CSW

TOPIC GUIDE

Aanya Gupta
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Chairs

Chair Letters:

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to AMUN XXIV! My name is Aanya Gupta and I am a junior in the Academy for Medical Science and Technology here at Bergen County Academies. I am extremely excited to be one of your chairs for the CSW committee this year and I am ready to hear some friendly debate and see what solutions you can come up with. I was introduced to Model UN here at BCA and I am beyond grateful that I joined the club my freshman year. Joining Model UN has taught me an unbelievable amount about public speaking, world affairs, debate, and so much more. Additionally, because of Model UN, I have made so many great friends not only within BCA but from every committee I have been a part of. I hope we can provide you all with such an experience over the course of the committee as well. Outside of MUN, I play soccer, I love to go skiing in the winter, and I enjoy reading. I also probably spend way too much time watching Netflix.

We hope this committee session of the Commission on the Status of Women will get your mind thinking to make novel solutions. I can not wait to meet everyone and if you have any questions about Model UN, CSW, or anything else feel free to reach out and email me!

Good luck and have fun,
Aanya Gupta, CSW Co-Chair
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Hello Delegates!

My name is Beatrice Song, and I'll be one of your co-chairs for the CSW committee this year. First of all, thank you for deciding to join us at AMUN XXIV! We are looking forward to all the engaging discussions and debates we'll see during this conference. Whether this is your first time as a novice or you're an experienced delegate, we hope that your time at AMUN will be a fun and unique experience.

I'm a sophomore in the Academy of Visual Arts, and I specialize in drawing comic strips. Other than cartoons, I also love illustration and practicing Korean calligraphy. I have always enjoyed public speaking and research, so I was thrilled to be able to participate in MUN in high school. Interestingly, my first official MUN experience was as a staffer, not a delegate. It was for our school's very own middle school conference, JAMUN, where I had an amazing time and saw how the whole conference ran behind the scenes. Just like how one of our own conferences started my MUN journey, I hope it will inspire some of you to start or continue yours as well.

All in all, the best part of MUN is making new friends and to learn something new along the way. If there's anything you want to ask, feel free to reach out to me or my co-chair. I am delighted to be meeting you all in the winter, and I hope together we can make this conference a meaningful one. See you all soon!

Best of luck to you all,
Beatrice Song, CSW Co-Chair
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Topic A:
Trafficking of Women

Introduction

Dedicated to empowering women and advocating for their rights, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established on June 21st, 1946 [7]. Since its inception, the commission has combated countless issues of women's social, economic, and educational rights. Despite existing since the dawn of civilization, human trafficking continues to be prevalent and dangerous today as it is one of the most profitable crimes worldwide, with 700,000 to four million women and children trafficked annually. It is the most rapidly growing area of organized crime internationally, partly because sex trafficked women allow their traffickers to earn massive profits over time, unlike other illicit items that can only be sold once. This economic motivation makes the trafficking of women and girls an international issue, with women in every continent at risk. Traffickers target those in vulnerable positions, and because women experience more social and economic inequalities, they make up most of the victims. Female trafficking victims receive immense physical and psychological abuse, such as injuries, malnutrition, depression, anxiety, and more. Evidence even suggests that they have higher rates of illiteracy, poverty, and isolation due to the lack of resources and opportunities in comparison to women who are not trafficked. With COVID-19, another worldwide issue, female trafficking is further exacerbated. The trafficking of women is not only a breach of human rights, but a detriment to society as a whole. Degraded social development, public health issues, and unsettled communities [6] rise as a result of female trafficking. Governments and organizations worldwide are putting their efforts together to resolve this humanitarian crisis, and protect women internationally.

History of the Issue

Human trafficking is a long-standing issue, especially for women and girls. They have become victims of forced marriage, servitude, forced pregnancy, sexual exploitation and more as a result of trafficking. Violence against women, or VAW, as well as gender inequality, leave women more likely to be exploited, coerced, or deceived [14]. Economically disadvantaged women are the most vulnerable. They are more likely to take risky opportunities, like taking up offers to move abroad for better earnings and lives. These false promises are how many traffickers recruit victims. Poorer families are also more likely to sell their daughters to human traffickers.

