

# G7

Gender Equality  
Advisory Council



Report of the G7 Gender  
Equality Advisory Council 2021

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## Building Back Better for Women and Girls



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**Sarah Sands,**  
Former editor of the  
Evening Standard and  
BBC Radio 4's  
Today programme

## Foreword by GEAC Chair

This report is the result of the individual insights and collaborative judgement of the members of the 2021 G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council.

We met during a pandemic year in which women carried the vast burden of care, millions of girls dropped out of school and there was an increase in all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence. No wonder we were determined that the voices of women and girls be heard.

A simple philosophy guided us – our recommendations had to be practical and their effects measurable. In the words of our team member Professor Iris Bohnet: what works. The character of the report and our recommendations reflect the composition of the Council: women leaders, many from a scientific discipline, with a belief in objectivity. The most used term in our discussions was “evidence-based”.

Our independent-mindedness was matched by a fierce sense of purpose and urgency. We were meeting – virtually – not only in the middle of a pandemic but also with a colossal economic iceberg ahead of us. Our first imperative was to ensure that women, and particularly women of colour, were not overlooked in the recovery, as they so often were during the pandemic.

Building on foundations laid by earlier G7 Gender Equality Advisory Councils in Canada and France, we presented our 14 [recommendations to G7 Leaders](#) in June. We called for greater representation of women in public life, better access to jobs and capital, guaranteed education, protection from violence and a full part in a flourishing green recovery.

To support those objectives, we invited experts to examine another core recommendation, a monitoring index. Measurement brings with it accountability. Our Council member Isabelle Hudon has fought particularly hard for this recommendation.

We looked, along the way, for quick win political opportunities, pushing hard for funding for global education, which we knew was a priority for the UK Prime Minister. Alice Albright and the Global Partnership for Education made sure that this government was on the hook. But our support and encouragement could not be taken for granted: we also acknowledged truths that are politically unpopular, such as the tragic effect of cuts in UK foreign aid on women's organisations. There is evidence and data to support the recommendations and a section for each on best practice.

It is, overall, an optimistic document that believes we can make improvements: sometimes incremental, sometimes big, always important. It also believes that we must never give up. We hope that it will serve both as a manual and a spur to action for G7 Leaders and we urge Germany to continue the fight. As Chancellor Merkel put it earlier this year: “All our efforts are about nothing more, but also nothing less, than equal opportunities for men and women”.

Many people have contributed to this report:

- Each and every member of our Council.
- We are indebted too to the G7 Sherpas, led this year by the UK Sherpa Jonathan Black.
- The enthusiastic and hard-working GEAC Secretariat in the UK Cabinet Office.
- Special thanks also to those who have provided invaluable advice on developing our recommendations: Alice Thomson, Alison Rose, Anne Jenkins, Asa Regner, Anita Bhatia, Deborah Cameron, Edwina Dunn, Hayaatun Sillem, Henriette Kolb, HMA Karen Pierce, Lyse Doucet, Nicola Mendelsohn, Nimco Ali, Rasmus Nielsen, Tara McGeehan, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Confederation of British Industry, the Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development Programme (K4D) at the Institute for Development Studies, the Transform Education Youth Advocates, and the many other ‘friends of GEAC’.

A difficult road lies ahead. We finalise this report as women in Afghanistan are being segregated, unpaid, unrepresented and beaten. As Sana Safi, senior presenter for BBC Pashto TV, says, “The current situation in Afghanistan is similar to the experience of Taliban rule in the 1990s”. They remind us that progress is not inevitable and that solidarity between women within the G7 and outside is a moral necessity. We must rise together.



Rt Hon  
Boris Johnson MP

## Foreword by UK Prime Minister

Few of us would relish the challenge of scaling a vertiginous peak with one hand tied behind our back. Yet that is exactly what the G7 will be attempting to do if we fail to act on the world's continued failure to unleash the talent and potential of women and girls.

The challenges we discussed in Carbis Bay this summer — of building back better from Coronavirus, and creating a greener, more prosperous future for us all — will simply not be met if half the world's people are unable to play their part, which is why I convened a Gender Equality Advisory Council to help put women and girls at the heart of the UK's G7 Presidency.

I'm enormously grateful to everyone involved for helping us do just that, particularly GEAC Chair Sarah Sands and Nobel laureate Dr Denis Mukwege for addressing us at the summit back in June.

And I'm delighted to see the concrete G7 commitments that came about as a result, including on tackling sexual violence in conflict, boosting the number of girls in school and fixing the under-representation of women in STEM.

As this report proves — and as hundreds of millions of women and girls know from bitter experience — there is still a long, long way to go. But while we cannot afford to be complacent, we are heading in the right direction. Progress is being made. And I look forward to continuing to work with the G7 to secure a better future for women and girls, and with it a better future for our world.

# Foreword by UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Minister for Women and Equalities

Women have been central to fighting the coronavirus pandemic – as healthcare workers, scientists and leaders. Women and girls must be at the heart of our approach to building back better, creating a better and fairer future for all.

I was delighted the UK was able to assemble such a high-calibre pool of experts to help us deliver for women and girls under our G7 Presidency. GEAC members come from a range of industries and professions, but are united by a desire to see change, and an ability to get things done. This report is a testament to their commitment and sets out a clear case for where the G7 should take action.

In my role as Minister for Women and Equalities, I have had the privilege of working with the GEAC over the past year to champion its core principles of freedom, opportunity, individual humanity and dignity for women and girls around the world. Now as Foreign Secretary, I look forward to taking forward this mission into next year's G7 Presidency and beyond.



Rt Hon  
Elizabeth Truss MP

# Executive Summary

In March 2021, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson convened an independent group of experts to form a Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), tasked with supporting the UK's G7 Presidency by galvanising ambition on gender equality so that women and girls across the globe drive and benefit from the pandemic recovery, including but not limited to those marginalised by race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status.

The 2021 GEAC builds on the GEAC convened for the first time by the Canadian G7 Presidency in 2018, and the second GEAC convened by the French Presidency in 2019. Chaired by Sarah Sands and led at ministerial level by the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Minister for Women and Equalities, the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, it has sought to champion the core principles of freedom, opportunity, individual humanity and dignity for women and girls around the world.

Against the backdrop of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 GEAC has directed its attention towards practical recommendations for how the G7 can work together to build back better, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed, with a focus on both domestic and global action. These have been structured around the UK Presidency's priority themes in relation to gender equality: education, empowerment and ending violence against women and girls, while drawing on the Council's strong expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). There are strong links between these three areas.

Following discussions with G7 Sherpas on gender equality, Sarah Sands and GEAC member and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr Denis Mukwege presented the GEAC's recommendations to G7 Leaders at the Carbis Bay Summit in June:

1. An **acknowledgement of the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on women and girls**, globally, and increased funding for, and dedicated action towards gender-transformative development programming, sexual and reproductive health services, and addressing the 'shadow pandemic' of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
2. A **pandemic response and recovery that takes account of the needs of women and girls**, and tracks the effect of recovery initiatives on men and women, taking into account factors such as age, income, disability and ethnicity.
3. At least **12 years of gender-transformative education** for all, building on G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' commitments on girls' education and, domestically, supporting schools to implement gender-responsive policies to benefit girls' physical and mental wellbeing.



4. **Strengthened domestic and international social care infrastructure**, and access to affordable quality care, including childcare, through increased public investment to address gender imbalances in care work, both paid and unpaid.
5. **Equal access to capital and labour markets**, through removing barriers and creating opportunities for jobs and funding for women to thrive in the modern economy, and tailoring policies to support women-owned micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
6. Recognition of the **impact that global trade has on women as traders, workers and consumers** with G7 Leaders building trading relationships that benefit women and girls around the world.
7. A **gender-responsive approach to climate financing, investment and policies**, including at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26), and for G7 Leaders to target investment in girls' education, re-skilling of women, and lifelong learning to ensure that women and girls can benefit from the 'green revolution'.
8. Acknowledgement of the risk to global prosperity and women's economic empowerment caused by a **gender imbalance in STEM education** and careers, and commitment to prioritising progress towards gender parity through concrete action.
9. Action to address the **digital gender divide** by supporting initiatives that provide women and girls in all areas with affordable, reliable and safe internet and mobile services; and to counteract algorithm bias which puts women, girls and marginalised groups at a disadvantage.
10. An end to the **stereotyping and unequal treatment of women in the media**, including by endorsing the Generation Equality Forum Charter of Commitments for Cultural and Creative Industries.
11. Global action to **end violence against women and girls** through increased investment in prevention and response; the ratification of relevant conventions, including the Istanbul Convention; and enhanced support for eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM).
12. Action to tackle **online harassment and abuse of women and girls**, through the introduction of legislation that establishes a duty of care on technology companies to improve the safety of users online, including appropriate controls for online pornography sites.
13. Condemnation of **sexual violence used as a method of war** as an international red line, by developing an International Convention to denounce it, in line with other prohibited weapons in war, such as landmines and chemical weapons.
14. Continued action to drive **monitoring of progress on gender equality, and accountability on commitments**, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through the establishment of a G7 GEAC observatory mechanism to measure and report on G7 progress.

A number of the recommendations, or the issues behind them, were taken forward as commitments in the Carbis Bay Communiqué, including specific action on girls' education, addressing the underrepresentation of women in STEM and strengthening the international response to conflict-related sexual violence.<sup>1</sup> We urge G7 Leaders to ensure that these are swiftly and fully implemented.

This report builds on the 14 recommendations, with additional background, evidence and examples, and a particular focus on 'what works'. It also includes a number of annexes. The first sets out the GEAC's proposal for a gender equality monitoring and accountability mechanism, requested by G7 Leaders in the Carbis Bay Communiqué. The second sets out how GEAC recommendations apply in a particular G7 regional setting: Cornwall, where the Leaders' Summit took place in June 2021. The GEAC has also engaged on the situation facing women and girls in Afghanistan, and the GEAC's open letter on this issue is included at Annex III.

By securing an intention from Leaders to convene the GEAC as a standing feature of all G7 Presidencies, future Councils will have an opportunity to track Leaders' progress against their commitments and against key gender equality indicators. We look to the upcoming German Presidency and the G7 as a whole to demonstrate its global leadership by taking forward a consistent and sustained focus on gender equality.

<sup>1</sup> G7 (2021), "[Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué: Our Shared Agenda for Global Action to Build Back Better](#)" accessed 30 September 2021.



# Introduction

This report builds on the recommendations of the 2021 G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council presented to G7 Leaders at the Carbis Bay Summit in June. It provides further evidence, drawing on the wide-ranging and unique expertise of GEAC members, on the issues and solutions proposed. The report also showcases case studies, best practice examples and views from members and their networks to provide insights into ‘what works’.

The report seeks to answer three key questions:

1. How are women and girls in the G7 and globally affected by the issues that the 2021 GEAC raised as areas for particular attention by G7 Leaders?
2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way women and girls, and gender equality, are impacted by these issues?
3. How can G7 countries build back better to advance gender equality, based on evidence of what works, and the knowledge and experience of GEAC members?

To support this, each chapter seeks to establish the drivers behind each issue, their impact, and the potential benefits of the solutions proposed.

The report is informed by written contributions from GEAC members and other experts on gender equality, and desk research conducted by the GEAC Secretariat. A more detailed methodology can be found at page 74.

Annexes set out:

1. The GEAC’s proposal for a G7 gender equality monitoring and accountability mechanism.
2. How some of the challenges identified by the GEAC apply locally in Cornwall, the site of this year’s G7 Leaders’ Summit.
3. The GEAC’s open letter on protecting the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, published 27 August 2021.

## Recommendation 1:

# Resources to redress the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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#### Domestically:

- Acknowledge the disproportionate and intersecting impacts of the pandemic on women, girls and marginalised groups, and commit to further monitoring the longer-term gendered impacts of the pandemic – for example, by collecting and analysing data on direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19, by gender and ethnicity at the least.
- Tackle structural inequalities by addressing the care economy, violence against women and girls, and the adverse impacts the pandemic has had on women, in particular those with caring responsibilities (see also, **Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 11**).

#### Globally:

- Recognise that the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls is particularly acute in less developed countries – where services and support are subject to the double blow of reduced national and aid budgets – including by providing support to women's rights organisations.
- Renew commitments to 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) target for Official Development Assistance (ODA), ring-fencing commitments to programmes where gender equality is a significant objective,<sup>2</sup> and support debt alleviation and gender-transformative financing initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Development Assistance Committee Gender Equality Policy Marker](#), No.1, accessed 10 September 2021.

## The issue

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, women were more likely to suffer **economic insecurity than men**: across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs and are more likely to be employed in the informal sector.<sup>3</sup> As with previous pandemics,<sup>4</sup> this has contributed to **the disproportionate impact on women and girls**, in both domestic and international contexts. Gender intersects with other factors, such as caste, ethnicity, income, socioeconomic status and disability in terms of determining how the pandemic affects groups and individuals, with worse outcomes, for example, for disabled women or women from ethnic minority groups.<sup>5</sup> The effects are particularly acute for women and girls who have been displaced, or who are living in conflict-affected states<sup>6</sup> or occupied territories.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the pandemic is exacerbating such instability.<sup>8</sup>

**Women have also been at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19**, accounting for 70% of health and care workers globally, putting them at greater risk of contracting the virus.<sup>9</sup> While women do not have worse health outcomes from contracting the virus itself, studies have found that the effect of COVID-19 and measures to suppress it have directly or indirectly **continued or worsened pre-existing inequalities** globally, meaning that women “appear to have lost out more than men economically and socially”.<sup>10</sup> For example, widespread and long-term closures of schools and day-care centres due to the pandemic have increased childcare needs, which has a disproportionate impact on working mothers (see **Chapter 4**). Data from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries shows that women continue to do the majority of **unpaid care work** in households, exacerbating existing gender inequalities.<sup>11</sup>

All types of **violence against women and girls (VAWG)** have intensified globally since the pandemic began<sup>12</sup> (see **Chapter 11**). Since the outbreak, more than half of the world’s population have been in some form of lockdown.<sup>13</sup> This has led to many survivors of domestic abuse being isolated with their abusers, and contributed to what has become known as a ‘shadow pandemic’ of VAWG.<sup>14</sup> The risk of other forms of VAWG, including **female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and forced marriage**, has also increased. Taking these factors together, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) predicts that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to cause a one-third

“All of our recommendations are designed to advance equality. In very concrete terms, they call for women to be part of the recovery. To be at the table everywhere. To be visible, audible, empowered in G7 countries and well beyond.”



Isabelle Hudon,  
President and CEO  
of the Business  
Development Bank  
of Canada

<sup>3</sup> UN Women (2020), “Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women,” p.2.

<sup>4</sup> Nieves, C. de P., Gaddis, I., & Muller, M. (2021), “Gender and COVID-19: What have we learnt, one year later?” Policy Research Working Paper 9709, World Bank Group, p.11.

<sup>5</sup> Kabeer, N., Razavi, S., & van der Meulen Rodgers, Y. (2021), “Feminist Economic Perspectives on the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Feminist Economics*, 27(1–2), pp. 1–29, p.8; Chen, M. et al. (2021), “COVID-19 and Informal Work: Distinct Pathways of Impact and Recovery in 11 Cities around the World,” WIEGO Working Paper (42); UK Women’s Budget Group, London School of Economics, Queen Mary Institute of London and The Fawcett Society (2020), “BAME women and COVID-19 – Research Evidence.”

<sup>6</sup> Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) et al. (2020), “Now and the Future – Pandemics and Crisis: Gender Equality, Peace and Security in a COVID-19 World and Beyond,” p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Kabeer et al., p.9; OECD (2020), “Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis,” p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Nieves et al., “Gender and COVID-19,” p.4.

<sup>11</sup> Up to 10 times as much according to the OECD Development Centre’s Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), accessed 10 September 2021.

<sup>12</sup> In some countries, there were reports of a 60–775% increase in calls to domestic violence helplines during lockdowns, including a 775% increase in calls to the national hotline in Kenya. Action Aid et al. (2020), “Humanitarian Funding, Partnerships and Coordination in the COVID-19 crisis: Perspectives from local women-led organisations and women’s rights organisations.”; Nieves et al., “Gender and COVID-19,” p.21.

<sup>13</sup> OECD (2020), “The territorial impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government,” accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Bourgault, S., Peterman, A., and O’Donnell, M. (2021), “Violence against women and children during COVID-19 – one year on and 100 papers in: a fourth research round up,” Center for Global Development.

reduction in progress towards ending gender-based violence by 2030.<sup>15</sup>

**Access to critical services for women**, including sexual and reproductive health care, antenatal services, safe delivery services, family planning and domestic abuse services, has also been reduced.<sup>16</sup> This is likely to result in an increased risk of maternal mortality, unintended pregnancies and other adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes among women and girls.<sup>17</sup> Maternal deaths have increased, due to women delaying attendance at hospital or concealing pregnancy, as well as decreased access to such services deemed non-essential by national or local governments, with the most significant rises seen in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>18</sup>

However, at the precise time when more investment is needed to redress the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on women and girls, **national and international funding for interventions that promote gender equality in less developed countries are under threat**.<sup>19</sup> Before the pandemic, only 4% of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) from OECD countries was dedicated to programmes with gender equality as the main objective.<sup>20</sup> Although ODA rose to an all-time high of USD 161.2 billion in 2020, with G7 countries providing 76% of total ODA,<sup>21</sup> cuts to ODA by the UK, among others, mean an estimated 20 million women and girls may no longer benefit from aid programmes.<sup>22</sup>

This includes aid funding to **women's rights organisations** (WROs), who play a key role in many contexts in filling service gaps exacerbated by the pandemic.<sup>23</sup> A 2021 study found that among over 200 WROs interviewed across 38 countries, a third have had to make between one and 10 members of staff redundant, and 18 have had to close altogether.<sup>24</sup> These effects have been particularly acute in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings.<sup>25</sup> One in three of the participating organisations reported being left out of conversations and policy-making decisions on their country's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.<sup>26</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

Targeted, **ring-fenced funding** is essential to address the structural barriers and social norms that create gender inequality and violence against women and girls. According to the United Nations Secretary General, "massive investments" are needed to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls, which are vital to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>27</sup> Government spending which is gender-blind risks maintaining, or further exacerbating, these impacts: **gender-responsive economic recovery plans** which build women's economic agency are vital for lessening the impact of the pandemic on women and girls, and potential economic scarring. National COVID-19 response plans should be reviewed to ensure they are sensitive to the needs of women and girls, and include targeted policies and investment to support them (see **Box 1** on the 2X Challenge).

