe disruption to the realisation of girls’ education, and impact each of the pillars of the right to education. [Research demonstrates](https://malala.org/newsroom/malala-fund-publishes-report-on-climate-change-and-girls-education) that climate-related events like flooding, droughts, storms and increased exposure to zoonotic diseases impede girls’ ability to go to school, particularly in fragile states and the most marginalised communities. Such climate-related events exacerbate girls’ vulnerability and the discrimination they face in multiple areas -- poverty, unpaid care work and harmful gender norms. These further limit girls’ return to school and rights to achieve 12 years of quality, inclusive education. It is important to also acknowledge that intersectional factors such as girls’ economic status, race, ethnicity, and displacement will also have a significant bearing on their access to education.

* Vulnerable households regularly adopt negative coping mechanisms to respond to climate shocks which have significant gendered impacts. These include pulling children, and particularly girls, out of school. This has been shown, for instance, in communities faced with drought where the gender norms place responsibility of water collection in the home and community on girls. [A study in Botswana](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.18.1.0126) found that 70% of children who dropped out of school during drought were girls, and 56% of girls reported travelling longer distances than usual to fetch water, which took more time out of their day. Instances like this impede the right of **accessibility** to education.
  + Moreover, during times of drought, the lack of access to water in school environments may prevent girls from attending lessons while they are menstruating, given the challenge of maintaining menstrual hygiene. [A 2015–2016 assessment of the impact of drought in India](http://madhya/) found that water hand pumps had dried up in approximately 60%– 80% of schools surveyed in Madhya Pradesh, restricting the number of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities available.
* Through natural disasters and natural disasters caused by climate change, the **availability** of adequate educational institutions and infrastructure (including school buildings and learning resources) may be negatively impacted. Climate change has also been linked to increased conflict and insecurity. [Pressures on natural resources are exacerbated by climate change; crop yields are reduced, land is degraded, and water supplies are diminished and contaminated.](https://www.worldvision.org.uk/media/t3wm4hbg/wvclimateconflicthungerreport.pdf) Such pressures can create conflict within communities and between communities as land boundaries, access to water, pasture and dwindling resources are contested and public services, including school systems, are stressed further. Moreover, when families migrate from rural to urban areas due to climate instances, girls’ school enrolment rates have been shown to drop, likely due to families’ fear for daughters’ safety. In instances of weather-related school closures, girls are less likely than boys to attend temporary school facilities because of families’ fears that their daughters could get harassed or experience violence on their journey to or from the temporary facility.
* Climate change has also been known to lead to ***displacement*** of children, their families, and communities. [According to the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), by 2050, an estimated 1.2 billion people could be displaced due to natural disasters and climate change](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10037158/#:~:text=Such%20figures%20are%20expected%20to,and%20climate%20change%20%5B6%5D.). Displacement may lead to limited availability and accessibility of trained teachers. Likewise, for children and families on the move, mobility may serve as a barrier to accessing educational opportunities, and many children may be left out-of-school as a result (**accessibility**). If children do manage to enrol in schooling once they have resettled in a new environment, instruction may be in a language that is foreign to them, and the educational content may be focused upon a different set of values or religious principles. As part of the principle of **acceptability**, the state must ensure access to an objective, inclusive and pluralist curriculum.
  + As demonstrated in instances such as following the heavy 2010 monsoon season in Pakistan, girls are much less likely to return to school following weather-related school closures.
* The economic hardships and loss of family livelihood that result from climate change can exacerbate poverty and lead to child labour, child marriage and trafficking as families struggle to meet their children's basic needs, with girls disproportionately impacted **(accessibility and adaptability)**. According to [research](https://malala.org/newsroom/malala-fund-publishes-report-on-climate-change-and-girls-education), girls in vulnerable households are more likely to leave school to get married in times of weather-related crises to help ease the burden of scarce household resources. During the droughts in Ethiopia in 2010–2011, for instance, [UNICEF reported an increase in the number of girls sold into marriage following the droughts in exchange for livestock](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HOA_CALL_FOR_ACTION_Leaflet_Feb2017_1.pdf) as families struggled to cope with extreme drought conditions.
* Whole-of-child impacts: climate change can exacerbate existing and overlapping barriers to accessing quality education such as increasing mental health needs, the prevalence of sickness and diseases, as well as hunger and domestic violence – which all impact a child’s ability to concentrate and learn. In these contexts, it is vital that children receive support from staff trained to provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and that children learn about MHPSS through their school curricula. This relates to the educational relevance, and **acceptability** *element*of the right to education.
  + Water-borne diseases are more prevalent in situations of drought due to the disappearance of [clean water sources](https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/clean-water/clean-water-facts-impact-future). Diarrheal disease from contaminated water [can quicky turn lethal,](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/diarrhoeal-disease) especially for vulnerable children. Likewise, limited access to clean water can impact the availability of crops and lead to [hunger and nutritional problems that disproportionately impact adolescent girls](https://reliefweb.int/report/world/undernourished-and-overlooked-global-nutrition-crisis-adolescent-girls-and-women-enar).
* **Adaptability of education** refers to the quality and flexibility of education to respond to the needs of changing societies and communities, as well as the measurable learning outcomes of pupils and students, training of teachers, and availability and quality of teaching materials, and school buildings, etc. Each of these characteristics of the adaptability of education can be disrupted during periods of climate-related upheaval and displacement.