The African slave trade was one of the earliest kind of worldwide human trafficking. Soon after, the forced prostitution of white women and girls also rose. The first global agreement about human trafficking was signed in 1904, titled the "International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic." White slavery was criminalized in 1910 with the signing of another agreement, but women and girls of other races were left unprotected. During World War I, attention was brought to the trafficking of all women and children, and succeeding the second world war, the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others was adopted. This document was the first legally binding worldwide agreement about human trafficking, although as of 2022 it has only been ratified by 82 countries. In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was created to.

This plan aimed to remove the restrictions preventing women and girls from utilizing their human rights, such as the trafficking of women. As time progressed, human trafficking grew in range, from harvesting organs to labor trafficking. In 2000, an international legal document was passed that made additions to the definition of human trafficking, labeled the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children [8]. Human trafficking continues to grow worldwide, in scope, victims, and profit.

As one of the most profitable crimes in the world, human trafficking serves as a low risk crime that reaps ample benefits for the perpetrators. Around $150 billion is made annually as a result of human trafficking, $99 billion from sex trafficking and $51 billion from labor trafficking. Sexual exploitation, which affects women and girls the most, is by far the most profitable, making on average $21,800 per victim. It earns about five times more than labor trafficking excluding domestic labor. While these criminals earn a massive profit from trafficking, their victims are left to suffer severe trauma for the rest of their lives [14].

Current Situation:

As of 2022, women and girls make up 72% of trafficking victims worldwide. Sex trafficking victims made up 77% of identified female survivors [13]. Despite past actions taken by the UN, the trafficking of women and girls still remains a prevalent issue today, worsened by the impact of the pandemic.

COVID-19 has brought an increase in economic instability, a critical factor in worsening the trafficking of women. COVID-19 has put millions of girls at risk of being lured in by prospects of money, education, citizenship, and more because of the opportunities that the pandemic has stripped from these people. In 2020, women within the 25-34 age group were 25% more likely than men to live in extreme poverty, which puts them at the greatest risk of exploitation [13].

Through the use of technology, the pandemic has also allowed traffickers to expand their reach. This new way of exploitation poses great risks for vulnerable women. Two-thirds of frontline anti-trafficking workers saw increased use of online recruitment from human traffickers. This online recruitment was utilized for online sexual exploitation. The state of female trafficking now shows that there are few limits for traffickers to reach their victims. Past solutions involved spreading awareness about the trafficking of women, but stronger preventions are now needed [13]. Adjusting to the pandemic-stricken world is necessary to prevent the pool of possible victims from growing.

Many plans and attempted solutions have been put in place to stop the trafficking of women. For example, the UN Trust Fund's 2021 Annual Report introduced its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to end VAW. Its 25th call for proposals focused on preventing violence against marginalized women and girls.   This call incorporated lessons learned from the pandemic's impacts, which will hopefully help to stop the rise of COVID-19 related trafficking issues [15].

In 2015, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action received additions to eliminate the trafficking of women as a form of VAW in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals [14].

Even if a victim of trafficking is rescued, their situation still remains dire. The most common way a victim is recruited is by falsely promising people with poor lifestyles of better wages, environment, or employment. Their original lives are still full of struggle, and victims must work in unstable jobs, now with the burden of trauma. They cannot receive an education because they must either earn money or do domestic work. Trafficked girls and women face much violence while trafficked, and are likely to not have access to mental or physical health services for treatment. Additionally, stigmas arise around these trafficking victims, making readjusting to life a much heavier burden.