Some examples of **gender-responsive public policies and programming** that are effective in empowering women (such as asset-building, microfinance – providing small loans to those who would otherwise be unable to access credit – and cash transfers), could be particularly relevant in the context of COVID-19 recovery, for example, to:

- support victims and survivors of gender-based violence, for instance, through targeting cash, voucher, or food transfers towards female heads of household;
- ensure women are well-represented in leadership and decision-making processes, by attracting and retaining more women in leadership fields; and
- support working mothers and parents, through public assistance payments and flexible working opportunities.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>15</sup> UNFPA (2020), "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage." p.1.

<sup>16</sup> UNFPA (2020), "Putting the brakes on COVID-19: Safeguarding the health and rights of women and girls." accessed 10 September 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Chmielewska, B. et al. (2021), "Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal and perinatal outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis." The Lancet (9:6, E759-E772).

<sup>19</sup> Care International et al. (2021), "UK Government decisions to cut UK Aid are disproportionately falling on women and girls." accessed 10 September 2021.

<sup>20</sup> OECD (2020), "Response, recovery and prevention in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in developing countries: Women and girls on the frontlines." p.2.

<sup>21</sup> OECD (2021), "COVID-19 spending helped to lift foreign aid to an all-time high in 2020 but more effort needed." accessed 10 September 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Care International et al., "UK Government decisions to cut UK Aid are disproportionately falling on women and girls."

<sup>23</sup> Gender and Development Network (2020), "Written submission to the International Development Select Committee Inquiry on the impact of Coronavirus on developing countries." p.3.

<sup>24</sup> Oxfam et al. (2021), "Impact of COVID-19 on Women Rights Organisations: A Call for Global Alliance to Support Women Rights Organisations." accessed 24 September 2021.

<sup>25</sup> UN Women (2021), "COVID-19 and women's rights organizations: Bridging response gaps and demanding a more just future." p.7.

<sup>26</sup> Oxfam et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Women Rights Organisations."

<sup>27</sup> United Nations (2019), "Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2019: Special Edition." p.35-36.

<sup>28</sup> Harvard Kennedy School Women and Public Policy Program, Gender Action Portal, "Utilizing evidence-based research to incorporate a gendered lens for the COVID-19 pandemic." accessed 10 September 2021.

**Increased funding to WROs** is required to continue the provision of essential services in a safe and sustainable way. The International Rescue Committee estimates that over 235 million people around the world require humanitarian assistance — 40% more than in 2020 — and funding to frontline organisations who provide essential services must be maintained to continue their programmes and to prevent closures of their organisations.<sup>29</sup> For this to happen, governments need to meet the internationally agreed UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA, with ambitious targets for the proportion of the aid budget focused on empowering women and girls and tackling global inequalities.<sup>30</sup> The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for example, aims to direct at least 80% of development cooperation investments that target gender equality as a principal or significant goal.<sup>31</sup>

In order to create policies and programmes which are truly effective in offsetting the impacts of the pandemic, creating a strong evidence base is essential. A lack of **gender-disaggregated data** creates challenges in understanding how to develop solutions to address gender inequality (see **Chapter 14**). In the context of COVID-19, governments must commit to monitoring the gender-differentiated impacts of the pandemic in the short-, medium- and longer-term, so that statistics adequately reflect the lived realities of all.

“We have to do a lot not only for gender diversity, but for diversity in general. Diversity is an asset of humanity, it’s our richness, and we have to use it in the best possible way.”



Dr Fabiola Gianotti,  
Physicist, Director-  
General, CERN

### Box 1: The 2X Challenge<sup>32</sup>

The 2X Challenge was founded in 2018 by the Development Finance Institutions of the G7 nations to shift more capital towards investments that enhance women’s economic participation in developing countries, to increase access to entrepreneurship, leadership opportunities, quality jobs and products and services that empower women. The 2X Challenge set out qualifying criteria for investment which “is becoming the gold standard for global gender-lens investing”.

The global gender finance initiative surpassed its original fundraising goal by 100% and has set a new target of US \$15 billion by the end of 2022. The increased target aims to further support women to access quality jobs, build resilient businesses and manage the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that have disproportionately impacted women’s economic and business prospects. Recovery from the pandemic provides the opportunity to work on economic structural transformation to promote inclusive economies through gender-lens investing that enhances women’s economic agency.

<sup>29</sup> International Rescue Committee (2021), “[Focus on the frontlines: How the Grand Bargain can deliver on its promise to improve humanitarian aid](#)” p.1.

<sup>30</sup> Care International et al., “UK Government decisions to cut UK Aid are disproportionately falling on women and girls.”

<sup>31</sup> Donor Tracker, “[Australia – Gender Equality](#)” accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Webpage: [2X Challenge](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

Recommendation 2:

# A COVID-19 recovery and response that takes account of the needs of women and girls

**Recommendations to G7 Leaders:**

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- Ensure women's equal representation and leadership in all COVID-19 response and recovery planning and decision-making, so that policies are effective, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all women and men, girls and boys, particularly those from marginalised groups.
- Commit to the integration of gender equality in the design and implementation of future pandemic crisis response plans, as well as COVID-19 recovery plans and economic support packages, aligned with international labour standards and intersectional approaches.
- Track the different effects of recovery packages on men and women, and on marginalised groups, taking account of other key factors, including age, income, disability and ethnicity.



## The issue

Globally, women are **underrepresented in decision-making** on COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery.<sup>33</sup> Only 21% of ministers are women,<sup>34</sup> women hold only 25% of leadership roles in the health sector,<sup>35</sup> and 85% of national COVID-19 taskforces have majority male membership. These imbalances mean missing out on talent and expertise.<sup>36</sup> In conflict-affected countries, women's representation in COVID-19 taskforces stands at just 18%.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, there has long been inadequate internationally comparable data on women's health, education, and economic opportunities<sup>38</sup> (see **Chapter 14**), and **data on the impact of COVID-19 and response measures is inadequate** in terms of taking account of gender.<sup>39</sup> There is also a lack of data disaggregated to recognise the different impacts of COVID-19 on population groups broken down by basic demographic characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and disability.<sup>40</sup>

While there are new tools tracking available **sex- and gender-disaggregated data** on COVID-19 infection and death rates,<sup>41</sup> and a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) tool monitoring the integration of gender in governments' pandemic responses,<sup>42</sup> these tools rely on the data that governments have made available, meaning that some countries are not included at all.

Disaggregated data is crucial for governments to understand whether and how the pandemic has different impacts, according to key characteristics like gender, and to consider the design and targeting of response and recovery plans accordingly. Without the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data when crafting response, recovery and future pandemic preparedness plans, governments risk a **"gender-blind recovery" that sets back gender equality.**<sup>43</sup>

**"It is absolutely critical that amidst the challenges that we continue to deal with, and as we emerge from the global pandemic, we put women and girls front and centre in the discussion of the recovery."**



Dr Dambisa Moyo,  
Global economist  
and co-principal of  
Versaca Investments

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Data as of 1 January 2020. Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women (2020), ["Women in politics 2020 map"](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>35</sup> World Health Organization (2019), ["Delivered by Women, Led by Men: A Gender and Equity Analysis of the Global Health and Social Workforce"](#), Human Resources for Health Observer Series No. 24, p.2.

<sup>36</sup> van Daalen K.R., Bajnoczki C., Chowdhury M., et al (2020), ["Symptoms of a broken system: the gender gaps in COVID-19 decision-making"](#), BMJ Global Health 2020;5:e003549.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Security Council (2020), ["Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General, 25 September 2020"](#), paragraph 3.

<sup>38</sup> Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank Group, PARIS21, UN Women, Global Health 50/50, Global Center for Gender Equality at Stanford University, the Center for Gender Equity and Health at the University of California at San Diego, IWWAGE and Data2X (2021), ["Strengthening gender measures and data in the COVID-19 era: an urgent need for change"](#), p.7.

<sup>39</sup> See Global Health 5050 et al., ["The COVID-19 Sex-Disaggregated Data Tracker"](#), accessed 12 September 2021; Buvinic, M., Noe, L., Swanson, E. (2020), ["Tracking the Gender Impact of COVID-19: An Indicator Framework"](#), Data2X; Gates Foundation et al., ["Strengthening gender measures and data in the COVID-19 era."](#)

<sup>40</sup> Gates Foundation et al., ["Strengthening gender measures and data in the COVID-19 era"](#), p.10.

<sup>41</sup> Buvinic et al., ["Tracking the Gender Impact of COVID-19"](#); Global Health 5050 et al., ["The COVID-19 Sex-Disaggregated Data Tracker"](#).

<sup>42</sup> UNDP, ["COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker"](#).

<sup>43</sup> Gates Foundation et al., ["Strengthening gender measures and data in the COVID-19 era"](#), p.8.

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 sets out that world leaders now have an unprecedented opportunity to build more resilient and gender-equal economies by investing in inclusive workplaces, creating more equitable care systems, advancing women's rise to leadership positions, applying a gender lens to reskilling and redeployment, and embedding gender parity into the future of work, to prevent long-term scarring in the labour market.<sup>44</sup>

**Gender equality can be promoted as part of the recovery process**, for example, through gender responsive planning, regulations, budgets and public procurement as highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).<sup>45</sup> In 2017, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessed the status of gender-budgeting in the G7 and identified a number of practical recommendations for strengthening gender equality objectives through the budgeting cycle<sup>46</sup> (see also, **Box 2** on gender-lens policy making in Iceland). Robust **gender equality impact assessments** (that also take account of age, income, disability, ethnicity, caring responsibilities and socioeconomic background) need to be mandated in the design and financing of fiscal stimulus packages and social assistance programmes to achieve greater equality. In Sweden, gender equality impact assessments have been made mandatory by a government decision. Early observations showed that a majority of COVID-19 policy actions in the country have included these assessments.<sup>47</sup>

A key lesson is the importance of a dual approach: firstly, proactive and targeted policy-making to close identified gender gaps and level the playing field for men and women, and secondly, mainstreaming gender equality throughout government action.<sup>48</sup> Ensuring relevant **technical expertise and leadership on gender issues in emergency and recovery decision-making structures** can also help generate better policy outcomes.<sup>49</sup>

Removing barriers to **access to leadership opportunities** in COVID-19 response structures and beyond for women may help ensure that decision-making processes are more inclusive of, and responsive to the different experiences of women and men from diverse backgrounds. Some respondents to an OECD survey of 26 countries highlighted that women's leadership at the ministerial level was pivotal in ensuring rapid recognition of women's different needs during the pandemic.<sup>50</sup> This also applies to the management of future pandemics: a report to the G7 by the Pandemic Preparedness Partnership highlights the need to give a leading voice to representatives of excluded groups in order to effectively implement its 100 Days Mission, which provides a roadmap on how to develop and deploy safe, effective diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines within the first 100 days of a pandemic.<sup>51</sup>

Governments should prioritise **collecting, analysing and using disaggregated data**, to ensure that response and recovery plans are informed by the best available evidence and that progress can be monitored (see **Chapter 14** on monitoring and accountability). Without the availability of sex- or gender-disaggregated statistics on the pandemic across all policy areas, there remains an untapped potential to expose gaps and provide insights into emerging issues and effective action to address them.

<sup>44</sup> World Economic Forum (March 2021), "[Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#)" p.4.

<sup>45</sup> OECD (2021), "[Towards gender-inclusive recovery](#)." OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

<sup>46</sup> IMF (2017), "[Gender Budgeting in G7 Countries](#)".

<sup>47</sup> OECD, "Towards gender-inclusive recovery."

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> G7 Pandemic Preparedness Partnership (2021), "[100 Days Mission to respond to future pandemic threats](#)" p.4.

## Box 2: Gender-lens policy making in Iceland<sup>52</sup>

Gender budgeting has been applied to Iceland’s budget processes since 2015. In 2020, Iceland carried out the country’s first gender impact assessment on their COVID-19 response packages: the Capital Investment Programme (pandemic package 1) and their Social Measures and Labour Market initiatives (pandemic packages 2 and 3). The government assessed the impacts of these packages on men and women, taking into account the extent to which the pandemic had exacerbated pre-existing inequalities.

To undertake a gender impact assessment of the Capital Investment Programme, line ministries estimated the number of jobs the programme would create for men and women. Any information gaps were filled by estimates from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. They estimated that 85% of jobs created would be filled by men. Thus, as the

programme goes into its second phase in 2021, the Icelandic government is focused on increasing the ratio of jobs that are likely to be filled by women. On the government’s Social Measures and Labour Market initiatives (pandemic packages 2 and 3), the gender assessment resulted in a number of amendments.

In terms of lessons learned, the government has emphasised the importance of shared responsibility for gender equality, for example, between the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of Finance. As a result, the government has committed to adopting gender impact assessments as a matter of course, in order to integrate a gender perspective throughout design and implementation phases, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies on gender equality.

**“It’s very important for G7 Leaders to ensure and commit towards the integration of gender-sensitive indicators that are measurable in the design and implementation of recovery policies, in particular in relation to overseas development assistance, to aid for trade and finance with the goal of promoting women’s economic agency as we build back better.”**



Bogolo J. Kenewendo,  
Global Economist  
and Former Minister  
of Investment, Trade  
and Industry in  
Botswana

<sup>52</sup> Gamillscheg, B. (2021), “Gender and Capital Budgeting” OECD, pp.22-23.

### Recommendation 3:

# Access to at least 12 years of gender-transformative education

#### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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#### Domestically:

- Introduce mandatory, age-appropriate, gender-responsive sex education for all pupils, and teaching on universal rights.
- Ensure schools have in place robust gender-responsive policies and learning environments and a rights-based approach to education.
- Support the participation of girl-led groups and girl activists in key education decision-making processes, including by ensuring accessible information and providing flexible funding.
- Eliminate stereotypes and unconscious bias at all levels of education by ensuring teacher training curricula empower teachers to understand and challenge gender stereotypes in learning choices.

#### Globally:

- Achieve the new global goals adopted at the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' meeting and re-endorsed by G7 Leaders, and make bold pledges across the G7 to ensure a fully funded Global Partnership for Education with at least US \$5 billion.
- Promptly implement the G7 Declaration on girls' education agreed by Foreign and Development Ministers in London on 5 May 2021 and re-endorsed by G7 Leaders.
- Protect relevant bilateral and multilateral aid expenditure in support of securing at least 12 years of quality education for all girls globally, with a particular focus on marginalised adolescent girls and girls of colour.
- Build on the 2019 G7 Gender at the Centre Initiative and ensure adequate financing to unleash the transformative potential for gender equality in and through education around the world.

## The issue

Persistent inequalities — relating to poverty, geographic location, ethnicity and disability, all of which intersect with gender — mean that the odds of completing primary and secondary school are “heavily stacked against girls, particularly the poorest and most marginalised”.<sup>53</sup> Only 49% of all countries have achieved gender parity in primary education — this widens to 42% at lower secondary education and only 24% in upper secondary education.<sup>54</sup> This means that there are still millions of girls in low- and middle-income countries who do not have access to quality education, and are also being held back because their educational environments lack adequate infrastructure, including menstrual hygiene management,<sup>55</sup> to help them through their time at school. According to World Bank estimates, limiting educational opportunities for girls costs the global economy between US \$15 trillion and US \$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.<sup>56</sup>

At an individual level, missing out on education and learning has lifelong, negative impacts on earnings, standard of living, safety, physical and mental health.<sup>57</sup> Being out of school puts adolescent girls at **increased risk of particular forms of abuse**, including forced and child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), unintended pregnancies, domestic and child labour, and sexual and domestic violence.

Access to education is not the only challenge: the **quality of education, school environment and learning outcomes** is also crucial. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, over 50% of all school-age children globally were not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading and maths by the end of primary school.<sup>58</sup> Increasing the number of girls in education does not automatically result in individuals acquiring skills and capabilities that have “long-lasting positive impacts on wages, health, empowerment, and wellbeing”.<sup>59</sup> The quality and content of that education is integral to ensuring positive outcomes for girls in their lives beyond school. For example, equipping girls with foundational skills that help them to guard against issues like child mortality. While six years of schooling alone is estimated to reduce child mortality by 22%, six years of schooling *that results in literacy* is estimated to reduce child mortality by 68%.<sup>60</sup>

As well as the school environment, curriculum content is important. Schools that entrench **toxic gender stereotypes**, or do not meet basic health, safety and sanitation needs, can be harmful to girls and prevent them from reaching their full potential. This is relevant not only to G7 countries’ development programming on global education, but also to their domestic education policies. Gender norms and stereotypes can limit girls’ opportunities and attainment in school, particularly in subjects perceived to be more masculine, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (see **Chapter 9**). Teachers’ gender-based biases have also been found to make girls underperform and widen classroom gender gaps in G7

“It is so important for us to recognise that no country will reach its full potential unless and until it fully engages with the ideas and talents and skills of the 50% of the population that is female.”



