

Secondary Schools United
Nations Symposium 2016
Commission on the Status of Women
AWID
cynthianicole10@hotmail.com
Colegio Episcopal de Panamá
Advisor: Laura Pollock

Around the world young women's access to education and employment is very limited due to gender disparities and discrimination. In many cases these barriers are not strictly moral, they include school fees; strong cultural norms favoring boys' education; and negative classroom environments, where girls may face violence, exploitation or corporal punishment. This is a problem that AWID has strongly advocated against and sought justice for the past years, and most importantly, a permanent solution for.

Girls' education is essential to the achievement of quality learning relevant to the 21st century, including girls' transition to and performance in secondary school and beyond. Adolescent girls that attend school delay marriage and childbearing, are less vulnerable to disease including HIV and AIDS, and acquire information and skills that lead to increased earning power. Evidence shows that the return to a year of secondary education for girls correlates to a 25 per cent increase in wages later in life. Increasingly, adolescent girls also face economic and social demands that further disrupt their education, spanning from household obligations and child labour to child marriage, gender-based violence and female genital cutting/mutilation. Recent estimates show that one-third of girls in the developing world are married before age 18, and one-third of women in the developing world give birth before age 20. If all girls had secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, child marriage would fall by 64 per cent, from almost 2.9 million to just over 1 million.¹ AWID's priority in this is to commission women's educational needs, and offer resources that include research, analysis, and documentation of the ways in which the lack of knowledge and professional growth is affecting women's lives, while amplifying and pressing for recognition of women's struggles, propositions and aspirations.² ensuring that they would not be obliterated or covered by the law as an "honour killing" such as the case of Ms. Farzana of Pakistan.

Women employment is also a great concern of AWID, due to the barriers of female employment in many countries, which some include illiteracy, poverty, decline of household industries, competition from factories, and technological changes.³ In the U.S, however, of the 123 million

women age 16 years and over, 72 million were labor force participants—working or looking for work. Women comprised 47 percent of the total U.S. labor force. Women are projected to account for 51 percent of the increase in total labor force growth between 2008 and 2018.⁴ AWID advocates for the increase of visibility and recognition of unemployed women, as well as the risks that they encounter by documenting the attacks that they face and disseminating information on their struggles, strategies, and challenges.⁵

Many challenges remain to bridge the gap of gender equality by 2030. Far too many women and girls continue to be discriminated against, subjected to violence, denied equal opportunities in education and employment, and excluded from positions of leadership and decision-making, furthermore, this emphasis on girls' empowerment will demand even greater attention to social emotional learning and innovation within programmatic approaches in education.

1. Women's education statistics: http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_70640.html
2. AWID's priorities: <https://www.awid.org/priority-areas/economic-justice>
3. Barriers: <http://www.importantindia.com/21304/barriers-for-women-employment/>
4. Women in the work force: <https://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-laborforce-10.htm>
5. Women's rights' defenders: <https://www.awid.org/priority-areas/women-human-rights-defenders>

Secondary Schools United
Nations Symposium 2016
Commission on the Status of Women
AWID
cynthianicole10@hotmail.com
Colegio Episcopal de Panamá
Advisor: Laura Pollock

Women around the world are subjected to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, regardless of their income, age or education. Such violence can lead to long-term physical, mental and emotional health problems. In many countries, both women and men believe that this actions are justified in certain circumstances. However, attitudes towards violence are beginning to change.