1. **Concrete measures taken to respond to the barriers faced by girls indicated above.**

As demonstrated, many of the challenges to the realisation of girls’ right to education are complex and context specific. As such, multi-sectoral approaches to respond to the barriers faced by girls are the most effective. As girls age, the number of intervening factors that divert girls from school increases. [Hence, what works is integrated programming that addresses protection, livelihoods, health, and education concurrently in a way that responds to the specific contextual barriers that keep girls out of school or limits their learning and progression](https://www.deval.org/fileadmin/Redaktion/PDF/05-Publikationen/Externe_Publikationen/2020_Lessons_from_Evaluation._Issue_2__Gender_Equality_in_Education/2020_Lessons-from-evaluation-ge-education.pdf).

The following are some evidence-based approaches that could be incorporated into programming to support girls’ school retention:

* Addressing the *safety* (in and on-the-way to school and in communities) and *social skills* *development* of girls supports them to remain in education and make informed choices about their future. Girls' clubs or adolescent clubs (with a quality outcome-based curriculum) and other safe spaces, clear protection mechanisms and platforms to engage with mentors and positive role models are proven approaches to deliver girls education outcomes. [Engaging boys to share their emotions and develop positive masculinity early on, has also proven key to achieving gender equality.](https://www.equimundo.org/engaging-young-boys-is-a-key-to-achieving-gender-equality-and-healthy-manhood-reveals-new-research-as-part-of-the-global-boyhood-initiative/)
* Building girls’ and boys’ agency through enabling meaningful participation in decision-making in their households, schools, communities, and programming gives young people a positive sense of identity and hope and ownership for the future.
* Early marriage and pregnancy are significant barriers to girls staying in school due to community and family expectations and laws in many countries. Adolescent girls in Africa have huge unmet needs in preventing unwanted pregnancy*. Age-appropriate SRHR and life skills* programming for girls (starting in primary school) can be integrated into girls’ clubs and other school-based programming. Provide girl-friendly information and services, particularly around sexual and reproductive health rights.
  + While child marriage predominantly affects adolescent girls, solid evidence has shown that working only with girls is not enough to end the practice. [Many boys and young men too face pressures to marry early, or to marry girls who are children, and play a key role in embodying and reproducing harmful gender norms that drive child marriage.](https://www.boyhoodinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Equimundo_CEFMU_Report_0.pdf) Thus, it is critical to also engage boys through age appropriate SRHR and life skills conversations to encourage them to develop healthy relational skills.
* *WASH* -Ensure schools have separate latrines for girls that are safe, [including dignified menstrual hygiene facilities and access to sanitary wear](https://www.brookings.edu/books/what-works-in-girls-education-evidence-for-the-worlds-best-investment/) and that school staff are prepared, aware and supportive of girls as they reach menses.
* Improve the *quality of education and learning* – Girls need to be learning not just attending school. [In order to learn effectively, it is imperative that children, and especially girls who are more likely to be undernourished, receive proper nutrition, including through school meals](https://womendeliver.org/nutrition-education-food-thought/). Girls (and boys) who make little learning progress in school are at high risk of eventually dropping out, and for girls this intersects with poverty and domestic work and contributes to early marriage. The most effective interventions for increasing learning outcomes are those improve teaching and learning. Most critically (and fundamentally) assuring enough teachers are present and consistently teaching then to focus on building learners’ foundational skills using learner-centred, inclusive, gender-transformative pedagogy. Targeted remedial programming is particularly relevant to mitigate learning loss and reduce drop out.