Hon Julie Bishop,  
38th Foreign Minister  
of Australia and  
current Chancellor,  
Australian National  
University

<sup>53</sup> Global Partnership for Education (2018), “[Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans](#)” p.5.

<sup>54</sup> UNICEF, “[Girls’ education](#)” accessed 5 September 2021.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Wodon, Q., Montenegro, C., Nguyen, H. and Onagoruwa, A. (2018), “[Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls](#)” World Bank Group, p.5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-5.

<sup>58</sup> UNESCO (2017), “[More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide](#)” Fact Sheet No. 46, p.1.

<sup>59</sup> Kaffenberger, M., Pritchett, L., & Sandefur, J. (2018), “[Estimating the impact of women’s education on fertility, child mortality, and empowerment when schooling ain’t learning](#)” p.4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p.6

countries.<sup>61</sup> Studies have found that **decisions in schools are also routinely made without the participation of students**, which can have a negative impact on students' engagement and learning<sup>62</sup> (see **Box 3** on youth leaders).

According to a review of qualitative studies from 10 high- and middle-income countries, students also view their school-based **sex and relationship education as negative**, out of touch, heterosexist and taught by poorly trained teachers, which in turn reduces opportunities to improve their sexual health.<sup>63</sup> Comprehensive sex education is not a statutory requirement in most countries, and a global review by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that while 80% of countries have some policies or strategies that support comprehensive sex education, there remain significant gaps in implementation.<sup>64</sup>

Global commitments to ensure every child completes **12 years of quality education**,<sup>65</sup> on which many countries have made some progress, are threatened by a global funding shortfall of US \$148 billion per year from now until 2030, according to UNESCO estimates.<sup>66</sup> At the current rate of progress, an estimated 825 million school-age children in low- and middle-income countries will not achieve the necessary skills for success in the job market by 2030.<sup>67</sup> The shortfall has been exacerbated by COVID-19, as two-thirds of low- and lower-middle-income countries have cut their own education budgets since the onset of the pandemic.<sup>68</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to stall or even roll back progress on girls' education.<sup>69</sup> Globally, around 1.6 billion children have not been in school due to the pandemic, due to **lockdowns and school closures**.<sup>70</sup> Projections suggest that 11 million girls — mainly in low- and lower-middle income countries — will not return to school when the crisis is over,<sup>71</sup> particularly those aged 12-17.<sup>72</sup> Evidence from previous disease outbreaks or crises suggests several pathways by which girls' education is disrupted disproportionately, including: being burdened with extra household work and childcare;<sup>73</sup> higher risks of early marriage and early pregnancy as a result of the crisis; disrupted access to safe spaces; disrupted access to health services; and greater threat of sexual- and gender-based violence.<sup>74</sup> The most marginalised, including girls with disabilities, those in conflict-affected contexts, remote and rural communities and those in the poorest quintile, are expected to be most affected by COVID-19-related school closures.<sup>75</sup>

### Box 3: Spotlight on youth leaders

Cynthia Nyongesa is one of the Global Partnership for Education's youth leaders who has used her platform to raise awareness of other young people in Africa advocating for change. By advising the Global Leadership Council and the Office of the President of Kenya, she is able to "raise awareness of the barriers to education and aim to increase the ambition of leaders for financing education and development".<sup>76</sup>

In her address to the GEAC in May 2021, she explained that being taught resilience and leadership from a

young age at school helps build an understanding of the importance of instilling the principles of women's empowerment in boys' and girls' education. She also highlighted that schools not only provide spaces for transformative learning, but also safe spaces and protection for girls from early marriage, FGM, early pregnancy and gender-based violence. School closures during the pandemic have had devastating impacts on girls around the world as these safe spaces have disappeared.

<sup>61</sup> Carlana, M. (2019), "Implicit Stereotypes: Evidence from Teachers' Gender Bias," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 134, Issue 3, pp.1163-1224.

<sup>62</sup> SoundOut, "Why Student Voice? A Research Summary", accessed 24 September 2021.

<sup>63</sup> Pound, P., Langford, R., Campbell, R. (2016), "What do young people think about their school-based sex and relationship education? A qualitative synthesis of young people's views and experiences" *BMJ Open*, p.1.

<sup>64</sup> UNESCO (2015), "Emerging evidence, lessons and practice in comprehensive sexuality education: a global review, 2015" p.32.

<sup>65</sup> UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, Target 4.1 states "The provision of 12 years of free, publicly-funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education — of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes — should be ensured for all, without discrimination". United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, *SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee*, accessed 20 May 2021; Education 2030 (2016), "Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4".

<sup>66</sup> UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Team (2020), "Act now: reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the cost of achieving SDG 4," Policy Paper 42, p.1.

<sup>67</sup> Brown, S., and Fore, H. (2020), "Classroom to Workplace: What Young People Need to Succeed," World Economic Forum.

<sup>68</sup> World Bank Group (2021), "Education Finance Watch 2021," p.2.

<sup>69</sup> UNESCO (2021), "#HerEducationOurFuture: Keeping girls in the picture during and after the COVID-19 crisis," p.1.

<sup>70</sup> Nieves, C. de P., Gaddis, I., & Muller, M. (2021), "Gender and COVID-19: What have we learnt, one year later?" Policy Research Working Paper 9709, World Bank Group, p.11.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Azevedo, J. P., Hasan, A., Goldemberg, D., Iqbal, S. A. and Geven, K. (2020), "Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: a set of global estimates," World Bank Group, p.15.

<sup>73</sup> In a Save the Children survey in 46 countries, 20% more girls than boys reported an increase in household chores during the COVID-19 pandemic than boys. Save the Children (2020), "Gender Equality and COVID-19," p.1.

<sup>74</sup> Acosta, A. M., & Evans, D. (2020), "COVID-19 and Girls' Education: What We Know So Far and What We Expect," Center For Global Development.

<sup>75</sup> UNESCO, "#HerEducationOurFuture," p.1.

<sup>76</sup> Global Partnership for Education, "Youth leaders," accessed 10 September 2021.

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

The GEAC welcomes the G7 Leaders' commitment to **mobilising financial and technical resources in support of girls' education**.<sup>77</sup> The benefits of investment in quality girls' education are well documented, with some evidence suggesting that **universal girls' secondary education** would practically end child marriage,<sup>78</sup> more than halve infant mortality,<sup>79</sup> and drastically reduce early childbearing,<sup>80</sup> thereby overcoming some of the main drivers of gender inequality. Increasing education opportunities for girls is estimated to have accounted for around 50% of economic growth in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in the past 50 years.<sup>81</sup> Estimates suggest that if every child in low-income countries is learning, gross domestic product per capita in those countries could increase by almost 70% by 2050<sup>82</sup> (see **Box 4** on boosting access to education in Pakistan).

A **gender-transformative model of education can have huge benefits for all students**.<sup>83</sup> This requires not just recognising gender disparities within the education system, but harnessing education to challenge harmful attitudes and practices within and beyond the education system,<sup>84</sup> which can have powerful effects on social norms.<sup>85</sup> A comprehensive **'whole of child' approach** can break down silos between child protection, education, health and other areas, and help identify harassment and abuse in schools and communities to create a safer learning environment.

There is also a growing evidence base on the impact of good-quality<sup>86</sup> **sex education** in schools, with the World Health Organization (WHO) highlighting studies in several European countries showing "hard outcomes" of national education programmes – such as reductions in teenage pregnancies and abortions, decreases in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people aged 15–24 years, decreases in sexual abuse and decreases in homophobia – as well as empowering young people to develop stronger and more meaningful relationships.<sup>87</sup>

**"If the G7 wants a silver bullet for the greatest challenges our world faces today, it's girls' education."**



Alice P. Albright,  
CEO of the Global  
Partnership for  
Education

<sup>77</sup> G7 (2021), "[Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué: Our Shared Agenda for Global Action to Build Back Better](#)," accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>78</sup> Wodon et al., "Missed Opportunities," p.4.

<sup>79</sup> For every additional year of schooling, child mortality falls by 5–10%. Twelve years of girls' education could therefore cut infant mortality by more than half. Global Partnership for Education (2021), "[Financing 2025: Case for Investment](#)," p.8. Citing UNESCO (2011), "[Education counts: towards the Millennium Development Goals](#)," p. 17.

<sup>80</sup> Wodon et al., "Missed Opportunities," p.4.

<sup>81</sup> OECD (2012), "[Gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship: Final report to the MCM 2012](#)," p.3.

<sup>82</sup> The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (2016), "[The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world](#)," p. 32.

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF, "[Girls' education: Gender equality in education benefits every child](#)," accessed 24 September 2021.

<sup>84</sup> Hamdani, S. (2020), "[How teacher training can support a truly gender transformative approach to education](#)," Plan International Canada (on Global Partnership for Education website), accessed 13 September 2021.

<sup>85</sup> The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, "The Learning Generation."

<sup>86</sup> In the Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe, experts agreed that this should aim to support and protect sexual development and gradually equip and empower children and young people with information, skills and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships and take responsibility for their own and other people's sexual health and wellbeing. WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA (2010), "[Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe: A framework for policy makers, education and health authorities and specialists](#)," p.20.

<sup>87</sup> UNFPA, WHO Regional Office for Europe, and BZgA (2016), "[Sexuality education: what is its impact?](#)" Policy brief no. 2, p.1.

By putting **gender equality at the centre of the school system**, we can create a more gender-equal future, and we must engage men and boys as a proven positive accelerant to the repositioning of girls and women in society. Girls must be supported in every sphere to develop the skills and knowledge needed to claim and exercise their rights, and empower them to be leaders and decision-makers.

#### Box 4: Tech-based solutions boost Pakistan's education reform<sup>88</sup>

Pakistan faces profound challenges in providing universal education, especially for girls in hard-to-reach areas like rural Baluchistan province. When the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) began its programme in the area in 2014, almost half of the province's 22,000 communities did not have access to a school. 78% of the schools lacked suitable buildings, trained teachers and adequate learning materials. GPE supported the use of innovative technologies, enabling 53,000 out-of-school children from the most remote areas – 72% of them girls – to be enrolled and ensuring the vast majority stayed in school.

Paper-based monitoring of attendance was replaced with a mobile app, allowing education officials to make informed decisions based on real-time data at the individual school level. The use of mobile apps improved teacher accountability by monitoring attendance offline in areas with no connectivity, and WhatsApp groups have helped improve school governance, knowledge sharing and support to students and teachers.

Pakistan will now build on its experience of delivering learning during COVID-19 to design and implement an inclusive learning pathway for up to 19 million children who were already out of school pre-pandemic.

<sup>88</sup> Global Partnership for Education, "[Pakistan: Technology boosts education reform in remote areas](#)" accessed 12 September 2021.





## Recommendation 4:

# The care economy

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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#### Domestically:

- Prioritise strengthening domestic social care infrastructure, ensuring accessibility of affordable quality care, including childcare, through increased public investment.
- Hold employers to account on designing and implementing gender-equal, flexible working policies to unlock the multiple benefits of promoting better gender balance in paid and unpaid work, and set more positive gender norms for future generations.
- Require employers to offer shared parental leave as a minimum, while working towards a 'use it or lose it' model which provides for a period of equal paid leave for both parents.

#### Globally:

- In addition, G7 Finance Ministers should work with International Financial Institutions to ensure that fiscal consolidation and austerity conditions do not restrict investment in social care infrastructure in less developed partner countries that will be essential to build back better.

## The issue

The pandemic has brought into the foreground the way societies and economies within G7 and globally are dependent on **the care economy**, which includes health services, education, childcare, care for the elderly and disability support.<sup>89</sup> Our societies, communities and economies rely on unpaid care and domestic work, which tends to be done disproportionately by women, but is economically undervalued.<sup>90</sup> Globally, **women and girls do, on average, three times more unpaid care and domestic work than men and boys**,<sup>91</sup> and it is estimated that on average women do seven more years of unpaid care and domestic work than men over the course of their lifetime.<sup>92</sup> **Unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work also impacts on girls' education globally:** girls who do more than four hours of unpaid care and domestic work per day are 28% less likely to be in school than those who do two hours a day.<sup>93</sup>

As a result, unpaid care work fundamentally shapes the economic opportunities, choices and activity of women and girls. Worldwide, women in every country are still less likely to engage in paid work than men.<sup>94</sup> Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of working-age women who felt unable to undertake formal employment because of unpaid care responsibilities stood at 606 million, whereas only 41 million men felt the same.<sup>95</sup>

When women do engage in paid work, the “double burden” of unpaid care and domestic work and paid work means that women often take jobs of lower quality, intensity and remuneration.<sup>96</sup> This is particularly profound for women with children (see **Box 5**). In countries where men and women are entitled to equal parental leave, women still tend to take the larger share,<sup>97</sup> with negative impacts on their career.<sup>98</sup> If **women's progress in their paid careers is hampered**, their likelihood of achieving leadership and decision-making positions in their field of work is diminished.<sup>99</sup>

“The pandemic has revealed the importance to society of the vast amount of care work that is done mostly by women, either unpaid or in very low paid jobs. As part of COVID-19 economic recovery packages, a substantial injection of resources into public health and care services is needed to improve the quality of care, reduce women's unpaid care burdens, and provide decent jobs for women.”



Jessica Woodroffe,  
W7 Co-Chair  
and Director of  
the Gender and  
Development  
Network

<sup>89</sup> Diallo, B., Qayum, S., Staab, S. (2020), “[COVID-19 and the care economy: Immediate action and structural transformation for a gender-responsive recovery](#).”

<sup>90</sup> Unpaid domestic and care work is undervalued: most traditional measures of GDP fail to acknowledge the central role of the care economy, despite unpaid care work amounting to an estimated \$10 trillion (USD) of output per year (roughly 13% of global GDP). McKinsey Global Institute (2015), [“The power of parity: how advancing women's equality can add \\$12 trillion to global growth”](#) p.2.

<sup>91</sup> International Labour Organisation (2018), [“Care work and care jobs: for the future of decent work”](#) p.53.

<sup>92</sup> Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2017), [“Unpaid care work and women's economic empowerment”](#) p.10.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.22.

<sup>94</sup> Up to 10 times as much in some countries. OECD Development Centre, [Social Institutions and Gender Index \(SIGI\)](#), accessed 17 May 2021.

<sup>95</sup> Gromada, A., Richardson, D., Rees, G. (2020), [“Childcare in a global crisis: the impact of COVID-19 on work and family life”](#) UNICEF – Innocenti Research Brief, p.1.

<sup>96</sup> Jones, L. (2019), [“Women's Progression in the Workplace”](#) UK Government Equalities Office; Gates Foundation, “Unpaid care work,” p.3.

<sup>97</sup> Hideg, I., Krstic, A., Trau, R. and Zarina, T. (2018), [“Do Longer Maternity Leaves Hurt Women's Careers?”](#) Harvard Business Review.

<sup>98</sup> Olivetti, C. and Petrongolo, B. (2017), [“The Economic Consequences of Family Policies: Lessons from a Century of Legislation in High-Income Countries”](#) Journal of Economic Perspectives, Volume 31, no. 1, p.221.

<sup>99</sup> Gates Foundation, “Unpaid care work,” p.19.

## Box 5: The ‘motherhood gap’

The motherhood gap measures the pay gap between women with children, and those who are not mothers. While the gap is wider in low- and middle-income countries, in many European countries, women with more than one child experience a significant wage penalty.<sup>100</sup>

Research from the US suggests that the motherhood gap is underpinned by lower perceived competence and commitment, higher professional expectations, lower likelihood of hiring and promotion, and lower recommended salaries.<sup>101</sup>

The disproportionate share of unpaid work that falls on women has been exacerbated globally by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>102</sup> Widespread and long-term **closures of schools and day-care centres** have increased childcare needs, and the immense pressure on health and social care services from the pandemic has further increased the burden of unpaid care work. This burden is particularly acute for women, often low-paid, working in sectors under high stress from the pandemic – such as health and social care – in which women are overrepresented. Globally, women business owners also appear to have been disproportionately impacted by additional care work.<sup>103</sup> However, few government responses have directly addressed the additional burden of care work on women in their pandemic response.<sup>104</sup>

Unequal burden-sharing of unpaid domestic and care work is driven in part by **social norms** that view such work as a woman’s responsibility. Gender discriminatory hiring policies and practices and unequal pay can make paid work discouraging or inaccessible for women. In addition, **weak policies and social institutions** limit access to affordable, quality care services, both in advanced economies and low- and middle-income countries. Over half of the world’s

population does not have access to social protection,<sup>105</sup> which is often seen as a cost rather than an investment.<sup>106</sup> Early learning and childcare places a heavy financial burden on parents, and current systems leave some families behind, particularly low-income families.<sup>107</sup> A **lack of investment in ‘social infrastructure’** therefore has a knock-on effect – not just on the wellbeing of the population, but also on the productive economy: it is an economic issue as much as it is social.

