



Government
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REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Tracking Education of girls and women in conflict and post conflict situations in Africa



FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines



1. Introduction.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that education is a fundamental human right¹ for everyone, irrespective of their sex, caste, creed or religion. Right to Education² is legally guaranteed for all without any discrimination. States have the obligation to protect, respect, and fulfil this right and as such this right to education should be; **Available** (education must be free, government-funded and benefit from appropriate infrastructure and trained teachers), **Accessible** (the system must be accessible to all without geographical, economic, social and cultural discrimination and must include the most marginalized populations), **Acceptable** (the content of education must be relevant, non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and of good quality; the school environment must be healthy and safe) and **Adaptable** (education adapt to the changing needs of society and contribute to combating inequalities, including gender discrimination, and must be adaptable locally to specific contexts).

AU Agenda 2063³ provides an African roadmap towards its renaissance, a situation requiring Africa to re-focus on its education system. Achieving Agenda 2063 requires creation of a new African citizen who will be an effective change agent, and thus a reason to develop a transformational education system that is responsive to the worlds changing needs, is development-driven and cognizant of the current predicaments Africa finds its self.

The number and intensity of violent conflicts⁴ has increased in the past decade; Africa has not been an exception. In 2017 Africa experienced 18 state-based conflicts, a decrease from 21 in 2016, though the continent experienced a significant increase in non-state conflict. Displacements, civilian casualties, violence, loss of infrastructure, loss of lives and livelihoods, refugees & internal displacements, debt burden as some of conflict effects, the denominator however is that girls and women bear the greatest human casualties. The extensive human, physical, emotional, social and economic costs of these conflicts are a source of concern for the affected populations, governments, policy holders, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), development partners, and other stakeholders in the education sector. Conflict directly derails education, yet it is education that is a catalysis towards renaissance of Africa.

¹ <https://www.en.unesco.org/news/what-you-need-know-about-right-education>

² www.right-to-education.org

³ <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063>

⁴ reliefweb.int/report/world/conflict-trends-africa-1989-2017



2. The nexus of conflict and girls education in Africa

Based on the high population of girls and women affected by these conflicts, it is important that conversations majoring on education are focused towards actualization of education right during and post conflict periods. These conversations would correlate the actualization of the education right, to navigation of the social structure girls and women find themselves exposed to, and the countries development index after conflict. It is known that existing power dynamics and inequalities are amplified during conflicts, educational gains lost, social fabric torn, and thus jeopardizing the achievements of the continent's Agenda 2063.

Social disruption experienced during these periods expose girls and women to various forms of violence resulting into lifelong consequences, and shift in gender roles. Most countries are unable to provide education services, or basic conflict conditions suitable for girls and women specific needs. There lacks data regarding those affected, their education needs, infrastructural capacities and the teacher services required. On the demand side, families and communities fearing for the security of their daughters, prefer marrying them off as coping mechanism; denying girls and women the right to education.

Proper planning, quality and relevant education can help protect women and girls, in these conflict situations, make them more resilient, improve their social and economic positions, and enhance the health and wellbeing of the families and communities. Nearly four years after the endorsement of the SDG, and three years after the adoption of CESA 16-25, African countries are at different stages of progress towards integrating / mainstreaming the internationally and African agreed education targets; In so doing, countries that have experienced conflict may need more support in achieving these set targets.

There is need to deliberate, understand and exchange ideas on policies, legislation, plans, financing and monitoring reforms within the education continuum while being cognizant of conflict situations in Africa. Achieving this process would require taking stock of progress made in educational context of girls and women living in countries that have experienced conflict. Using this trajectory, it is possible that in collaboration with governments, CSOs, education stakeholders can collaborate in ensuring transformative education for girls and women is achieved regardless of the conflict situation. It is within this context that the Government of Kenya, the Canadian Government in collaboration with the Office of Special envoy of chairperson for African Union Commission of Women Peace & Security, and the Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) are convening a one day conference focusing on girls and women's access to education in



conflict and post conflict situations in Africa. The conference recommendations will contribute to the outcome document to be presented as African position on girls and women education in conflict during the Women Deliver conference in Canada in June 2019, will also inform the framework that the Office of African Union Special Envoy Women Peace & Security is currently adapting towards advocacy on education for girls and women in conflict, guide various government implementation strategies in conflict education as well as inform FAWE and other CSOs working education in conflict in Africa.

3. Conference objectives:

The conference overall objective is to track girls and women education progress despite conflict situations in Africa. Ensuring that all African girls and women achieve transformative education despite conflict situation will guarantee sustainable development, transform lives/livelihoods and assure continental socio economic development is achieved as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

3.1 Other conference objectives will be to;

- i. Find out the education status of girls and women in conflict and post conflict situations in Africa.
- ii. To find out what measures countries hosting girls and women from conflict /post conflict countries are taking towards ensuring their attainment of an education would guarantee them sustainable livelihoods in the wake of structural change presented by the conflict.
- iii. Identify challenges, opportunities, innovative practices from various countries, civil society organizations and academia working in education in conflict with a view of ensuring cross learning and upscale of best practices.
- iv. Review existing implementation mechanisms by governments, CSOs and education stakeholders to harmonize execution, strengthen synergy and alignment to regional, continental and global educational frameworks

3.2 Conference outcome

The outcome of these deliberations will lead to formulation of policies for the continental position paper on girls and women education in conflict. These recommendation will be tabled at African Union next Ordinary Session for endorsement and will inform the framework that the Office of Special envoy African Union Women Peace & Security will adopt towards advocacy on education for girls and women, and will also be adopted by GIMAC as a working document. Furthermore, the outcome document



will be presented at the Women Deliver conference in Canada as the African position on education for girls and women in conflict situations

4. Conference organization

4.1 Participation there will be representation from Government of Kenya, Government of Canada, African Union, all 33 countries where FAWE has presence, selected government representation from countries who are / have been faced directly /indirectly by conflict, within the past decade, civil society under GIMAC, the academia and experts in education in emergencies.

4.2 Venue: The conference shall be held at Windsor golf and country hotel in Nairobi Kenya, on 22nd May 2019

4.3 Event structure: The conference will take a technical approach. In view of the expected deliberations, country papers will be presented and discussed, followed by experience sharing from civil societies, reflections from the academia, best/working practices shared, and experiences from beneficiaries heard. This will lead into a discussion and formulation of the position paper.