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# FACT SHEET: USAID ANNOUNCES \$130 MILLION IN NEW INVESTMENTS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

## BACKGROUND

Around the world, USAID tackles the barriers that keep girls from achieving their full potential and supports them to be the leaders of today and tomorrow. **This International Day of the Girl, USAID is announcing \$130 million in new investments to elevate and advance girls' empowerment.**

Adolescence is a critical period in a girl's life, shaping her current and future well-being. When adolescent girls are educated, healthy, free from violence, and economically and socially empowered, they are more likely to thrive, as are their communities.

In line with the [U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls](#), USAID is committed to advancing gender equality for adolescent girls by transforming harmful stereotypes, attitudes, norms, and practices that decrease girls' likelihood of benefiting from education and other opportunities; and by increasing girls' capacity to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in their households, communities, and societies.

## **ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROMOTE SAFETY**

Gender equality and girls' empowerment are not achievable without addressing the unique forms of gender-based violence (GBV) that girls, including adolescent girls and young women, around the world disproportionately face, including sexual exploitation and abuse; intimate partner violence; female genital mutilation/cutting; child, early, and forced marriage and unions; and technology-facilitated gender-based violence. GBV threatens the well-being of all children, particularly girls, by depriving them of their rights to make decisions about their relationships and lives; disrupting their education; increasing their risk of early pregnancy; and preventing their full participation in economic, political, and social spheres. To address these barriers, USAID is investing:

- \$42 million, subject to the availability of funds, to prevent and respond to child, early, and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU) globally, prioritizing evidence-based interventions to reduce the number of child marriages as well as meet the needs of already-married children. This includes \$20 million globally to tackle CEFMU, in addition to:
  - Up to \$15 million over 5 years, subject to the availability of funds, in Bangladesh to reduce CEFMU, increase the age at first birth, and provide age and developmentally-appropriate family planning and reproductive health services to adolescents;
  - \$2 million in Yemen to support adolescents and community leaders identifying solutions to child protection risks, including CEFMU and to support girls' groups, student councils, and girls' non formal education centers to prepare out of school girls to go back to formal education or to join the labor market;
  - \$1.7 million in Ghana to support social and behavior change and child protection efforts to reduce drivers of CEFMU;
  - \$1.5 million in Mauritania to protect girls' rights, prevent GBV, and mobilize community leaders to reduce CEFMU;
  - \$1 million in Somalia to reduce CEFMU and mitigate its harmful effects by equipping adolescent girls and young women with education and workforce readiness skills and by increasing access to multi-sectoral services; and
  - \$550,000 in Azerbaijan for small grants to local organizations tackling CEFMU through tertiary education opportunities and awareness-raising efforts.

## PROMOTE GIRLS' HEALTH

Adolescent girls have unique health needs and face disproportionate barriers to access health information and services. Pregnancy and childbirth complications are the leading causes of death for girls aged 15-19, while their infants have the highest mortality rates and their children are more vulnerable to poor health outcomes. USAID advances girls' health—including family planning and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and response, and maternal and child health—by promoting equitable access to education including comprehensive sexual education, and advancing access to and use of high-quality adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health services. To address these barriers, USAID is investing:

- Up to \$40 million over five years, subject to the availability of funds, in Bangladesh for community-based interventions to improve the knowledge and practice of nutrition interventions that aim to change behavior of adolescents and young women of reproductive age, and for children during the first 1,000 days of life. The aim is to increase access to and use of health and nutrition services at public health facilities in 'hard-to-reach' rural locations where malnutrition rates are high.
- \$20 million, subject to the availability of funds, for policy, advocacy, health financing, and governance programming to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and advance gender equality. This will include developing policies to reduce barriers to access SRH and other health services; building the advocacy capacity of women-led and youth-led organizations to participate in the policymaking process; and applying a youth and gender lens to private and public health financing mechanisms.
- Up to \$3 million, subject to the availability of funds, in the Philippines to improve social protection for adolescent girls and young women who are exiting high school and preparing to enter the labor force. Investments include providing vocational skills training and increasing awareness of and access to essential health services, including family planning and reproductive health, primary healthcare, and psychosocial support.

## INVEST IN GIRLS' EDUCATION

Through education, girls gain the foundational literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills to advocate for themselves and others, challenge harmful gender norms, and create more just societies. USAID is working in more than 50 countries to advance gender equality in and through education. USAID is investing:

- \$20.6 million, subject to the availability of funds, in new education initiatives that prioritize girls, including:

- Up to \$20 million over 9 years in Nepal, subject to the availability of funds, of which \$12 million has been previously obligated, to improve equitable education outcomes for marginalized youth in grades 6-10 and support local governments to bring out-of-school children back into school. This includes the outreach toward child brides, learners from marginalized castes and ethnicities, girls and boys from extremely poor families and remote areas, LGBTQI+ youth, and learners with disabilities;
- \$600,000 in Comoros to encourage the active civic participation of girls and young women through education, democracy camps, and service learning opportunities.

## **PROMOTE GIRLS' LEADERSHIP IN STEM AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE**

To overcome mounting global challenges such as climate change, all girls must be supported to succeed in safe, equitable, and inclusive education systems. USAID believes that girls are already demonstrating their leadership in fields such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and no girl should be denied the right to education or other opportunities for leadership on the basis of gender identity or any other characteristic. To support girls STEM and climate leadership, USAID is investing:

- Up to \$3.8 million, matching its partner the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)'s contribution of £3 million, for the Climate Action Partnership for Education, a joint effort between USAID and FCDO to develop and test innovative solutions that will deliver assistance at the intersection of education, climate, and gender equality, including by reducing the impact of the climate crisis on girls' education.
- Up to \$737,000, subject to the availability of funds, for a global activity to develop and pilot diagnostic and guidance tools to identify inclusive opportunities in the workplace and advance the creation of more and better jobs for adolescent girls, young women and others in food, agriculture, and other green sectors. This effort will help deliver decent work opportunities for young working age women and strengthen climate resilience.