Austerity measures, particularly cuts in public services, **have disproportionately hit women hardest in the past**, given their socially assigned roles as the providers of care, and their reliance on the public sector for decent work.<sup>108</sup> While some G7 countries, supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have started to recognise the importance of investment in social infrastructure in response to the pandemic, the IMF’s focus in low-income countries continues to be on fiscal consolidation and spending cuts to ensure that foreign debts can be paid. Persuading governments to prioritise repaying their external debts, rather than invest in much needed social care, has been proven over decades to have a significant adverse impact on gender equality.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Grimshaw, D. and Rubery, J. (2015) [“The motherhood pay gap: A review of the issues, theory and international evidence.”](#) International Labour Office, p.16.

<sup>101</sup> Correll, S., Benard, S. and Paik, I. (2007), [“Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?”](#) American Journal of Sociology, Volume 112, no. 5.

<sup>102</sup> UN Women (2020), [“Whose time to care? Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19”](#); McKinsey & Company (2020), [“COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects”](#)

<sup>103</sup> In a study conducted of over 30,000 small and medium enterprises in 50 countries in June 2020, 23% of women business owners reported spending six or more hours per day on care work compared to 11% of men. Facebook, OECD and the World Bank (2020), [“Global State of Small Business Report”](#) p.5.

<sup>104</sup> UN Women (2020), [“From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19”](#)

<sup>105</sup> UN (2019), [“World Economic Situation and Prospects”](#), p. xviii.

<sup>106</sup> De Henau, J., Himmelweit, S., and Perrons, D. (2017), [“Investing in the Care Economy: Simulating employment effects by gender in countries in emerging economies.”](#) Women’s Budget Group for the International Trade Union Confederation, p.5.

<sup>107</sup> OECD (2020), [“Is Childcare Affordable?”](#) Policy Brief on Employment, Labour And Social Affairs, p.1.

<sup>108</sup> UN Women (2015), [“Progress of the world’s women 2015-2016: transforming economies, realizing rights”](#) p.26.

<sup>109</sup> Ortiz, I., Cummins, M., Capaldo, J. and Karunanathy, K. (2015), [“The decade of adjustment: a review of austerity trends 2010–2020 in 187 countries”](#) ESS working paper no. 53, p. 3.

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

The GEAC agrees with the Civil Society 7<sup>110</sup> and Women 7<sup>111</sup> Engagement Groups that G7 governments must recognise the importance of the care economy in securing prosperity for all by investing an additional 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) into social infrastructure to create **gender-responsive public health and care services** that improve service provision for the most marginalised, reduce women's unpaid care burdens and create decent work for women. G7 governments must eliminate systems which promote unequal care structures, and incentivise men and boys to participate equally in unpaid care and domestic work. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.4, which requires states to "recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate".<sup>112</sup>

Public investment in social infrastructure and particularly **free or affordable childcare** has high returns for the economy and society,<sup>113</sup> and is a more effective way to increase the availability of decent jobs for women, with better pay and conditions, than investment in physical infrastructure.<sup>114</sup>

Evidence from Québec (see **Box 6**) suggests that investing in early learning and childcare yields long-term socioeconomic outcomes, including jobs for women, and enables parents, particularly mothers, to reach their full economic potential. Low-income countries should be encouraged and supported to invest in social infrastructure, particularly through the funding of universally accessible public services and creation of decent work in the public sector. The international financial institutions, and their G7 board members, should support such investment, for example, by reducing debt burdens.

**Flexible working policies** are essential to allow parents, especially mothers, to meet caring responsibilities whilst maintaining paid employment.<sup>115</sup> In the EU, four times more women than men aged 20–64 years worked part-time in 2017,<sup>116</sup> yet nearly half of all part-time workers indicated that they would be willing to move to full-time jobs if more flexible working arrangements were available.<sup>117</sup> But the picture is complex: in the UK, where all employees<sup>118</sup> have the legal right to request flexible working, women are more likely to take advantage of these arrangements, which has an overall positive impact on quality of life but a negative impact on career progression.<sup>119</sup> Governments should encourage employers to maximise the use of flexible working policies

**"We must close the clear differences in income between men and women... Not against men, but with them. It can only be done together. Let us act."**



Prof. Jutta Allmendinger, President of the WZB Berlin Social Science Centre and Professor of Sociology at Humboldt University Berlin

<sup>110</sup> Civil Society 7 (2021), "[C7 communiqué 2021: Civil society's recommendations to the G7](#)," p.4.

<sup>111</sup> Women 7 (2021), "[Making gender equality a reality: Recommendations to the G7](#)," p.5.

<sup>112</sup> Sustainable Development Goals Tracker, "[SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls](#)," accessed 15 September 2021.

<sup>113</sup> World Economic Forum (2021), "[Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#)," p.56.

<sup>114</sup> See, for example, ITUC (2017), "[Investing in the Care Economy: Simulating employment effects by gender in countries in emerging economies](#)"; ITUC (2016), "[Investing in the Care Economy – A gender analysis of employment stimulus in seven OECD countries](#)"; and UN Women (2015), "[Progress of the world's women 2015–2016](#)."

<sup>115</sup> UK Government Equalities Office (2020), "[How flexible working can help close the gender pay gap](#)," accessed 17 September 2021.

<sup>116</sup> 31% of women compared to 8% of men in total employment. Eurostat, "[ffsj\\_pt\\_a](#)," accessed 17 September 2021.

<sup>117</sup> Kantar Public Brussels (2018), "[Flash Eurobarometer 470](#)," European Commission, p.6.

<sup>118</sup> Employees must have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks to be eligible. UK Government, "[Flexible working](#)," accessed 17 September 2021.

<sup>119</sup> CIPD (2019), "[UK Working Lives](#)," p. 5.

for all, to support equal participation and progression in the labour market.

There is a growing body of evidence from high-income countries on how to ensure that **parental leave policies** work for women. Firstly, there is evidence that encouraging men to take parental leave will lead to a reduction in gender pay gaps, increased participation of women in labour markets, and more equal sharing of housework. Evidence from Sweden and Québec (see **Box 6**) suggests that policies that

work on a ‘use it or lose it’ basis, rather than being transferable between parents, may incentivise fathers to take a more gender-equal division of childcare,<sup>120</sup> and lead to more equitable sharing of care work in the long term.<sup>121</sup> Secondly, **paid family leave policies**<sup>122</sup> have been shown to support the health of mothers and fathers with newborn children in high-income countries.<sup>123</sup> Finally, the continued provision of benefits once mothers return to work, for example, employer-sponsored childcare, makes it more likely that they will continue paid employment.<sup>124</sup>

## Box 6: Québec Educational Childcare Act<sup>125</sup>

Québec’s Educational Childcare Act (1997) aimed to increase gender equality, through improved employment prospects for women. It did this by providing low-fee early learning and childcare for all children, and enhancing the quality of early learning centres. This included comprehensive support for families and children, and provision of a healthy, safe and stimulating environment, where children could develop their full potential.

The implementation of the Act has increased the rate of participation of women in the labour force in Québec, from 4% below the Canada average before the Act, to 4% above the Canada average by 2021. Estimates suggest that if the rest of Canada had implemented the scheme, 240,000 workers would have been added to the labour force since 1997, boosting economic growth by 1.2%. This initiative has contributed to a rise of 1.7% in Québec’s GDP, and now in Québec, women with children under three have some of the highest employment rates in the world.

<sup>120</sup> Apolitical Case Study (2017), “[How a parental leave policy changed the way Sweden sees fatherhood](#),” accessed 29 September 2021.

<sup>121</sup> Almqvist, A.L., and Duvander, A.Z. (2014), “[Changes in Gender Equality? Swedish Fathers’ Parental Leave, Division of Childcare and Housework](#),” *Journal of Family Studies* 20(1).

<sup>122</sup> Which broadly include any national policies which provide compensated time away from work for families, such as maternity leave, shared parental leave, adoption leave, etc.

<sup>123</sup> Lee, B., Madrek, S., White, J., Batra, A., Collin, D., and Hamad, R. (2020) “[The effect of California’s paid family leave policy on parent health: A quasi-experimental study](#),” *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 251.

<sup>124</sup> Ranganathan, A., Pedulla, D. S. (2020), “[Work-Family Programs and Nonwork Networks: Within-Group Inequality, Network Activation, and Labor Market Attachment](#),” *Organization Science*, Volume 32, Number 2.

<sup>125</sup> Department of Finance Canada, “[Budget 2021: A Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan](#),” accessed 12 September 2021.



## Recommendation 5:

# Access to capital and labour markets

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Prioritise gender equality and women's economic empowerment in their domestic and international economic strategies, including economic recovery plans and aid and development policies that focus on gender equality programming among the poorest and most marginalised groups.
- Embed gender-responsive approaches in industrial strategies by reorienting job creation initiatives to women-led industries and tailoring policies to support women-owned micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
- Introduce living minimum wages and mandatory gender pay gap reporting for all employers, and encourage employer-led voluntary initiatives to promote gender-equal, flexible working policies.
- Introduce gender equality criteria in public sector procurement and targets for public spending on women-owned and women-led businesses.
- Encourage financial stakeholders to leverage the power of capital markets and movements of resources to steer responsible business conduct and foster inclusive corporate cultures.
- Ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on collective bargaining and freedom of association, as well as Convention 189 on domestic workers, and ensure these conventions are enforced throughout supply chains.



## The issue

Expanding women's economic opportunities, either through access to finance to start and grow their businesses, or access to jobs, is central to global development and prosperity.<sup>126</sup> At present, gender gaps in entrepreneurship and workforce participation have been estimated to cause an average income loss of 15% in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, 40% of which is due to entrepreneurship gaps.<sup>127</sup> Barriers for women to access capital and labour markets persist everywhere, although they vary according to context. They also affect international trade (see **Chapter 6**).

Around the world, **women are less likely than men to own small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**. Women's businesses tend to be smaller than men's, are more likely to be home-based,<sup>128</sup> less profitable,<sup>129</sup> and less likely to benefit from public procurement.<sup>130</sup> This is linked to the fact that women's businesses often face challenges, including access to finance,<sup>131</sup> credit, resources and insurance.<sup>132</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa, 40% of businesses are owned by women, but only 20% of that number have access to institutional finance: a funding gap of US \$42 billion.<sup>133</sup> Globally, women are less likely than men to have access to a bank account or financial instruments,<sup>134</sup> and are less likely to have meaningful access to digital technologies (see **Chapter 9**), which hinders their ability to set up and grow businesses.

**Gender inequality also permeates labour markets.** Globally, women's labour force participation rate is nearly 27% lower than men's, and women are more likely than men to be unemployed.<sup>135</sup> In developing countries, women are overrepresented in informal and vulnerable employment<sup>136</sup> and are less likely than men to have access to social protection measures linked to their employment (such as pensions and parental leave).<sup>137</sup> In many countries, a woman cannot get a job in the same way as a man: for example, in 18 countries men can legally prevent their wives from working.<sup>138</sup> In corporate structures, women are less likely to reach top leadership positions,<sup>139</sup> and a lack of workplace protections (for example, laws on sexual harassment in the workplace) can inhibit women's ability to secure and sustain employment.<sup>140</sup> Women in every country also bear a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic

**“Backing women grows economies. In particular, women need better access to capital to recover and build businesses, that may be a micro-loan for a tiny initiative in a small country where economically marginalised women are often not visible to their governments, all the way to scaling businesses.”**



Emma Sinclair MBE,  
Tech entrepreneur,  
and CoFounder  
and CEO of  
EnterpriseAlumni

<sup>126</sup> UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment (2016), "[Leave no one behind: a call to action for gender equality and women's economic empowerment](#)," p.8.

<sup>127</sup> Cuberes, D. and Teignier, M. (2016), "[Aggregate Effects of Gender Gaps in the Labor Market: A Quantitative Estimate](#)," Journal of Human Capital, Volume 10, no. 1.

<sup>128</sup> UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, "Leave no one behind."

<sup>129</sup> Delecourt, S., Ng, O. (2020), "[Does Gender Matter for Small Business Performance?](#)" p.1.

<sup>130</sup> Harris Rimmer, S. (2017), "[Gender-smart Procurement: Policies for Driving Change](#)," Chatham House, p.2; International Trade Centre and SheTrades (2020), "[Making public procurement work for women](#)."

<sup>131</sup> Harvard Kennedy School Women and Public Policy Program, "[Venture Capital and Entrepreneurship](#)," accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>132</sup> Carter, S., Mwaura, S., Ram, M., Trehan, K. and Jones, T. (2015), "[Barriers to ethnic minority and women's enterprise: Existing evidence, policy tensions and unsettled questions](#)," International Small Business Journal, Vol. 33(1); OECD, "[Do women have equal access to finance for their business?](#)" accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>133</sup> 2X Challenge (2021), "[The Gender Agenda and the Missing Middle: Improving Economic Outcomes for Women in sub-Saharan Africa](#)," accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>134</sup> The World Bank (2017), "[Global Findex, Chapter 2: The Unbanked](#)," p.36.

<sup>135</sup> International Labour Office (2018), "[World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018 – Global snapshot](#)" p.7.

<sup>136</sup> Bonnet, F., Vanek, J. and Chen, M. (2019), "[Women and Men in the Informal Economy – A Statistical Brief](#)," WIEGO, p.5.

<sup>137</sup> International Labour Office (2016), "[Women at Work: Trends 2016](#)" p.30.

<sup>138</sup> World Bank (2018), "[Women, Business and the Law 2018](#)" p.2.

<sup>139</sup> McKinsey & Company, "[Women in the Workplace 2020](#)," accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>140</sup> World Bank, "Women, Business and the Law 2020," p.15.

work (see **Chapter 4**), which negatively impacts on their ability to participate fully in paid work.<sup>141</sup>

The well-documented global **gender pay gap** hinders women's equal participation in labour markets. Although gender pay gap figures and estimates vary depending on methodology, and there are some issues with data,<sup>142</sup> the average gender gap in labour income (GGLI) in many OECD countries is around 40%.<sup>143</sup> While standard gender pay gap measures look at a particular point in time, the gender gap in lifetime earnings is even more stark, with the impact of parenthood particularly strong.<sup>144</sup> In the UK, for example, women on average earn only 59% of men's earnings over the course of a lifetime,<sup>145</sup> likely because of the unequal distribution of men and women across sectors, time spent in the labour force, gender differences in negotiation, and discrimination in the workplace.<sup>146</sup> The lifetime gender pay gap accumulates as a woman reduces hours or takes time out of the workforce. In the US, a woman spends on average 44% of her adult life out of the workforce, compared to 28% for a man.<sup>147</sup>

**The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing labour market inequalities.** Evidence suggests that women have experienced more negative economic effects than men because of the pandemic, and that gender differences are more significant than age, education or rural/urban locality.<sup>148</sup> Overall figures show that **more women have lost jobs or income:** between April and June 2020, 36% of women compared to 28% of men stopped working (from a survey of 40 mostly developing countries),<sup>149</sup> and women's employment declined by 5% in 2020, compared with 3.9% for men globally in 2020.<sup>150</sup> The reasons for this disparity vary with context, but may include that women tend to be concentrated in sectors affected by lockdown, such as hospitality, or in informal work.<sup>151</sup> For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the pandemic led to heavy job losses in female-dominated sectors, such as some areas of trade, personal services, education and hospitality.<sup>152</sup> Women-led businesses were more likely to close due to COVID-19 in every region of the world.<sup>153</sup> Looking ahead, the pandemic may cause an acceleration in **automation and digitisation**, in turn

speeding up labour market disruption which will likely have disproportionate impacts on women (see **Chapters 8 and 9**).<sup>154</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

The pandemic offers a unique opportunity for organisations and governments to reassess how they work and make the most of human capital. At the macro level, **government legislation, policies and incentives** are required to bring about systemic change. Equality in labour and capital markets must be at the centre of governments' efforts to 'build back better' from the pandemic (see **Chapters 1 and 2**), including through the introduction of gender-responsive labour market policies and economic and industrial strategies, including skills development policies, infrastructure investment, policies to promote access to credit and technologies,<sup>155</sup> and policies that protect the rights of workers in sectors where women are overrepresented, for example, domestic workers.<sup>156</sup> A recent study suggests that increasing female employment rates across the OECD to match that of Sweden could boost OECD Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by US \$6 trillion.<sup>157</sup>

**Closing the gender pay gap** will not only benefit women, it may also bolster business performance, strengthening the global economy.<sup>158</sup> Evidence from the UK suggests that new legislation requiring companies with over 250 employees to report their gender pay gap data on an annual basis has led to a 1.6% increase in women's hourly wages relative to those of men, which means that the gap was closed by about 19% in these companies.<sup>159</sup> In Chile, the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Accelerator — a public-private collaboration programme to close economic gender gaps — has effectively promoted female representation and reduced gender wage inequalities in member companies.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Ferrant, G., Pesando, L. M. and Nowacka, K. (2014), "Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes." OECD Development Centre, p.5.

<sup>142</sup> Rubery, J. and Koukiadaki, A. (2016), "Closing the gender pay gap: A review of the issues, policy mechanisms and international evidence." International Labour Office.

<sup>143</sup> OECD (2018), "Employment Outlook 2018." ch.6.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Office for National Statistics (2019), "Human capital estimates in the UK: 2004 to 2018." p.13.