Country Policies:

The main and most recent international legal document to combat human trafficking is the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000. This trafficking protocol provides the world's first globally agreed upon [18] definition of human trafficking and it classifies human trafficking as a crime. The objective of the protocol is to protect and help victims of human trafficking. Countries that ratify this treaty must criminalize human trafficking and develop anti-trafficking laws that align with the Protocol. [5]

MAP 2.
Status of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol

■ Party to the Protocol
■ Not yet Party to the Protocol

Trafficking in Persons Protocol
Parties: 178   as of 15 September 2021

In 2021 the US State Department created the "Trafficking in Persons Report." The report recognized 188 countries and assigned them to one of 4 categories based on the country's efforts to combat human trafficking. Tier 1 refers to countries taking sufficient preventative actions and that have little amounts of human trafficking. Next is tier 2, tier 2 watch list and tier 3, the decrease of tiers correlates with a worse state of human trafficking and less preventative measures that countues are taking. [17]

European Nations:

In 2021 the European Commission, with help from the European Parliament, presented its new 2021-2025 strategy for combating trafficking. In the European Union, nearly 50% of trafficking cases are within their own borders [11]. The top five EU countries with the most victims are Romania, Hungary, France, the Netherlands, and Bulgaria. Europe is also a popular destination for trafficking from Asia, Africa, and South America. One of the largest flows of trafficking to Europe is from Nigeria, which mainly brings women and girls for sexual exploitation. Nearly 500,000 women annually are imported into western Europe alone for the purpose of sexual exploitation [12]. The European Union has many legal frameworks against women trafficking, like Article 5 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Another main instrument that addresses human trafficking is Directive 2011/36/EU: the Anti-trafficking directive, which was adopted in 2011.

The European Parliament has also played a big role in addressing gender-based trafficking. In 2016, Parliament assessed the implementation of the EU Anti-trafficking Directive from a gender perspective and called to adopt gender-specific prevention, assistance, and support measures. These directives, along with many more have been implemented in Europe and have helped to improve the rates of trafficking in women.
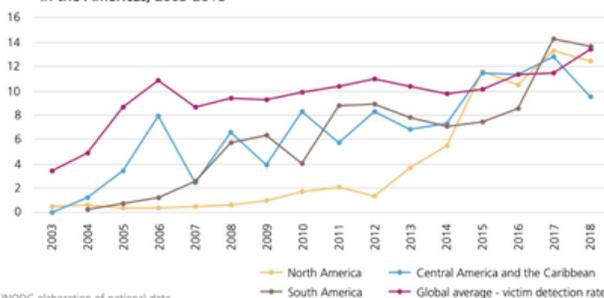
Asian Nations:

Trafficking is extremely prevalent in Asia and, in particular, it has the highest rates in Southeast Asia. Of the 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked annually in the region, about 250,000 are estimated to be from South-East Asia and 150,000 from South Asia. The main reasons for the high rate of trafficking in Asia is primarily due to poverty, lack of education, and domestic violence [4]. Many Asian countries are not a party to the United Nations Protocol on Trafficking. Additionally, many countries do not have any legislation that targets the trafficking of women, and hence they do not have sufficient law enforcement to help and protect victims. Afghanistan, Myanmar, China, North Korea, and Russia, remain classified as Tier 3 and do not have sufficient laws against women trafficking. Throughout Asia there is both internal and external trafficking of women however internal trafficking is more predominant. A report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes [11] states that more than 85 percent of victims were trafficked from within the region. China, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand are main destinations for human trafficking from neighboring countries. Additionally, a big internal issue in China is that women who live in big cities are being trafficked and kidnapped to move to rural areas and become housewives [11].

The Americas and the Caribbean:

Similar to Asia, in South America most victims are women and girls from cities, rural towns, and high poverty regions. They are deceived into romantic relationships, fake jobs, or coerced by other victims. These victims are trafficked into residential brothels, forced marriages, and more. 90% of all cases of human trafficking in South america are women victims [2]. Most South American countries have a specific legal offense of trafficking in persons that is in line with the United Nations Trafficking in person definition. However, even with these legislations in place, the conviction rates per 1,000,000 have been generally increasing over the last 15 years.

In the United States, victims of trafficking are almost exclusively immigrants, and mostly immigrant women. Immigrant women and children are particularly vulnerable to being coerced by traffickers because of their lower levels of education, inability to speak English, immigration status, and lack of familiarity with U.S. employment protections. [10] The U.S. Department of State estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year. The numbers are comparatively lower in Canada, with 800 persons trafficked into Canada annually, and 1,500-2,200 people trafficked through Canada to the United States. The United States of America is ranked a Tier 1 country due to its consistent efforts to combat human trafficking, meeting the TVPA minimum standards.