* *Community engagement* involving community leaders and caregivers is important for changing attitudes towards girls’ education. In many contexts globally, [there is a stark contrast between girls and boys when it comes to domestic chores](https://www.unicef.org/media/65586/file/A-new-era-for-girls-2020.pdf). Other [barriers for girls result from harmful social norms and attitudes](http://www.wvi.org/education-and-life-skills/publication/girl-vision). Addressing these through effective community engagement involving local role models and champions and tackling harmful religious and cultural norms increases effectiveness and sustainability of girls’ education programming. Community involvement in school management through parent teachers' associations strengthen collaboration with schools and can be leveraged for responsive early warning and follow up systems for girls (and boys) who have or are at-risk of dropping out of school.
* [Interventions that *reduce the cost of schooling* can be very effective at retaining girls in school](https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/investing-girls-education-top-3-lessons-evidence). Importantly, this also includes reducing the time taken to travel to or distance to school.  **School-meals are a transfer that households can value as a reduction in the cost of schooling.** Additional, well-targeted supports such as conditional cash transfers, uniform or stationary supports, can increase the impact for girls.
* *Sustain education during emergencies*-Crises that break continuity of education place girls in a negative spiral of lost protection and eventual permanent drop out. A [girl of primary school age and living in a crisis-affected country is 35% more likely to be out of school than her male peers.](https://inee.org/resources/closing-gap-advancing-girls-education-crisis-and-conflict) **Sustaining education in crises and emergency or fragile contexts provides a protective effect.**

Additional helpful measures include:

* Improving access to quality education for refugee and displaced children in both camp and urban and informal and formal settings.
* As part of the multi-sectoral focus, triple-nexus programming, including [World Vision's Fragile Context Programming Approach](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Navigating%20the%20Nexus%20-%20iraq%20case%20study.pdf), rapid response and fragile contexts approaches are effective and proven ways to respond short-term needs with flexibility, while also prioritising long-term interventions that address the drivers and root causes of fragility and risk in an integrated way across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming.
* [Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA)](https://www.wvi.org/stories/global-hunger-crisis/saving-lives-and-assets-value-nexus-cash-approaches-anticipatory) has proven to be a cost-efficient means of building the resilience of vulnerable communities and strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in pre-disaster scenarios, including climate crises. CVA works best when complemented by longer-term Social Protection mechanisms.

1. **The most important existing gaps and challenges in education to empower all girls to contribute to the climate change agenda.** 
   * While duty bearers have the responsibilities to implement what they pledged, girls are important agents of change in climate action therefore they have the right to participate in climate policy decision making processes in a meaningful way;

Gaps include:

* + Capacity building: States should invest in capacity building for the policy makers, teachers and practitioners so that girls’ participation in climate action is facilitated in a safe and meaningful way, in accordance with the evolving capacity of their age, with appropriate resources.
  + Green skills: Building their resilience and capacity to adapt in the context of climate change, including access to so called ‘green’ skills development and technical and vocational education and training.
  + Workforce development: Workforce development of teachers and club facilitators should be supported, to move towards a play-based and experiential pedagogy that builds agency, resilience, asset-building, and an enabling environment for Positive Youth Development.