<sup>146</sup> Olsen, W., Gash, V., Sook, K. and Zhang, M. (2018) "The gender pay gap in the UK: evidence from the UKHLS." Government Equalities Office.

<sup>147</sup> Merrill and Age Wave (2019), "Women & financial wellness: Beyond the bottom line." p.19.

<sup>148</sup> Nieves, C. de P., Gaddis, I., & Muller, M. (2021), "Gender and COVID-19: What have we learnt, one year later?." Policy Research Working Paper 9709, World Bank Group, p.2.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>150</sup> International Labour Office (2021), "World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021." p.14.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Gender Innovation Lab for Latin America and the Caribbean (2021), "The Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 on Labor Markets in Latin America and the Caribbean." World Bank, p.4.

<sup>153</sup> Copley, A., Decker, A., Delavelle, F., Goldstein, M., O'Sullivan, M. and Papineni, S. (2020), "COVID-19 Pandemic Through a Gender Lens." Africa Knowledge in Time, Issue 1, No. 2, World Bank, p.2.

<sup>154</sup> World Economic Forum (2021), "Global Gender Gap Report 2021." p.6.

<sup>155</sup> UNIDO (2019), "Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development: The Gender Dimension."

<sup>156</sup> ILO News (2021), "10 years on, domestic workers still fight for equality and decent work." 15 June 2021.

<sup>157</sup> PWC (2021), "Women in Work Index 2021: The impact of COVID-19 on women in work," accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>158</sup> Noland, M., Moran, T. and Kotschwar, B. (2016), "Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey." Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper No. 16-3.

<sup>159</sup> Blundell, J. (2021), "Wage responses to gender pay gap reporting requirements." Centre for Economic Performance Discussion Paper No.1750, London School of Economics and Political Science, p.3.

<sup>160</sup> On average, these companies report that 41% of staff members are women — almost 10% above the national average, which stood at 31.7% in January 2019. The employers also reduced gender wage inequalities by 37.5% between 2016 and 2019: World Economic Forum, "Women in work: how companies in Chile reduced wage inequalities." accessed 21 September 2021.

Radical approaches to **promoting flexible working** (see also, **Chapter 4**) may also lead to impressive results. For example, in Iceland, an experiment in which 2,500 people (over 1% of the working population) switched to a four-day work week for five years without a pay cut resulted in men living in heterosexual couples taking on a greater share of domestic responsibilities, better wellbeing and work-life-balance for employees, and sustained or improved service provision and productivity across the majority of participating organisations.<sup>161</sup>

Companies are increasingly putting in place **corporate policies and strategies** on gender and racial equality, which have traditionally been implemented through initiatives like diversity or unconscious bias training, for which there is limited evidence of any meaningful positive impact.<sup>162</sup> More recent research suggests that organisations should instead focus on strategic systemic change based on rigorous evidence about what works,<sup>163</sup> including **de-biasing formal human resources (HR) processes**, such as recruitment, hiring, performance management, pay, promotion, flexibility, and leave policies, as well as informal organisational practices, such as project assignment, recognition, feedback, meetings, and cultural norms (see **Box 7**).

**“It’s very hard to eliminate our biases, but we can design organizations to make it easier for our biased minds to get things right.”**



Prof. Iris Bohnet, Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government and co-director of the Women and Public Policy Program, Harvard Kennedy School

## Box 7: Behavioural insights

The Behavioural Insights Team, funded by the UK Government Equalities Office, undertook a programme of research<sup>164</sup> to identify what actions employers can take to close the gender pay gap. They found that:

- Advertising all jobs as open to part-time work or job-sharing by default attracts around 16% more applications from women. In management roles, this rises to 19%.
- Employers who saw a prompt to include flexible working options in their adverts on the global job site, Indeed, were 20–30% more likely to do so. This subsequently attracted a wider talent pool, with up to 30% more applicants for each role.
- At Santander UK, telling men that the majority of their male colleagues supported parental leave for fathers saw a 62% increase in the proportion of men intending to take five to eight weeks of parental leave.
- In the Ministry of Defence, where employees were encouraged to share new vacancies with women they knew, there was an increase in the number of applications from women, job offers to women and offers accepted by women, even in traditionally male-dominated roles.

<sup>161</sup> Haraldsson, G. D. and Kellam, J. (2021), “[Going Public: Iceland’s Journey to a Shorter Working Week](#)” Alda and Autonomy.

<sup>162</sup> For reviews, see Lai et al. (2014), “[Reducing implicit racial preferences: I. A comparative investigation of 17 interventions](#)” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, Volume 143, Issue 4, pp.1765–1785; Paluck, E.L and Green, D.P. (2009), “[Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice](#)” *Annual Review of Psychology*, Volume 60, Issue 1, pp.339–367; and Paluck et al. (2021), “[Prejudice Reduction: Progress and Challenges](#)”, *Annual Review of Psychology*, Volume 72, pp.533–560.

<sup>163</sup> See, for example, Bohnet, I. (2016), *What Works: Gender Equality by Design*, Harvard University Press; Milkman, K. Chugh, D. and Bazerman, M. (2009), “[How Can Decision Making Be Improved?](#)” *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Volume 4, Issue 4, pp.379–383; and Thaler, R.H. and Sunstein, C.R. (2008), *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*, Yale University Press.

<sup>164</sup> Behavioural Insights Team, “[Gender and Behavioural Insights](#)”, accessed 21 September 2021.

Both public and private sectors can work to achieve socioeconomic change for women and girls on a global scale by adopting **inclusive procurement processes** that endorse supplier diversity. UN Women has published a manual on gender-responsive procurement to develop understanding of the barriers and challenges preventing women-owned businesses from accessing and fully participating in local and global value chains, and providing actionable steps that organisations can take to increase the share of women-owned businesses in their procurement.<sup>165</sup>

Promoting **access to capital** has been shown to boost women's economic opportunities.<sup>166</sup> In India, for example, providing male and female led micro-enterprises with equal access to capital, resources and

business inputs contributed to closing the gender profit gap.<sup>167</sup> In the UK, further efforts to boost **female entrepreneurship** could have a major impact, with the Rose Review calculating that if women chose to start and scale businesses at the same rate as men, around £250 billion of new value could be added to the domestic economy.<sup>168</sup> In India, **financial education** is a cost-effective way of improving the financial behaviours of women from poor households,<sup>169</sup> and may help women to break into the traditionally male-dominated financial services sector.<sup>170</sup> It also makes good business sense – venture capital firms with 10% more female investing partner hires, for instance, make more successful investments at the portfolio company level, have 1.5% higher fund returns, and see 9.7% more profitable exits.<sup>171</sup>

## Box 8: Viewpoint – Dr Dambisa Moyo

### *The power of financial education and women's financial literacy*

Women tend to have relatively low levels of financial literacy.<sup>172</sup> Financial education for women encourages leadership and the participation of women and girls at all levels of decision-making, in trading, as business owners, as savers and consumers. Financial education will help women to shape and lead the financial industry, which can be a powerful engine for growth as we emerge from the pandemic and build back better.

One organisation supporting women to join financial services firms is 100 Women in Finance.<sup>173</sup> Its goal is for women to occupy 30% of investment team and executive leadership roles by 2040, by empowering education initiatives and peer engagement.

<sup>165</sup> Chin, K. (2017), ["The Power of Procurement: How to Source from Women-owned Businesses: Corporate Guide to Gender-Responsive Procurement"](#), UN Women.

<sup>166</sup> Sahay, R., Čihák, M. et al. (2018), ["Women in Finance: A Case for Closing Gaps"](#), International Monetary Fund.

<sup>167</sup> Delecourt, S. and Ng, O. (2019), ["Does Gender Matter for Small Business Performance? Experimental Evidence from India"](#).

<sup>168</sup> Rose, A. (2019), ["The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship"](#), p.15.

<sup>169</sup> Bhutoria, A. and Vignoles, A. (2018), ["Do Financial Education Interventions for Women from Poor Households Impact Their Financial Behaviors? Experimental Evidence from India"](#), Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, Volume 11, Issue 3, pp.409-432.

<sup>170</sup> Bucher-Koenen, T., Alessie, R., Lusardi, A. and van Rooij, M. (2021), ["Fearless Woman: Financial Literacy and Stock Market Participation"](#), Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center.

<sup>171</sup> Harvard Kennedy School Women and Public Policy Program, ["Venture Capital and Entrepreneurship"](#), accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>172</sup> Bucher-Koenen et al., "Fearless Woman."

<sup>173</sup> Webpage: [100 Women in Finance](#), accessed 30 September 2021.



## Recommendation 6:

# Gender-responsive trade

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Build on the ambition of the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment on the Occasion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017 (see **Box 9**) at the next WTO Ministerial Conference, and seek ambitious commitments around improving data on women in trade and developing gender-responsive trade policies.
- Require existing and new Aid for Trade initiatives to include the tools for crafting gender-responsive trade policies and programmes for facilitating women in trade and economic empowerment; and work directly with women-owned businesses in developing countries to ensure these programmes meet women's needs.
- Progress trade facilitation reform and support the implementation of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement in a way that bolsters women's participation in trade and economic empowerment.
- In addition, G7 Trade Ministers should commit to joining the SheTrades Outlook digital platform to improve the evidence base on trade and gender equality to inform policy and programme development; and support the establishment of a United Nations binding treaty on business and human rights, with a particular focus on the rights of women.

## The issue

Women play key roles in the **global trade system**: an estimated 192 million women in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and middle-income countries work in global value chains, accounting for 42% of global value chain employment.<sup>174</sup> **However, women do not access the global trade system on an equal footing with men.** Women balancing paid and unpaid responsibilities will often have to seek trade-offs, and the resulting time poverty and lack of mobility and resources can act as barriers to opportunities and choices. These same factors underpin the tendency for women to be concentrated in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs — as set out in **Chapter 5**),<sup>175</sup> and it is less likely that SMEs will have the resources to meet the high costs associated with engaging in international markets, or the capacity to address complex regulatory requirements.<sup>176</sup> In addition, although an estimated 40% of SMEs worldwide are women-owned businesses, only 15% of exporting firms are led by women.<sup>177</sup>

The constraints that women face because of their multiple roles interact with **biased trade policies** that make it difficult for women to take advantage of the opportunities that increased trade brings. Trade liberalisation policies, for example, can be a double-edged sword, leading to job opportunities, but also negatively impacting sectors in which women are concentrated, leading to job losses and increased inequalities.<sup>178</sup> While trade standards can support and enable women's empowerment, they can also disempower women who are concentrated in precarious, part-time or seasonal jobs within value chains, and may therefore be especially vulnerable to changes induced by requirements for the standards compliance process.<sup>179</sup>

There is growing evidence to suggest that **women are more likely to be negatively affected by COVID-19-related trade disruptions** than men. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), this is largely because the sectors they work in are more affected by lockdown,<sup>180</sup> but also that the pandemic is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, including gender inequality, because of lower wages for women, fewer educational opportunities, greater reliance on informal employment, limited access to finance, and social norms. Lower rates of information technology (IT) skills and limited access to digital technologies also affect women's ability to adapt to the economic changes brought about by the pandemic.<sup>181</sup>

Establishing and communicating gender bias in trade policies is challenging because of the lack of gender-disaggregated data in economic indicators. This makes it difficult to determine how gender aware, responsive or transformative policies are,<sup>182</sup> and inadvertently reinforces biases against women.<sup>183</sup>

**“The G7 Leaders have to look at every action they’re taking, first through the lens of whether or not this action will increase the opportunities for women and girls to participate fully in society, safely in society, joyfully in society.”**



Ursula M. Burns,  
Former CEO and  
Chairwoman of  
Xerox Corporation,  
Former leader of the  
White House STEM  
Programme

<sup>174</sup> International Labour Organization (2015), [“World Employment and Social Outlook 2015: The Changing Nature of Jobs”](#) p.135.

<sup>175</sup> OECD, [“How can trade contribute to women’s economic empowerment?”](#) accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>176</sup> OECD, [“Small and medium-sized enterprises and trade”](#) accessed 17 May 2021.

<sup>177</sup> International Trade Centre (2015), [“Unlocking Markets for Women to Trade”](#) p.13.

<sup>178</sup> Williams, M. (2007), [“Gender and Trade: Impacts and Implications for Financial Resources for Gender Equality”](#) Commonwealth Secretariat, p.5.

<sup>179</sup> UN Economic Commission for Europe (2019), [“Gender Responsive Standards”](#) p.40.

<sup>180</sup> WTO (2020), [“The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Women in Vulnerable Sectors and Economies”](#) Information Note, p.1.

<sup>181</sup> McKinsey & Company, [“COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects”](#) accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>182</sup> The World Bank and the World Trade Organization (2020), [“Women and Trade: The Role of Trade in Promoting Women’s Equality”](#).

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

G7 governments must work together to build mutually beneficial and sustainable trading relationships that benefit women around the world, and **facilitate equitable growth** for the G7's current and future trading partners. Identifying future trade patterns and ensuring women have meaningful access to those sectors will be vital.

**Gender-sensitive trade policies** can benefit women globally in a range of ways. Trade can promote greater economic equality through a combination of more and better jobs<sup>184</sup> and increased wages for women.<sup>185</sup> As workers, trade can result in improved access to formal employment: jobs in high-export sectors are 7% more likely to be formal than in low-exporting sectors, giving women better access to jobs with benefits, training and security.<sup>186</sup> As consumers, women stand to gain from more affordable goods and services resulting from open trade and global value chains.<sup>187</sup>

As business owners, women are likely to benefit from reforms that would reduce trade costs for SMEs, such as trade facilitation.<sup>188</sup> In order to simplify and reduce the costs associated with doing business and participating in global trade, all countries should expedite implementation of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement<sup>189</sup> and other **multilateral Aid for Trade initiatives**, such as the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility<sup>190</sup> and the Enhanced Integrated Framework.<sup>191</sup> These agreements include a focus on assisting women to trade, and to comply with regulatory requirements for export.

The Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund (TAF2+) is developing the knowledge base on how gender equality and social inclusion can be included in **investment treaties**. The recent Guide to Include

Gender in Investment Agreements<sup>192</sup> makes a range of suggestions, for example, the inclusion of clauses guaranteeing not to roll back existing protections for women as beneficiaries of government stimulus packages, and including performance requirements to positively discriminate in favour of women's labour employment. Promising initiatives include the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Trade and Gender Toolbox,<sup>193</sup> which is a tool for analysing and understanding the likely impact of trade reforms on women and gender inequality. On trade facilitation, the Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT)<sup>194</sup> is a tool for customs administrations to assess the gender equality implications of current policies, practices and activities, given that many small-scale cross-border traders are women.

More broadly, the UN Human Rights Council is advocating a **binding treaty on business and human rights**, which has the potential to address structural drivers of economic inequality through the regulation of transnational corporations and other business enterprises.<sup>195</sup> G7 countries should support its development and ensure meaningful consultation with women, as well as a robust gender equality impact assessment of the treaty.

Improved monitoring and **data collection** is also important for building a clear picture of the evidence base on trade and women's economic empowerment. For example, the International Trade Centre's SheTrades Outlook,<sup>196</sup> as recommended by the GEAC, provides comprehensive data and analysis on how laws, policies and practices in different countries affect women's participation in business and trade, and shares experiences and good practices from around the world. This allows users to identify data gaps and compare progress with other countries, regions, and economic groupings to inform business and trade policy decisions.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, p. ix.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, p. 21

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, p. 22

<sup>188</sup> OECD, [Trade and gender: How can trade contribute to women's economic empowerment?](#) accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>189</sup> World Trade Organization (2014), [Protocol Amending The Marrakesh Agreement Establishing The World Trade Organization](#), WT/L/940.

<sup>190</sup> World Trade Organization, [Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility](#), accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>191</sup> Enhanced Integrated Framework, [Who are we](#), accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>192</sup> Dawar, K. (2021), [Guide to include Gender in Investment Agreements](#), Gender, Social Inclusion and Trade Working Group, p.vii.

<sup>193</sup> UN Conference on Trade and Development (2017), [Trade and Gender Tool Box](#), United Nations.

<sup>194</sup> World Customs Organization (2013), [Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool](#).

<sup>195</sup> Anumo, F. and Michaeli, I. (2018), [Justice not "special attention": Feminist Visions for the Binding Treaty](#), Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, p.20.

<sup>196</sup> International Trade Centre, [SheTrades Outlook](#), accessed 30 September 2021.



### Box 9: The Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment<sup>197</sup>

The Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment was signed on the Occasion of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017. In it, signatories agreed to collaborate on making their trade and development policies more gender-responsive, including by:

1. Sharing our respective experiences relating to policies and programmes to encourage women's participation in national and international economies through World Trade Organization (WTO) information exchanges, as appropriate, and voluntary reporting during the WTO trade policy review process;
2. Sharing best practices for conducting gender-based analysis of trade policies and for the monitoring of their effects;
3. Sharing methods and procedures for the collection of gender-disaggregated data, the use of indicators, monitoring and evaluation methodologies, and the analysis of gender-focused statistics related to trade;
4. Working together in the WTO to remove barriers for women's economic empowerment and increase their participation in trade; and
5. Ensuring that Aid for Trade supports tools and know-how for analysing, designing and implementing more gender-responsive trade policies.

<sup>197</sup> World Trade Organization (2017), "[Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment](#)."