African Nations:

As of 2020, no African country fully meets the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking. However, 19 are almost there and are on the tier 2 Watch List. Over 400,000 people in Africa are victims of sexual exploitation, 99% of which are women. Main reasons for trafficking of women in Africa are poverty, low education, lack of job opportunities, and cultural practices.

Libya and Somalia are special case countries. Due to conflict in these areas, it is impossible to measure the amount of human trafficking. However, they are believed to be the most active places of trafficking. Violence in these areas has led to no law enforcement and nothing to combat trafficking [3].

Trafficking-in-Persons-Protections Map from the Africa center for strategic studies website

FIG. 172 Average victim detection rates (per 1,000,000 population) globally and by subregions in the Americas, 2003-2018

Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Potential Solutions:

As for potential solutions, one important note is to acknowledge the crisis at its source. Women who lack basic necessities are most susceptible to trafficking, so example solutions include increased funding of girls' education or improving women's income.
Raising police wages in countries where trafficking victims are often shipped can prevent bribery incidents. Increasing engagement about this issue, like the Start Freedom global project, which educates young people about the dangers of trafficking and helps them play a part in preventing this crisis [9]. Delegates can also propose solutions focused on rescuing and providing relief for victims. Better funding for anti-trafficking workers, communication with local authorities, and/or supplying rescued victims with food, housing, employment, mental health treatment, and more. Keep in mind how trafficking has changed as it moves into a modern era. Acknowledging private companies, and not just governmental authorities can be another solution. Making companies agree to source from humane practices prevents them from benefitting and contributing to international trafficking. And as trafficking moves online, solutions can include implementing more advanced digital security, raising awareness about online privacy, and partnering with social media and tech companies to enforce said methods.

Questions to Consider:

What are the common needs of women vulnerable to trafficking, and how can we provide for these necessities?

As female trafficking moves to the digital space, how can we create an effective legal framework to adapt to this situation? Should social media and tech companies be on watch for these situations, or is that an infringement of privacy?

How can the public be better informed about what human trafficking looks like?

The countries where women are being trafficked from aren't the only ones needed to be accounted for. How can "destination countries" play a part, whether through prevention, protection, or prosecution?

How can we dispel the stigmatization trafficking victims face after they go back into society?

Topic B:

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women's Education

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women in the UN works towards achieving gender equality, and while doing so they must focus on the root causes of inequality, which includes inequality in education. Uneven access to education is stated as one of the top causes of gender inequality [12]. When young girls are not given the same access to education as boys it greatly impacts their future and the kinds of opportunities they will get. Every additional year that a girl attends primary school, their future wages increase by 10-20%. Additionally, this encourages women in areas where child/early marriage is common to marry later, have fewer children, and leaves them less vulnerable to violence. However, there is a long way to go to help young girls stay in school. According to global statistics, only 39% of girls living in rural areas attend secondary school, which is much fewer than the 45% of rural boys who attend secondary school. Although the gender gap in education was beginning to lessen, the issue was exacerbated again when the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Girls enrollment rate in school has severely declined because of Covid-19. The Malala fund estimates that 20 million more secondary school-aged girls could be out of school after the pandemic has passed. A lack of education puts girls at risk of child marriage, poor health, early pregnancies, and poverty.

History of the Issue:

For all of history, gender inequality has been an extremely prevalent issue putting up a wall between women and men. For centuries women have been seen as inferior to men, not being given the same rights and opportunities. Gender roles were formed around societal norms that labeled women as caregivers and men as providers. Women were deprived of higher education as they were seen as unworthy and unable to contribute to the workforce. Because of these gender biases, women face many disadvantages including, getting paid less for jobs, unequal access to healthcare, and especially unequal access to education.

In colonial days, when women were only supposed to play the role of the wife and perform household duties, their education was confined to learning how to do domestic chores. However, in the 1800s is when women began to be given more opportunities to go to school all over the world. In 1803 the US opened Bradford Academy in Bradford, Massachusetts which was the first institution of higher education to enroll women. In 1827, the first school for women was opened in Brazil. In 1834, in Greece, there was compulsory education for both boys and girls. Throughout the 1800s schools for girls opened in more places all over the world, including, India, Haiti, Finland, Bulgaria, France, Egypt, Sweden, Chile, and more.