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

* [Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE),](https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/big-picture/ACE) a concept adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – which aims to empower all members of society to engage in climate action through education, training, awareness-raising, participation, public access to information and international cooperation on these issues. In line with ACE, many World Vision project models – such as [IMPACT+](https://www.wvi.org/publications/brochure/education/impact-brief), [Building Secure Livelihoods](https://www.wvi.org/building-secure-livelihoods), [Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management](https://www.wvi.org/humanitarian-and-emergency-affairs-drr-cca-and-response), [Citizen Voice and Action (CVA)](https://www.worldvision.de/sites/worldvision.de/files/pdf/WVD_Citizen_Voice_and_Action_Project.pdf) and [Ultra-Poor Graduation](https://www.wvi.org/economic-development/ultra-poor-graduation) – include the key building blocks of environmental education, awareness-raising and climate empowerment.
  + For example, IMPACT+ is an integrated approach to adolescent life skills and active citizenship, equipping young people with the knowledge, competencies, and values they need to be healthy, productive and engaged and to contribute meaningfully to issues affecting their lives and communities. The approach uses service-learning projects, where adolescents assess the needs and assets of their communities to plan, implement, and evaluate projects.
* In Ghana, the Ministries of Education and Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation have integrated environmental education in school syllabuses to ensure education for sustainable development. [World Vision Ghana supported this initiative by inaugurating 10 school clubs in the Garu-Tempane District](https://www.worldvision.com.au/docs/default-source/impact-briefs/ghana-talensi-phase-3-impact-brief.pdf) and training its members in farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) concepts as part of measures to help increase children’s interest in environmental issues.
* Anticipatory Action is an initiative World Vision Mongolia is embracing which uses meteorological early warning data to better predict weather patterns to more effectively prepare for and mitigate the impact of climate hazards. [Several studies](https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/09/southeast-asia-climate-change-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-prakash) have already shown the valuable impact of Anticipatory Action. A [report highlighted](http://https//www.fao.org/3/ca2181en/ca2181en.pdf) that for every dollar spent in early action, the return of investment is $72. In a separate [impact assessment report](http://ttps//startnetwork.org/learn-change/news-and-blogs/dzud-mongolia-anticipation-harsh-winter) published by Start Network alongside World Vision and Save the Children, it was found that the reactive intervention cost, inclusive of all logistics and monitoring activities, was $120 per household, while in contrast, the cost of a sheep at that time was about $60 proving that the savings was greater than the cost when anticipatory actions are implemented.

Moreover, World Vision's [Girl Vision](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/EdLS_FactSheet_GirlVision_1.pdf) programme was developed as a multi-functional, cross-sectoral approach to equip girls to successfully transition to and complete secondary school by addressing the key barriers to attending and staying in school. The programme involves:

* Analysing the barriers that affect a girl’s access to quality education—and engaging and empowering the girl herself in a safe and supportive environment.
* Changing social norms (knowledge, attitudes and practices) in within the school environment, within family structures, and the communities, including through conversation with families, boys and men, and local leaders.
* Training teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy to ensure girls and boys have an equal opportunity to learn.
* Prioritising access to education for girls in crisis and conflict situations.
* Emphasising cross-sectoral collaboration from actors working on health, nutrition, education, child protection, as well as actors at the family, community, school and government levels.

World Vision's Girl Vision approach has also leveraged World Vision project models including:

* [Safe and Nurturing Schools](https://www.wvi.ngo/sites/default/files/2019-05/World%20Vision_Education_Safe%20and%20Nurturing%20Schools.pdf), to create a positive and violence-free learning environment;
* [Channels of Hope for Gender](https://www.wvi.org/church-and-interfaith-engagement/channels-hope-gender), which engages and mobilises faith communities to address gender-based violence and attitudes; and
* [Citizen Voice and Action](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Citizen%27s%20Voice%20and%20Action%20Field%20Guide.pdf), World Vision’s proven local-level advocacy approach for social accountability