## Recommendation 7:

# Climate change, biodiversity loss and the green economy

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Commit to swiftly implement a gender-responsive approach to climate financing, investment and policies.
- Reaffirm commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Gender Action Plans to better equip and empower women and girls to confront the challenges they are facing, and to adapt, participate and benefit from resetting our relationship with nature and the transition to Net Zero.
- Target investment in girls' education, reskilling of women, and lifelong learning to ensure that they can be a part of the 'green revolution'.
- Work with the private sector to commit to providing equal opportunities for women and girls to take on climate and environmental leadership roles.
- Increase efforts to achieve G7 commitments in the Equal by 30 campaign, in particular the integration of a gender lens into this work.
- Fund early warning systems and alternative education settings in climate-affected areas to minimise risk and impacts of climate-related school closures.

## The issue

Climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation threaten the lives and livelihoods of billions of people around the world.<sup>198</sup> However, women and girls in developing countries are more dependent than men and boys on natural resources for their livelihood, meaning that they are disproportionately impacted when climate conditions and biodiversity loss threaten those resources.<sup>199</sup> **Climate disasters and crises exacerbate pre-existing inequalities.** They produce dramatically unequal impacts across social groups.<sup>200</sup> In countries most affected by climate crises, women and girls are more likely to be displaced by climate change, die from pollution,<sup>201</sup> or face a heightened risk of gender-based violence during and following climate disasters and when displaced from their homes due to climate change.<sup>202</sup> Environmental threats, including climate-related disasters, are estimated to disrupt the education of 37.5 million students globally every year.<sup>203</sup> The most marginalised and those with intersecting vulnerabilities – such as ethnicity, age, disability and income – are often most severely affected. Policy approaches to climate disasters that are not gender-sensitive risk exacerbating “the vulnerabilities of groups most exposed to the impacts of climate change, deepening existing inequalities and potentially aggravating environmental and security threats”.<sup>204</sup>

The climate crisis risks **undermining human security**.<sup>205</sup> While climate change does not directly cause violent conflict, it is a ‘threat multiplier’ that may indirectly increase the risk of conflict by exacerbating pre-existing social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, including gender inequality.<sup>206</sup> Climate change also makes peace harder to build and maintain, in that climate crises reduce the quantity and quality of land available, and threaten the creation of jobs and livelihoods.<sup>207</sup>

Despite these risks, the central importance of **gender equality in climate change policy is often not reflected in climate financing and investment**. In 2013, just 3% of bilateral aid from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee members – which includes many of the largest aid donors – to climate change programmes targeted gender equality as a principal objective, while 26% targeted gender equality as a secondary objective.<sup>208</sup> At present, levels of gender-responsive climate finance are insufficient.<sup>209</sup> **Women-led**

<sup>198</sup> Adger, W.N., Pulhin, J.M., Barnett, J., Dabelko, G.D., Hovelsrud, G.K., Levy, M., Oswald Spring, U. and Vogel, C.H. (2014), “Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Chapter 12: Human Security,” Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, pp.755-791.

<sup>199</sup> See UN Women (2009), “[Factsheet: Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change](#),” accessed 21 September 2021; and Asfaw, A., Lemenih, M., Kassa, H., & Ewnetu, Z. (2013), “[Importance, determinants and gender dimensions of forest income in eastern highlands of Ethiopia: the case of communities around Jelo Afromontane forest](#),” Forest Policy and Economics, Volume 28, pp.1-7.

<sup>200</sup> UNDP (2017), “[Overview of linkages between gender and climate change: Training module 1](#).”

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>202</sup> UN Women Fiji (2014) “[Climate Change, Disasters and Gender-based Violence in the Pacific](#),” p.1.

<sup>203</sup> TheirWorld (2018), “[Safe Schools: The Hidden Crisis. A framework for action to deliver Safe, Non-violent, Inclusive and Effective Learning Environments](#),” p.50.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, UN Women, UNDP and UNDP/PA/PBSO (2020), “[Gender, Climate & Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change](#),” p.13.

<sup>205</sup> Seymour Smith, E. (2020), “[Climate Change in Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans](#),” SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2020/07, p.5.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* and Cohn, C. (2020) “[The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the Climate Crisis: Inextricable Links](#),” Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights.

<sup>207</sup> Cohn, “The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the Climate Crisis,” p.3.

<sup>208</sup> OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) (2015), “[Making climate finance work for women: Overview of the integration of gender equality in aid to climate change](#),” p.1.

<sup>209</sup> Atmadja, S.S., Liswanti, N., Tamara, A., Lestari, H. and Djoudi, H. (2020), “[Leveraging climate finance for gender equality and poverty reduction: A comparative study](#),” Center for International Forestry Research, p.ix.

**environmental activism** receives only 3% of global philanthropic environmental funding.<sup>210</sup>

In addition, women and girls are underrepresented in **climate-related decision-making** across all levels and sectors.<sup>211</sup> The UK Government's Green Jobs Taskforce found endemic diversity issues across green sectors, including on gender equality.<sup>212</sup> This is unlikely to change if women continue to be underrepresented in industries likely to be targeted for reskilling in the future, such as the automotive sector.<sup>213</sup> More work — through initiatives like the Equal by 30 campaign (see **Box 10**) — is needed to ensure women and girls have equal pay, leadership and opportunities in the clean energy sector.

Key international policies and strategies to address climate change and biodiversity loss — such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Gender Action Plans — have experienced challenges to implementation. For instance, a report on UNFCCC implementation found a lack of coordination with affected communities, particularly women and other vulnerable individuals; policy frameworks that are poorly optimised; and a lack of data and financing.<sup>214</sup>

## Box 10: The 'Equal by 30' Campaign

Equal by 30 is a commitment by public and private sector organisations to work towards equal pay, equal leadership and equal opportunities for women in the clean energy sector by 2030. Equal by 30 asks organisations, companies and governments to endorse principles, then take concrete action to accelerate the participation of women in the clean energy sector, and close the gender gap.

The G7 recommitted to their efforts to advance gender equality and diversity in the energy sector, including under the Equal by 30 campaign, at the G7 Summit in June 2021. G7 countries made a “commitment to make diversity and gender equality central to the global energy sector’s recovery efforts, and help to build a more inclusive and equitable energy future”.<sup>215</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

Successfully transitioning to a Net Zero and nature-positive future will depend on the ability to harness all possible talent globally. UN Women notes that **women in climate and environmental leadership positions** have made a visible positive difference to the effectiveness of natural disaster responses.<sup>216</sup> But existing barriers to women's economic empowerment are unlikely to be addressed without a focus on more inclusive green growth which provides targeted investment in green skills for women and girls<sup>217</sup> (see **Box 11** on the Green Climate Fund). The development and diffusion of green technologies, including through timely implementation of the G7 Industrial Decarbonisation Agenda, offer opportunities to both generate jobs and accelerate the transition to Net Zero.

The **representation of women in decision-making groups** has been shown to increase the likelihood that climate and environment policy interventions will be effective and that the benefits of the interventions will be shared equally, as demonstrated in a study on forest conservation in Indonesia, Peru and Tanzania.<sup>218</sup> Private sector investment can support gender-responsive, climate-resilient development by engaging women in climate adaptation decision-making processes, and providing access to finance for climate-resilient technologies.<sup>219</sup>

As governments and systems change in response to climate change, this must be accompanied by direct access to **financing for gender-just climate solutions**. The upcoming **UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26)** offers a unique opportunity to advance gender equality within climate action and finance by advocating for gender-responsive policies and strategies and prioritising the climate leadership of women, girls and marginalised people.

<sup>210</sup> Dobson, C. and Lawrence, S. (2014), “[Our Voices, Our Environment: The State of Funding for Women's Environmental Action](#),” Wallace Global Fund, p.37.

<sup>211</sup> Generation Equality Forum (2021), “[Action Coalitions: Global Acceleration Plan](#),” p.88.

<sup>212</sup> Green Jobs Taskforce (2021), “[Report to Government, Industry and the Skills Sector](#),” pp.42-52.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68-69.

<sup>214</sup> UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, “[Overcoming Obstacles to Action](#),” accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>215</sup> G7, “[Equal by 30: Countries Commitments](#),” accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>216</sup> UN Women, “[Factsheet: Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change](#),” p.7.

<sup>217</sup> Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme (2021), “[Women's Economic Empowerment and Climate Change: A Primer. WOW Helpdesk Guidance Note No. 3](#),” p.17.

<sup>218</sup> Cook, N.J., Grillos, T. and Andersson, K.P. (2019), “[Gender quotas increase the equality and effectiveness of climate policy interventions](#),” *Nature Climate Change*, Volume 9, pp.330-334.

<sup>219</sup> European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2019), “[Guidance Note: How Private Sector Investment can Support Gender-responsive, Climate-resilient Development in Tajikistan](#),” p.10.

As set out in **Chapter 3, girls' access to education** is critical, and plays a vital role in increasing countries' resilience to climate disasters<sup>220</sup> — if every child received a full secondary school education by 2030, 200,000 natural disaster-related deaths could be averted in the following two decades through improved risk awareness.<sup>221</sup>

More broadly, advances in **early warning systems** — which have been shown to reduce disaster risk through better generation and dissemination of information<sup>222</sup> — should also be extended to those living in the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. The Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative is an example of a capacity-building project which recognises the importance of empowering women and other most-at-risk groups to better protect themselves from and adapt to disasters, with promising results.<sup>223</sup>

### Box 11: The Green Climate Fund — responding to the increasing risk of drought, and building gender-responsive resilience in the most vulnerable communities<sup>224</sup>

Ethiopia is considered to be at “extreme risk” from climate change. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) developed the *‘Responding to the Increased Risk of Drought’* project in contexts where the poor, the majority of whom are women, are disproportionately affected by drought. The project has helped to establish improved water supply and small-scale irrigation in vulnerable drylands, helping to mitigate drought and other climate impacts in exposed, agricultural, rural communities.

The project takes a gender-responsive approach by conducting community-based gender analysis, integrating indigenous knowledge and practices on climate resilience, and understanding how drought impacts on women. The project provides leadership training and skills for women community leaders to help foster a gender balance in committee leadership and decision making. As a result, over 50% of beneficiaries are expected to be women, and the 30% of households that are female-headed will also benefit from the project.

<sup>220</sup> The Brookings Institution (2017), “[3 ways to link girls' education actors to climate action](#)” accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>221</sup> UNESCO (2016), “[Education for People and Planet, Creating Sustainable Futures for All](#)” p.16–35.

<sup>222</sup> United Nations, “[Early Warning Systems](#),” accessed 23 September 2021.

<sup>223</sup> World Meteorological Organization (2021), “[CREWS Report Series: Annual Report 4 – 2020](#),” Climate Risks and Early Warning Systems, p.4.

<sup>224</sup> Green Climate Fund (2017), “[Gender Action Plan: FP058: Responding to the increasing risk of drought: building gender-responsive resilience of the most vulnerable communities](#)” Annex VI (c) — Environmental and Social Impact Assessment.

Recommendation 8:

# The pipeline into science, technology, engineering and mathematics

Recommendations  
to G7 Leaders:

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- Acknowledge the damage to global prosperity and women's economic empowerment caused by a gender imbalance in STEM education and careers, and commit to prioritising progress towards gender parity through concrete action.
- Commit to applying a rigorous gender analysis — beyond public sector equality duties — to national industrial, science and research strategies, and implementing strategies, such as targets for the participation and leadership of girls and women and other marginalised groups in STEM education and careers, and other sectors of public life.
- Support initiatives which champion best practice in STEM education, such as scholarship schemes and kite-marking systems for those schools and employers which encourage girls to participate in STEM fields.
- Develop targeted communications campaigns that showcase female role models.
- Invest in women's lifelong learning, including female entrepreneurship and reskilling for new economies.
- Set targets for reaching gender parity in STEM secondary and tertiary education within G7 countries by 2030.

## The issue

Women and girls continue to be **underrepresented in many science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) studies and careers**, with the caveat that there is wide variation within the STEM umbrella. Globally, only 7% of women who enrol in tertiary education choose to study engineering, manufacturing, or construction, compared with 22% of men who enrol.<sup>225</sup> This underrepresentation persists into STEM careers, including in scientific research, where women make up around 30% of the global workforce,<sup>226</sup> and in the machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) sectors of many mature economies, where only 14% of professionals are women.<sup>227</sup> Though the overall gender gap is narrowing, progress is slow, and there are persistent inequalities, for example, the number of women who hold professor contracts is particularly low.<sup>228</sup>

The gender gap in STEM is an inefficient allocation of labour and talent, and a missed opportunity for economies around the world.<sup>229</sup> Without interventions to decrease the gender gap in STEM, women's potential will remain untapped and they will be at risk of **missing out on future jobs** as economies shift in response to automation.<sup>230</sup> In the next decade, between 40 and 160 million women globally will need to transition between occupations, often into roles requiring more complex skills.<sup>231</sup> STEM sectors offer comparatively well-paid careers, and the development of skills that will allow women to enter **future and growing job markets**, such as cyber security<sup>232</sup> and biomedical engineering.<sup>233</sup> Increasing women's participation in STEM careers also has wider economic benefits – according to the European Institute for Gender Equality, closing the gender gap in STEM would contribute to an increase in EU GDP by 2.2 – 3.0% per capita in 2050.<sup>234</sup>

The drivers of the gender gap in STEM start in primary and secondary education and persist into higher education and careers. **Entrenched stereotypes about STEM** as masculine subjects impact on the way in which girls are expected to and perceived to perform in STEM subjects. For example, a study in the US found that black female high school students with strong academic performance were 20% less likely to be recommended by high school counsellors to take advanced placement calculus courses, compared to when their profile had a blind review, with the student's name removed.<sup>235</sup>

These low expectations shape girls' own **beliefs and attitudes towards STEM**. Analysis of an international database on adolescent achievement in science, mathematics and reading found that girls performed at a level similar to or better than

“Science was not just a subject for me, but a passion that was drawing me to my goal.”



Dr (H.C.) Ritu Karidhal, Deputy Operations Director to India's Mars Orbiter Mission, Mangalyaan

<sup>225</sup> World Bank (2020), [“The Equality Equation: Advancing the Participation of Women and Girls in STEM”](#) p.8.

<sup>226</sup> UNESCO and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020), [“Women in Science”](#) Factsheet no. 60, p.2.

<sup>227</sup> McKinsey Global Institute (2019), [“The future of women at work: Transitions in the age of automation”](#), p.54.

<sup>228</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2021), [“R&D People and Culture Strategy”](#) p.23.

<sup>229</sup> World Bank, “The Equality Equation,” p.1.

<sup>230</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and ITU (2020), “Towards an equal future: Reimagining girls' education through STEM,” p.12.

<sup>231</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, “The future of women at work” p.vi.

<sup>232</sup> Forbes, [“Can STEM Qualifications Hold The Key To The Future Of Cybersecurity?”](#) 11 September 2019, accessed 23 September 2021.

<sup>233</sup> Fayer, S., Lacey, A. and Watson, A. (2017), [“STEM Occupations: Past, Present, And Future”](#), US Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 14.

<sup>234</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (2019), [“Economic benefits of gender equality in the EU: How gender equality in STEM education leads to economic growth”](#) p.2.

<sup>235</sup> Francis, D.V., de Oliveira, A. and Dimmitt, C. (2019), [“Do School Counselors Exhibit Bias in Recommending Students for Advanced Coursework?”](#) The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, Volume 19, Issue 4, pp.1-17.

boys in science in two out of every three countries.<sup>236</sup> However, research also shows that girls are held back by a lack of confidence in their own intelligence,<sup>237</sup> and from a young age they believe that girls are less likely than boys to be “really, really smart”, and avoid activities said to be for those who are “really, really smart”.<sup>238</sup> In a recent survey conducted by the Children’s Commissioner for England and GEAC member Dame Rachel De Souza, girls spoke about how the expectations and stereotypes they faced held them back from pursuing certain careers – leading the Commissioner to call for “high quality careers advice in school with good information about non-academic career routes, including into sectors that enable career progression, such as STEM industries, especially for girls.”<sup>239</sup>

Lack of **mentoring and female role models** is a challenge within STEM education and careers<sup>240</sup> and can have a significant impact on women’s and girls’ perception of STEM as ‘for them’.<sup>241</sup> This can be exacerbated by underrepresentation or misrepresentation of female STEM experts in popular culture and the media: while many of the leading scientists working on the COVID-19 response are women, in some countries male scientists have had more media exposure. In a study of news articles on COVID-19 from the UK, US and Australia between March and July 2020, male STEM experts were mentioned nineteen times more often than female STEM experts.<sup>242</sup>

Once in the workforce, women in STEM fields are more likely than their male counterparts to face issues relating to **discrimination in hiring and promotion**,

harassment, pay gaps, treatment by co-workers, and balancing work and life.<sup>243</sup> By 2030, jobs in Europe and the US could require up to 55% more time using technical skills.<sup>244</sup> In order to meet the demands of changing workplaces, women will need opportunities to develop the new skills that will be in demand; the flexibility and mobility needed to negotiate labour-market transitions; and access to the technology necessary to work with automated systems. These are all areas where women have faced long-established and pervasive structural and societal barriers.<sup>245</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC’s recommendations

National policies in STEM-related fields have a crucial role to play in actively addressing the gender gap. While analysis of **national strategies** in the International Database on Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP)<sup>246</sup> finds that almost all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have implemented policy initiatives to increase women’s participation in STEM, these tend to focus on measures such as targeted funding and public awareness campaigns, rather than addressing wider systemic issues or analysing the potential gendered impact of all initiatives within the strategy.<sup>247</sup> There may therefore be a need for more rigorous gender analysis in designing national strategies. G7 governments have previously committed to ensuring that no girl is held back from STEM subjects in the 2016 G7 Guiding Principles for Building the Capacity of Women and Girls (see **Box 12**).