In the majority of countries, less than 40 per cent of the women who experienced violence sought help of any sort. Among those who did, most looked to family and friends as opposed to the police and health services. In almost all countries with available data, the percentage of women who sought police help, out of all women who sought assistance, was less than 10 per cent. Women's reluctance to seek help may be linked to the widespread acceptability of violence against women.¹ To finalize this, AWID seeks collaboration across all of its priority areas, to ensure young feminists' voices are heard and reflected are reflected in debates, policies and programs affecting them.²

Child brides are likely to experience domestic violence and social isolation, and typically have limited opportunities for education, a career and vocational development. Moreover, girls are often married to older men, sometimes making it difficult for them to exercise their decision-making power within the household and partnership, including on issues related to reproductive health.³ The majority of these women who have wed under the age of 15 have been subjected to participate into sexual acts, because they believe them to be subservient due to being female, which results in many of them dying in the process. This also connects with female infanticide, due to the belief that girls are undesirable and the patriarchal norms in certain societies; the more prominent ones located in China and India.⁴

AWID has worked with several organizations to end this practices around the world, promoting the rise of young feminists and Women Human Rights Defenders, whose purpose is to defend human rights, and they do it with passion, courage, and dedication. This organization will not rest to demonstrate and protect the rights and beliefs of women who deserve to be treated as such.

1. Violence towards women statistics: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/worldswomen2015_report.pdf
2. AWID actions: <https://www.awid.org/priority-areas/young-feminist-activism>
3. Child marriage: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/worldswomen2015_report.pdf
4. Female infanticide: <http://www.domesticviolenceservices.com/female-infanticide.html>

Secondary Schools United
Nations Symposium 2016
Commission on the Status of Women
AWID
cynthianicole10@hotmail.com
Colegio Episcopal de Panamá
Advisor: Laura Pollock

In 2013, AWID joined a group of women's rights organizations to make environmental sustainability a lived reality for all people and the planet.¹ AWID's mission towards this is to be the driving force within the global community of feminist and women's rights activists, to strengthen our voice, to influence and transform structures of power to make awareness of what we can do for the planet and ourselves.

Environmental protection and sustainable development require that both women and men are actively involved, including through daily activities aimed at preserving natural resources and through participation in local and high-level environmental decision making. As mentioned in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action,² the involvement of women in environmental decision-making at all levels is a key step to ensuring that women's issues and gender perspectives on the environment are included in policymaking from the local to national and global levels. Women are definitely more involved than men in protecting the planet, which is somewhat linked to the gender division of domestic labor. Recycling is a clear example of it, and some countries in which women leader these movements include Argentina, Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom.³ The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are neither gender nor age neutral; however, women and children are frequently among those most significantly affected by natural disasters such as drought and famine.⁴

Another point to take into consideration is the fact that the natural process of menstruation, that's the core of a woman's being, can be so life-threatening to the health of our planet and most importantly, damaging even to the woman herself. Sanitary pads, that are made primarily with plastic and chemicals and the like, can't possibly be healthy for a woman's body. Women need to understand what sort of chemicals might be getting into our blood stream (through exposure to skin) by wearing a sanitary napkin that's more than 80% plastic – non-bio degradable, made with toxic chemicals that leaches BPA and BPS. The same chemicals that have been related to female infertility by disrupting embryonic development; are also linked with heart diseases and cancer. Chlorine, that is used as a bleach for that pristine white napkin can create toxic dioxin and

other disinfection-by-products (DBPs) such as trihalomethane.⁵ This is why AWID reinforces research and knowledge creation in the community to inform women and create awareness on this matter.

It is imperative that the dangers of not helping women's sustainable development are known within the global community, and as recently Ban Ki Moon stated on the Paris Climate Agreement, claiming it is most significant international agreement to combat climate change,⁶ this is incredibly relevant and it must be treated and debated as such.

1. AWID's actions: <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/challenging-power-one-percent>
2. Beijing Platform for Action: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/worldswomen2015_report.pdf
3. Women and the environment around the world: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/worldswomen2015_report.pdf
4. Climate change: <http://www.worldwatch.org/critical-role-women-sustainable-development>
5. Risks and chemicals: http://www.mommy-labs.com/holistic_living/restoring-earth-sustainable-menstrual-hygiene-practices/
6. Paris Agreement: <http://time.com/4556705/paris-agreement-climate-change-global-warming/>