In recent years the United Nations have taken big steps in helping many women have equitable access to education. Sustainable development goal 4, "Ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all." Since 2014, UN Women continues to promote gender equality in education by revising school curriculums and training teachers.

Even with the UN goals and improvement of equal access to education, this problem is far from being resolved. Women are still facing early marriages, gender-based violence, poverty, and much more which don't let them have access to education. On top of it all, many of these problems were exacerbated because of Covid-19 and must be addressed.

Current Situation:

Just prior to Covid-19, rates for girls' schooling were excelling and even led to what some called a "reverse gap": where girls had higher enrollment rates than boys and even better learning outcomes [3]. This occured in almost all developed nations and most developing nations. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has hit women especially hard and has further impacted their ability to access education. Impoverished countries were especially hurt. The pandemic is estimated to push 47 million more women and girls below the poverty line, making it impossible for these girls to afford to return to school. Many girls did not have access to the internet as they lived in poverty or were in rural areas, and therefore suffered from interrupted education, and thought that they missed too much school to go back.

Additionally, Covid-19 has largely impacted women's health and jeopardized their safety. With many girls in quarantine, gender-based violence and sexual exploitation have also substantially increased. This resulted in a rapid increase in the number of child pregnancies and early marriages, consequently, taking many young girls out of school.

Estimates have shown that the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to almost 13 million early marriages in the next decade. Furthermore, with loved ones lost, women who needed to take care of their children, and other circumstances, many women and girls took on household roles and left their education behind [1]. UNESCO estimates that between 11 to 20 million girls are at risk of dropping out of school and not returning after Covid.

In order to address this issue and attempt to facilitate girls going back to school many organizations have set up plans of action and funds. UNESCO, for instance, has created a "Girls back to school guide." The goal is for this to help girls go back to school while ensuring they are safe and healthy. Additionally, UNICEF has been working with governments and communities around the world to help tackle this problem, prioritizing helping girls get through secondary education in order to lead successful lives. Their work focuses on removing gender stereotypes from learning materials, tackling discriminatory gender norms that deny girls access to school, helping schools and governments use data from assessments to eliminate gender gaps in learning, and much more (UNISEF).

Country Positions:

African Nations:

Past crises have already caused the education system to become unstable in Africa, such as a humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso that led to the shutdown of over 2,000 schools. Emergencies like COVID-19 have caused the situation to worsen, with a predicted 5 million students unlikely to return to school in sub-Saharan Africa, girls being the majority [2].

Teen pregnancy is also a prevalent issue in Africa, which is also a major cause for girls dropping out. Because of the lockdown, many girls were unable to escape from abusers. In West and Central Africa, 66% of girls had limited access to studying materials, in comparison to the 44% of boys during school closures [24].

However, many countries in Africa are making efforts to improve the schooling situation of girls. Nigeria's girl-focused programs, Benin's gender sensitization, Senegal's creation of digital safe places for young women are all examples of funding towards girls' education during this crisis. The Central African Republic educated their teachers about handling gender-based violence, while nations such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mali, and Zimbabwe had lessons on gender equality in their teacher training programs. A number of international organizations have kickstarted initiatives to improve the education crisis in Africa.

For example, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) held a funding campaign called "Raise Your Hand" to finance girls' education in Africa. The African Union Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa started the "Africa Educates Her" campaign to raise awareness about returning girls to school due to the impact of COVID 19 [2].

METHODS OF CONTINUING STUDY, BY REGION
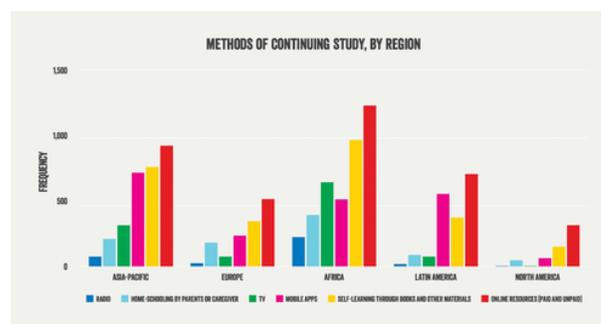
Asian Nations:

Recent studies have shown that around 1.2 million girls in the Indo-Pacific region could drop out of school due to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. In the region, an additional 8.7 and 11.5 million girls may live in economically unstable homes due to the effects of the pandemic. The pandemic may also cause children to drop out of school to help within the household, affecting more girls than boys. A study in Vietnam depicted that 75% of girls were helping with household chores compared to the 60% of boys. Pre-COVID, one in every five girls was illiterate by 10 years of age. This already severe education crisis was worsened by the pandemic, causing schools all over East Asia and the Pacific to shut down for months [16].

Figure 2: Months of school closure as of end of August 2020 in selected countries in East Asia and Pacific region
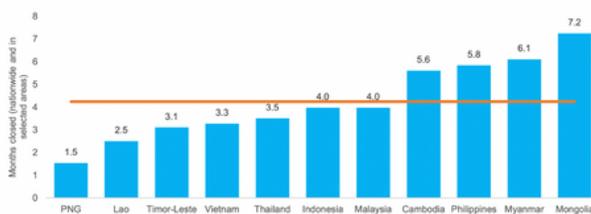
Europe has seen a number of impacts on girls due to COVID-19, including mental health, increased responsibilities, and infringement of women's rights. All of these effects are barriers keeping women away from receiving a proper education. Due to the pandemic, there is an estimated 30% increase in domestic violence cases in the EU. When the safety of these women is compromised, education is a far reach away for them. Additionally, a UK survey reported a decrease in the mental health of young women because of the pandemic and lockdown. 25% of 11-14 year olds and 50% of 15-18 year old girls experienced this decline in mental state. COVID-19 has already made schooling very difficult, and worsening psychological health makes it even harder for these girls to properly learn.

In response, European organizations have been taking action to improve their situation. For example, the Slovenian Member Organization released a mindfulness program focused for girls, along with an online mental health test. Furthermore, the Israeli Member Organization marched to spread awareness about domestic violence. European representatives worldwide hold meetings about COVID and its impact on girls, through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts [23].

The Americas and the Caribbean:

Over 150 million students are not in school in the Latin American and Caribbean region due to COVID-19, and girls especially are in danger of not returning. Because women are often the caregivers in the home, their increase in household responsibilities prevents them from performing well in school compared to boys. With the replacement of in-person school with virtual learning, some families see it as a waste of time for their girls. Girls receive less support for continuing their education during pandemic times, and many are even abandoned [16].

Issues of domestic violence, pressure of caregiving responsibilities, and mental health issues as an effect of the pandemic are problems that hurt women's education worldwide, and Northern America is no exception. To fight these issues, organizations such as the Canadian Women's Foundation have started emergency funds and called for action on these issues of girls' schooling [5].

Potential Solutions:

 Solving gender inequality in schools begins with changing stereotypes. Change can begin locally, within communities, by teaching children that men and women are equal. Research shows that teaching children about powerful women role models can help a great deal with encouraging more girls to go to school. A study done by J-PAL (Poverty Action Lab) found that the presence of female leaders in a village was able to eliminate the gender education gap almost completely. Additionally, another important change would be changing a school's curriculums to incorporate powerful women in history, and not only teach about men. The course materials should not include gender stereotypes and teachers should be trained to ensure they treat students equally and fairly regardless of gender.
 In addition to these local changes, funding is needed to help support girls who can not afford school. With funding, thousands of girls can be given access to schooling and, in result, will be less vulnerable to gender-based violence, early marriage, and more. Lastly, people need to be educated on how severely Covid-19 impacted young girls' education to help them understand the severity of this issue.

Questions to Consider:

What actions should be taken to prevent an increase in gender inequality in education if there is another global pandemic?

What can schools do to prevent other forms of gender-based discrimination and how can they protect vulnerable girls?

How can countries work together to distribute financial aid for women's schooling effectively?

How should the approach to tackling gender inequality in impoverished areas, rural areas, and cities, differ from one another?

If gender equality improves in education, can you be sure it will also improve in the workforce? Will the gender based wage gaps also decrease?

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