### Box 12: G7 Guiding Principles for Capacity Building of Women and Girls<sup>248</sup>

1. Eliminate gender disparities and stereotypes in education and careers.
2. Enrich job-related education and vocational training for women’s labour force participation, entrepreneurship and leadership.
3. Improve education and advocacy programmes for women’s and girls’ health.
4. Improve school environments and address barriers to quality education for girls.

<sup>236</sup> Stoet, G. and Geary, D.C. (2018), “[The Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education](#),” *Psychological Science*, Volume 29, Issue 4, pp.581-593.

<sup>237</sup> See Cassidy, R., Cottan, S., Crawford, C. and Dylham, S. (2018), “[How can we increase girls’ uptake of maths and physics A-level?](#)” Institute for Fiscal Studies; and Makarova, E., Aeschlimann, B. and Herzog, W. (2019), “[The Gender Gap in STEM Fields: The Impact of the Gender Stereotype of Math and Science on Secondary Students’ Career Aspirations](#),” *Frontiers in Education*, Volume 4, Issue 60.

<sup>238</sup> Bian, L., Leslie, S.J. and Cimpian, A. (2017) “[Gender stereotypes about intellectual ability emerge early and influence children’s interests](#),” *Science*, Volume 355, Issue 6323, pp.389-391, p.389.

<sup>239</sup> Children’s Commissioner for England (2021), “[The Big Ask: The Big Answer](#),” p. 9 and p. 46.

<sup>240</sup> Dasgupta, N. and Stout, J.G. (2014), “[Girls and Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: STEMing the Tide and Broadening Participation in STEM Careers](#),” *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp.21-29, p.24.

<sup>241</sup> See UNESCO (2017), “[Cracking the code: girls’ and women’s education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics \(STEM\)](#),” p.58; Davies, P. G., Spencer, S. J., Quinn, D. M. and Gerhardt, R. (2002), “[Consuming Images: How Television Commercials that Elicit Stereotype Threat Can Restrain Women Academically and Professionally](#),” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Volume 28, Issue 12, pp.1615-1628; and Steinke, J. (2017), “[Adolescent Girls’ STEM Identity Formation and Media Images of STEM Professionals: Considering the Influence of Contextual Cues](#),” *Frontiers in Psychology*, Volume 8, No. 716.

<sup>242</sup> Jones, L. (2020), “[Women’s representation and voice in media coverage of the coronavirus crisis](#),” King’s College London, p.5.

<sup>243</sup> Funk, C. and Parker, K. (2018), “[Women and Men in STEM Often at Odds Over Workplace Equity](#),” Pew Research Center.

<sup>244</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, “The future of women at work,” p.15.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.21-26.

<sup>246</sup> OECD, [International Database on Science, Technology and Innovation Policy](#), accessed 23 September 2021.

<sup>247</sup> Pollitzer, E., Smith C. and Vinkenburg, C. (2018), “[OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2018: Adapting to Technological and Societal Disruption](#),” OECD, ch.7

<sup>248</sup> G7 (2016), “[G7 Guiding Principles for Capacity Building of Women and Girls](#),” accessed 12 September 2021.



Given that gendered norms, attitudes and expectations may be learned very early on in a child's life,<sup>249</sup> harmful stereotypes should be challenged from nursery up. A report by the Fawcett Society highlights a number of resources and case studies to support practitioners to **address gender bias in education settings**, including teacher training, data audits and appointing gender champions.<sup>250</sup> An evaluation of the evidence on interventions which seek to improve gender equality in STEM prepared for the Welsh government in 2020 found that building an awareness of gender stereotypes, creating a non-stereotyped learning environment and exposure to female role models can all positively impact girls' attitudes towards STEM subjects (see also, **Box 13**) and confidence in their abilities<sup>251</sup> (although interventions with female role models should be carefully planned to avoid negative impacts).<sup>252</sup>

### Box 13: A Norwegian Study – gender role models and the STEM gender gap

Norway's healthcare system assigns every resident a primary care doctor. A 2019 study found that Norwegian girls who were randomly assigned a female GP were significantly more likely to pursue traditional male-dominated education programmes such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) fields. Girls assigned to female primary care doctors in childhood were found to be 4 percentage points more likely to choose a STEMM programme in high school than girls with non-female primary care doctors. Additionally, girls assigned a female doctor in childhood were 2 percentage points

more likely to choose a STEMM programme in college than those without. The study suggests that having female primary care doctors can close the gender gap in high school and college STEMM choice by almost 20%. This effect is particularly strong in high-ability girls with parents who have low levels of education; they are also more likely to perform higher across the board, although particularly in STEMM subjects, indicating that exposure to female doctors can contribute to reducing inequality and improving intergenerational mobility.<sup>253</sup>

Harvey Mudd College in California managed to raise the percentage of women computer science majors to over 50% in less than 10 years.<sup>254</sup> Through a transformation in college culture and pedagogy, as well as specific actions taken by the faculty and school leadership, they were able to create a learning environment that was attractive to women and allowed them to thrive.

**"I am passionate about inspiring the next generation of girls into STEM careers and hope that children...will realise how vital careers in science are to help the world around us."**



Prof. Dame Sarah Gilbert, Lead researcher at Oxford University for the coronavirus vaccine

<sup>249</sup> Plan International (2017), "Gender Inequality and Early Childhood Development".

<sup>250</sup> Fawcett Society (2020), "[Unlimited Potential: Report of the Commission on Gender Stereotypes in Early Childhood](#)".

<sup>251</sup> Arad Research (2020), "[Baseline evidence and research project for gender equality in STEM: literature review](#)", p.19.

<sup>252</sup> Bamberger, Y.M. (2014), "[Encouraging Girls into Science and Technology with Feminine Role Model: Does This Work?](#)" Journal of Science Education and Technology, Volume 23, Issue 4, pp. 549-561.

<sup>253</sup> Riise, J., Willage, B., and Willén, A. (2019), "[Can Female Doctors Cure the Gender STEMM Gap? Evidence from Randomly Assigned General Practitioners](#)", NHH Discussion Paper, pp. 1-47.

<sup>254</sup> Such as a focus on creative problem-solving, offering early summer research projects for those with minimal computer science experience, providing a wide variety of role models and demystifying success. Winig, L. (2021), "[Harvey Mudd College: Promoting Women In Computer Science Through Inclusive Education](#)", Harvard Kennedy School.

Governments should commit to working closely with education leaders to develop an implementation plan that creates cultural change and encourages girls' participation in STEM (see **Box 14**), looking at the role of the interventions outlined above, as well as university mentoring, work shadowing, online support systems and communications campaigns involving female role models. Further, providing **funding for programmes that specifically aim to address gender inequality in STEM** and setting clear targets to reach gender parity in STEM education are critical factors for success.<sup>255</sup>

To facilitate the transition from STEM education to careers, McKinsey's Future of Women at Work report highlights the role of **lifelong learning and reskilling**, with a role for governments in providing women with subsidies and financial support to finance training and reskilling.<sup>256</sup> Applying gender impact assessments (as seen in **Chapter 2**) to national science and research strategies will also help governments to understand – and address – barriers to women's participation in STEM education and careers.

#### Box 14: Gender Action Schools Award<sup>257</sup>

The UK-based Gender Action Schools Award scheme stretches across nurseries, schools and colleges to promote and support whole-school approaches to tackling gender stereotypes. Schools that participate have access to a range of resources to support their challenge to stereotypes by working through various 'levels' that require them to set and achieve goals. These range from establishing staff working groups and training throughout the year to improve conscious

use of gender-appropriate language, closing the gender attainment gap in STEM subjects and encouraging staff to consider adaptation of their language to be more gender-inclusive. The rollout of this kitemark offers the opportunity to reward and acknowledge schools that take the initiative to address gender imbalances that are needed to improve girls' educational experiences and potential.

<sup>255</sup> Arad Research (2020), p.19.

<sup>256</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, "The future of women at work," p.22.

<sup>257</sup> Webpage: [Gender Action](#), accessed 12 September 2021.



## Recommendation 9:

# Digital inclusion

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Address the digital gender divide by supporting initiatives that provide women and girls in all areas with affordable, reliable and safe internet and mobile services; and implementing the recommendations of the Youth 7 to ensure that all young people are equipped with the digital skills and literacy to fully engage and stay safe online.
- Leverage public-private partnerships to target funding towards addressing the digital divide, while learning from private sector best practice and innovative solutions.
- Make better use of technology in education systems to maximise children's skills development for the digital economy and ensure no child is left behind.
- Counteract algorithm bias by encouraging increased use of data in the public and private sectors to identify bias, and incentivising organisations to act to address it.
- Pursue harmonised principles of data collection for use in the private sector.
- Provide clear guidance, working with regulators, on the collection and use of sex- and/or gender-disaggregated data in outcome monitoring and decision-making processes.

## The issue

**More men than women have access to and use the internet in almost all regions of the world.** Globally, men are 21% more likely to be online than women — rising to 52% more likely in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>258</sup> Smartphone ownership is 20% lower for women than men in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>259</sup> The digital gender gap is growing, particularly in developing countries.<sup>260</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 222 million girls globally — predominantly in low- and lower-middle-income countries — were unable to be reached by remote learning during school closures due to COVID-19.<sup>261</sup>

Unequal access is not the only barrier women and girls face in terms of harnessing the benefits of the internet and digital technologies. **Global gender gaps in both traditional and digital literacy** impede women from making full use of digital technologies.<sup>262</sup> Online environments can also be hostile for women and girls: they are more likely than men to experience gender-based online harms, including harassment, abuse, threats of violence and hate speech<sup>263</sup> (see **Chapter 12** on online harassment and abuse).

The digital gender gap has **profound implications** for women. Being able to access and meaningfully engage with the internet and digital technologies creates educational, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities for individuals and their communities. Digital technologies offer new ways to start businesses, sell products on new markets, find jobs, access financial services, access health and general information, and engage in political and campaigning activity.<sup>264</sup> In G20 countries, advances in automation and digitisation of industries may disadvantage women, linked to their underrepresentation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields and the fact that they may have fewer opportunities to reskill or take advantage of new technologies.<sup>265</sup> Women’s digital exclusion is also a missed economic opportunity: doubling the number of women online in developing countries has the potential to increase global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by an estimated US \$13-18 billion.<sup>266</sup>

The unequal participation of women in the digital world can also exacerbate their **underrepresentation in the development of new digital tools and content.** The private and public sectors are increasingly turning to artificial intelligence (AI) systems and machine learning algorithms to automate simple and complex decision-making processes. The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, an independent UK advisory body, has suggested that skewed data sets may result in bias in algorithmic decision-making systems. For example, over- or under-recording of particular groups could mean an algorithm is less accurate for some people,

**“Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are becoming extremely powerful but embedded algorithmic biases, which replicate and even amplify human biases present in our society, influence the decisions. Counter action is urgently required.”**



Prof. Reiko Kuroda, Professor of Chemistry & Biology at Chubu University and winner of the L’Oréal-UNESCO award for Women in Science

<sup>258</sup> World Wide Web Foundation (2020), [“Women’s Rights Online: Closing the digital gender gap for a more equal world”](#), p.3.

<sup>259</sup> USAID (2021), [“The Gender Digital Divide Primer”](#), p.2.

<sup>260</sup> International Telecommunication Union (2019), [“Measuring digital development: Facts and figures, 2019”](#), p.3.

<sup>261</sup> UNICEF estimates that at least 463 million schoolchildren worldwide cannot be reached by digital and broadcast remote learning programmes enacted to counter school closures. An estimated 48% (222 million) of these schoolchildren are girls. UNICEF (2020), [“COVID-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures? A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies”](#), p.11.

<sup>262</sup> Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project (2017), [“Ways to Bridge the Gender Digital Divide from a Human Rights Perspective”](#), p.2.

<sup>263</sup> OECD (2018), [“Bridging The Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate”](#), p.23.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>266</sup> USAID [“The Gender Digital Divide Primer”](#), p.2.

or gives a skewed picture of particular groups.<sup>267</sup> Although decisions made by AI may appear free from bias, these new forms of decision-making have surfaced numerous examples where algorithms have entrenched or amplified historic biases, or even created new forms of bias or unfairness.<sup>268</sup> AI uses data created by people, so is also liable to replicate human flaws, such as bias based on age, gender or race,<sup>269</sup> often to the detriment of women and marginalised groups.<sup>270</sup> The risk is growing as algorithms, and the datasets that feed them, become increasingly complex.

These **algorithmic and AI biases have real-world impacts**. For example, facial recognition algorithms, which are often used for surveillance, show gender and racial bias, and find it much harder to identify the gender of darker-skinned women than lighter-skinned males (one study found a maximum error rate of 0.8% for lighter-skinned men, and a maximum error rate of 34.7% for darker-skinned women).<sup>271</sup> This has stark implications: those who are harder for the facial recognition software to identify may be more likely to be mistakenly stopped and questioned for crimes they did not commit.<sup>272</sup> Algorithmic bias has also been seen to affect online algorithms that are utilised for the targeting of job adverts. The algorithms were designed to prioritise cost-effectiveness, which resulted in fewer adverts for STEM-related roles being shown to women than men, because younger women are a prized demographic who are therefore more costly to advertise to.<sup>273</sup> If the digital gender gap is not addressed, digital technologies may continue to exacerbate existing gender inequalities.

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

As UN Women note, “there is no one solution to closing the gender digital divide. Gender inequality stems from multiple intersecting economic, social, political and cultural barriers, and remedies must be grounded in evidence about which barriers are in play across different contexts”.<sup>274</sup> In order to address the systemic problems driving the digital gender divide, the focus needs to be on **concrete actions to foster participation and inclusion**, such as closing the digital skills gap in the education sector, addressing the underrepresentation of women in technical fields and ensuring gender equality in digital social and welfare services.<sup>275</sup>

A report by the World Wide Web Foundation<sup>276</sup> has highlighted a number of areas of **best practice for closing the digital gender gap**, including:

- collecting gender-disaggregated data on information and communications technology (ICT) access, adoption, and use;
- supporting grassroots women’s digital skills initiatives, such as training on using the internet for social change; and
- using Universal Service and Access Funds (USFs) to invest in initiatives that target women’s internet access.

UN Women also note that in **educational settings**, technology, such as personalised distance learning platforms, educational games and online grading and rating, can be leveraged across high-, low- and middle-income countries to help women and girls navigate the digital economy in different ways.<sup>277</sup> However, depending on design and implementation, **education technologies can equally aggravate existing inequalities** — for example, where disadvantaged students do not have the guidance needed to use the technology provided — so interventions should be based on a robust review of the evidence (see **Box 15**).<sup>278</sup>

When it comes to the use of algorithms that influence decision-making, for example, in recruitment, facial recognition, advertising and mortgage applications, understanding the various causes of bias is the first step to addressing them. To avoid amplifying systemic discrimination and unethical applications, **women must be part of building technology to ensure that algorithms are sensitive to the inherent bias that exists** when developed by a homogenised group of people. By bringing diverse voices to the table, the development of these algorithms will be better able to ensure women and minorities are not at a computational disadvantage. A number of mitigation strategies can also be employed by governments and operators of algorithms according to the tools and models used, as highlighted by the Brookings Institution review of best practices and policies to reduce consumer harms caused by algorithmic bias.<sup>279</sup> These range from the updating of non-discrimination and civil rights laws to apply to digital practices, to the development of bias impact statements, the use of inclusive design principles, and cross-functional work teams.

<sup>267</sup> Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (2020), “[Review into bias in algorithmic decision-making](#),” p.26.

<sup>268</sup> Natural language processing (NLP), a critical ingredient of common AI systems like Amazon’s Alexa and Apple’s Siri, among others, has been found to show gender biases: Chin, C. and Robison, M. (2020) “[How AI Bots and Voice Assistants Reinforce Gender Bias](#),” AI in the Age of Cyber-Disorder: Actors, Trends, and Prospects, F. Rügge (ed.), pp.82-104.

<sup>269</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service (2020) “[The ethics of artificial intelligence: Issues and initiatives](#),” p.15.

<sup>270</sup> Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, “[Review into bias in algorithmic decision-making](#)”; UNESCO (2020) “[Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality: Key findings of UNESCO’s Global Dialogue](#)”.

<sup>271</sup> Buolamwini, J., and Gebru, T. (2018), “[Gender Shades: Intersectional Accuracy Disparities in Commercial Gender Classification](#),” Proceedings of Machine Learning Research 81:1-15, 2018.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, p.1.

<sup>273</sup> Lambrecht, A., Tucker, C. (2018), “[Algorithmic Bias? An Empirical Study into Apparent Gender-Based Discrimination in the Display of STEM Career Ads](#),” Management Science, Volume 65, Issue 7, p.32.

<sup>274</sup> Wajcman, J., Young, E., Fitzmaurice, A. (2020), “[The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women’s Rights 25 Years after Beijing](#),” UN Women, Discussion Paper, p.22.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, p.22-23.

<sup>276</sup> World Wide Web Foundation, “[Women’s Rights Online](#),” p.24-28.

<sup>277</sup> Wajcman, Young and Fitzmaurice, “[The Digital Revolution](#),” p.8.

<sup>278</sup> Escueta, M., Quan, V., Nickow, A. J., Oreopoulos P., “[Education Technology: An Evidence-Based Review](#),” National Bureau of Economic Research, p.3.

<sup>279</sup> The Brookings Institute (2019), “[Algorithmic bias detection and mitigation: Best practices and policies to reduce consumer harms](#),” accessed 1 October 2021.

## Box 15: AI4ALL's Educational Programmes

AI4ALL<sup>280</sup> is a US non-profit organisation dedicated to developing a diverse and inclusive pipeline of talent in artificial intelligence (AI) education, research, development and policy. AI4ALL offers various educational programmes in the US, including a Summer Programme, Open Learning and College Pathways. The College Pathways initiative aims to spark interest and encourage undergraduates to follow and persist in AI-related careers.

Co-hosted by top universities, AI4ALL connects participants with accessible introductions to AI, internships, career-readiness resources and a supportive peer community. The programme aims to inspire a diverse student body to become the next generation of AI leaders, offering them access to lifelong support, mentorship, grants, and other opportunities, which will help fund students to enter and persist in the AI field.

The programmes have shown success in widening participation in AI: 2019 data revealed that 64% of the people involved in their programmes are female and predominantly from minority backgrounds. 81% of alumni are interested in a career in AI, 86% of alumni have female role models in the AI field and 88% of alumni feel they are part of a community in AI and computer science. The programmes offer an avenue for a more diverse AI workforce to combat the risk of bias that AI poses.

<sup>280</sup> AI4ALL, "[AI Will Change the World. Who Will Change AI?](#)" accessed 1 October 2021.

## Recommendation 10:

# Representation in the media

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Pledge to tackle the stereotyping and unequal treatment of women in the media.
- Endorse the Charter of Commitments for Cultural and Creative Industries, which was signed by the first signatories on the occasion of the Generation Equality Forum, on 2 July 2021, to hold media companies accountable for addressing damaging stereotypes of women internally, and in the content they produce; raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence; and acting as sounding boards on issues concerning women's rights and equality between men and women.
- Encourage all G7 media outlets to challenge gender stereotypes using the UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media<sup>281</sup> as a framework for action.

<sup>281</sup> UNESCO (2012), "Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content" pp.13-53.



## The issue

Media and communications sectors provide information, education and entertainment globally, crossing borders and cultures. They therefore play a crucial role in producing and reinforcing societal norms, stereotypes and expectations,<sup>282</sup> making these sectors highly influential. **Stereotypes and the underrepresentation of women in the media** persist worldwide, and play a significant role in shaping attitudes and behaviour towards them, including harmful behaviour. In a study of advertising in 13 countries across Asia, the Americas and Europe – including the US, UK, France, Germany and Japan – **women were frequently portrayed in stereotypical gender roles**, more often appearing in adverts for body and cleaning products than men.<sup>283</sup> In a study of the top 100 fictional films per year from 2007–2017, male characters with speaking roles were found to outnumber their female counterparts by two to one, and over 70% of the characters with speaking roles were white.<sup>284</sup> Female characters were far more likely to be shown in **sexualised attire**,<sup>285</sup> and more likely to be secondary characters, parents or care-givers.<sup>286</sup> The perpetuation of harmful gender stereotypes in media and communications can restrict the choices, aspirations and opportunities of children, young people and adults.<sup>287</sup>

In **news media**, women continue to be underrepresented. A 2020 study of news media in the UK, US, Kenya, India, South Africa and Nigeria found that women made up only 15–30% of the protagonists or subjects of news reports,<sup>288</sup> while the Global Media Monitoring Project’s 2020 report found that only 24% of expert voices in the news were women.<sup>289</sup> Where women do appear in the news, they are far more likely to be providing personal experience or popular opinion than expertise (see also, **Chapter 8** on the limited media coverage of women scientists in the COVID-19 response).<sup>290</sup> In political news coverage, men’s ‘share of voice’ as experts, sources or protagonists is up to seven times higher than that of women.<sup>291</sup>

The gender inequality and stereotyping seen in the content produced by media and communications organisations is in part driven by **gender imbalances among those developing, producing and regulating it**.<sup>292</sup> Women are underrepresented in leadership positions within the sectors.<sup>293</sup> For example, recent analysis of major news outlets in 12 countries – including the UK, US, Germany, Japan, South Africa and South Korea – found that only 22% of the top editors across the 240 brands sampled are women, despite the fact that on average, 40% of journalists in the 12 countries are women.<sup>294</sup> Work

“Media can have a concrete impact on women’s rights and life conditions, particularly to fight violence against women.”



Marie-Christine Saragosse, President and CEO of France Médias Monde

<sup>282</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (2020), “[Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States](#)” p. 120.

<sup>283</sup> Matthes, J., Prieler, M., & Adam, K. (2016), “Gender-Role Portrayals in Television Advertising Across the Globe,” *Sex Roles*, Volume 75, pp.314–327.

<sup>284</sup> Smith, S. L., Choueiti, M., Pieper, K., Case, A., and Choi, A. (2017), “[Inequality in 1,100 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBT & Disability from 2007 to 2017](#)” Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, p.1.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>287</sup> Wille, E., Gaspard, H., Trautwein, U., Oschatz, K., Scheiter, K., Nagengast, B. (2018), “[Gender Stereotypes in a Children’s Television Program: Effects on Girls’ and Boys’ Stereotype Endorsement, Math Performance, Motivational Dispositions, and Attitudes](#),” *Front. Psychol*, Volume 9, Article 2435.

<sup>288</sup> Kassova, L. (2020), “[The Missing Perspectives of Women in News](#)” International Women’s Media Foundation, p.27.

<sup>289</sup> Who Makes The News? (2021), “[6th Global Media Monitoring Project](#)” p.5.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Kassova, “The Missing Perspectives of Women in News”, p.18.

<sup>292</sup> Council of the European Union (2019), “[Beijing +25: The 5th Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States](#)” Draft Report, p.10.

<sup>293</sup> Beard, L., Dunn, J., Huang, J., Krivkovich, A. (2020), “[Shattering the glass screen](#)” McKinsey & Company, accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>294</sup> Robertson, C. T., Selva, M., Nielsen, R. K. (2021), “[Women and Leadership in the News Media 2021: Evidence from 12 Markets](#),” Reuters Institute, University of Oxford, p.3.

conditions also impact on women's progression in the sectors: harassment and discrimination in the media and entertainment industries have been highlighted by the #MeToo and Time's Up movements as factors that limit women's career progression.<sup>295</sup> Around the world, women journalists face higher risks of online harassment,<sup>296</sup> and in some countries, such as Afghanistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan, women journalists are at risk of physical and sexual assault, imprisonment, harassment, rape and murder.<sup>297</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

The **creative and cultural industries have the potential to challenge gender stereotypes** and promote social inclusion with fair and accurate representation in media content, combined with inclusive workplace policies and practices.

The **Unstereotype Alliance** convened by UN Women has found that inclusion of underrepresented groups in **senior leadership** roles across the global advertising industry still needs significant improvement.<sup>298</sup> They suggest that strategies for the recruitment, retention and promotion of underrepresented individuals may be effective, alongside ambitious diversity quotas and targets, with mechanisms for monitoring and publicising the information to ensure accountability. Companies can further engage externally with students and creatives from underrepresented groups in their communities to provide internship and apprenticeship opportunities.

There has been documented evidence of the benefits of **utilising data to identify biases and take action to address them**. For example, the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC's) 50:50 Project asked editorial and production teams to monitor gender data relating to their own content and then used this information to encourage teams to take action towards the target of featuring at least 50% women as contributors of content.<sup>299</sup> This led to small changes in everyday work practices which eventually scaled into organisation- and industry-wide change.<sup>300</sup>

In order to foster gender equality within media organisations and address stereotyped media and advertising, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has developed a **global framework of Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media**, which allows organisations to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content, for instance, the proportion of time and prominence given to news stories featuring women as sources of information or opinion.<sup>301</sup> Although not all indicators may be relevant to all organisations, media companies should be encouraged to review and apply the framework based on their specific context to identify priority areas of action and establish clear targets to create progress. Furthermore, the process of goal setting can also be seen to bring about a will to change by tapping into motivational devices, such as accountability, competition and public recognition.<sup>302</sup>

Media can also be used to combat rather than reinforce gender inequality (see **Box 16**). In a study assessing the **impact of media on social norms** on a rural indigenous community in Mexico, researchers broadcast a radio programme designed to challenge gender norms and discourage violence against women. They subsequently found decreased personal and perceived social acceptance of violence against women, and an increase in willingness to report violence to community members and local authorities.<sup>303</sup> To highlight the objectification of women by the porn industry, an advertising agency bought one of Poland's best-selling adult magazines, 'Your Weekend', and published a final issue focused on gender equality, women's rights and empowerment.<sup>304</sup>

<sup>295</sup> Council of the European Union, "Beijing +25," p.11.

<sup>296</sup> International Federation of Journalists, "[IFJ global survey shows massive impact of online abuse on women journalists](#)," accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>297</sup> The Coalition for Women in Journalism (2021), "[Press Freedom Status For Women Journalists](#)," p.3.

<sup>298</sup> The Unstereotype Alliance (2021), "[State of the Industry: An assessment of progress in diversity, equity and inclusion across the global advertising industry](#)," p.3.

<sup>299</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "[How it works: A methodology that creates cultural change](#)," accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>300</sup> Chilazi, S., Rattan, A. (2020), "[What Companies Who Want More Diversity Can Learn From the BBC](#)," Behavioral Scientist, accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>301</sup> UNESCO, "Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media."

<sup>302</sup> Chilazi and Rattan, "What Companies Who Want More Diversity Can Learn From the BBC."

<sup>303</sup> Arias, E. (2019) "[How Does Media Influence Social Norms? Experimental Evidence on the Role of Common Knowledge](#)," Political Science Research and Methods, Volume 7, Issue 3, p.562.

<sup>304</sup> Cannes Lions, "[Glass: The Lion for Change Grand Prix Case Study: The Last Ever Issue](#)," accessed 4 October 2021.

## Box 16: Charter of Cultural and Creative Industries – 10 pro-equality commitments<sup>305</sup>

The Charter of Cultural and Creative Industries – which was signed by the first signatories on the occasion of the Generation Equality Forum on 2 July 2021 – seeks to foster an inclusive society that challenges sexual and gender-based stereotypes, and combats gender-based violence. The Charter raises awareness of these inequalities and fights against sexist representations within the cultural and creative industries: music, film, radio, TV, video games, books and children’s entertainment.

The Charter notes that these areas are highly influential in shaping the way people think and act, especially as digital and creative industries continue to rapidly expand in a time of unprecedented connectivity. Cultural and creative industries hold the power to raise awareness and turn ideas into actions that promote more equal and respectful societies.

Signatories must take action on 10 commitments that aim to achieve five goals:

- Collect objective information that will help identify gender imbalances and inequalities.
- Take gendered representations forward and take actions against stereotypes.
- Promote gender-balanced participation in decision-making.
- Prevent and fight gender-based violence.
- Ensure effective communication and monitoring of commitments.

<sup>305</sup> Generation Equality Forum (2021), [“10 Pro-equality commitments of cultural and creative industries,”](#) accessed 12 September 2021.

Recommendation 11:

# Ending gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity

## Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Drive global action to end VAWG, with increased investment in prevention and responses across all aspects of women's and girls' lives.
- Ratify and implement relevant international and regional conventions, including ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the workplace; the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Protect and prioritise VAWG initiatives in lower-income partner countries through responsible and sustainable aid budgets.
- Scale up implementation and financing of evidence-driven prevention strategies, domestically and globally.
- Scale up implementation and financing of coordinated, comprehensive and accessible services for survivors of gender-based violence, including in humanitarian settings.
- Enhance support for autonomous girl- and women-led organisations working to end gender-based violence against girls and women in all their diversity.
- Commit to eradicating FGM within a generation, prioritising support for the Africa-led movement to accelerate efforts towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5.3.

## The issue

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)<sup>306</sup> is a grave human rights violation, with immediate and long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls that can be devastating.<sup>307</sup> It is one of the **most profound expressions of gender inequality**, and is driven by a combination of cultural, legal, economic and political factors.<sup>308</sup> A woman's right to live free from violence is upheld by international agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Istanbul Convention and International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the workplace. Yet, according to latest estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women, **almost one in three women globally** had experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>309</sup>

VAWG takes multiple and evolving forms; online abuse and sexual violence in conflict are specific types of VAWG which are discussed in more detail in **Chapters 12 and 13**. During times of crisis and quarantine, women and girls face increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment. COVID-19 not only exposed the lack of preparedness of countries to respond to and deal with VAWG, it also led to a significant rise of this already prevalent human rights violation, with civil society organisations across the world reporting a surge in requests for support. In some cases, calls to helplines were up by 770%.<sup>310</sup> Emerging data and reports have shown that **VAWG, in particular intimate partner violence, has intensified globally since the pandemic began.**<sup>311</sup> Since the outbreak of the pandemic, well over 100 countries have implemented lockdowns,<sup>312</sup> often isolating survivors of domestic abuse with their abusers and contributing to what has become known as a 'shadow pandemic' of VAWG.<sup>313</sup>

It is estimated that COVID-19 conditions have led to between 10 and 13 million more girls globally being **at risk of child marriage** due to disruption to education, loss of livelihoods and increased economic insecurity.<sup>314</sup> Job and income loss, as well as food insecurity, has been shown to be a **primary risk factor for increased gender-based violence** within the context of the pandemic.<sup>315</sup> Other suggested causes of increased VAWG include increased stress within families from

**“Violence against women and girls is a grave human rights violation, public health concern of pandemic proportions and the most horrific manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women.”**



Dr Aldijana Šišić,  
Chief of the UN Trust  
Fund to End Violence  
against Women (UN  
Women)

<sup>306</sup> Defined by the UN as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. UN General Assembly (1979), “[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)” 18 December 1979.

<sup>307</sup> OHCHR (2020), “[Information Series: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Violence against Women](#)”; and OECD (2021), “[Truth Hurts: The unknown brain injuries of domestic violence survivors](#)”.

<sup>308</sup> International Rescue Committee (2019), “[Safety First: Time to deliver on commitments to women and girls in crisis](#)”; and Council of Europe, “[What causes gender-based violence?](#)” accessed 21 September 2021.

<sup>309</sup> World Health Organization (2021), “[Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018](#)” United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women Estimation and Data, p.33.

<sup>310</sup> UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), “[United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better](#)” p.46.

<sup>311</sup> In different countries, there are reports of 60–775% increase in calls to domestic violence helplines, including a 775% increase in calls to the national hotline in Kenya: CAFOD et al. (2020), “[Humanitarian Funding, Partnerships and Coordination in the COVID-19 crisis: Perspectives from local women-led organisations and women’s rights organisations](#)” p.3; and Nieves, C. de P., Gaddis, I., & Muller, M. (2021), “[Gender and COVID-19: What have we learnt, one year later?](#)” Policy Research Working Paper 9709, World Bank Group.

<sup>312</sup> BBC, “[Coronavirus: The world in lockdown in maps and charts](#)” accessed 1 October 2021.

<sup>313</sup> UN Women, “[The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19](#)” accessed 1 October 2021; and Bourgauff, S., Peterman, A., and O’Donnell, M. (2021), “[Violence Against Women and Children During COVID-19 – One Year On and 100 Papers In: A Fourth Research Round Up](#)” Center for Global Development.

<sup>314</sup> Nieves et al., “Gender and COVID-19,” p.28; and UNFPA (2020), “[Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage](#)” Interim Technical Note, 27 April 2020, p.5.

<sup>315</sup> Bourgauff, Peterman and O’Donnell, “Violence against women and children during COVID-19,” p.1.

quarantines and isolation, breakdown in social infrastructure, family separation in conflict areas and reduced access to services.<sup>316</sup> Even before the pandemic, the Five Foundation predicted that 70 million girls will undergo **female genital mutilation (FGM)** by 2030 in Africa alone.<sup>317</sup> The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) projects that delays and disruption to VAWG prevention programmes caused by COVID-19 will lead to an additional two million cases of FGM over the next decade,<sup>318</sup> and is likely to cause a one-third reduction in progress towards ending gender-based violence by 2030.<sup>319</sup>

Even before the pandemic, many **providers of services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) reported facing difficulty securing resources**, and in many countries “physical distancing and shelter-in-place orders, have disrupted the availability of, and accessibility to, services for survivors of violence”.<sup>320</sup> Women from marginalised groups may face more barriers to service provision: in a study in Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, there were “reported incidents of denied access to services for women migrant workers returning home from other countries”.<sup>321</sup> In **global aid and humanitarian budgets**, just 0.12% of all funding between 2016 and 2018 was allocated to gender-based violence prevention and response, which represents only one third of funding requested.<sup>322</sup> This insufficient and irregular funding means that women and girls in humanitarian and crisis settings in particular are denied access to the life-saving physical and psychological care they need.<sup>323</sup> Cuts in official development assistance (ODA) from some donors have forced many civil society organisations and women’s rights organisations to scale back their operations<sup>324</sup> (see also, **Chapter 1**). Without targeted investment in prevention and response services, countries are likely to continue to lose a huge proportion of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) — up to 3.7% in some cases — to the shadow pandemic of VAWG.<sup>325</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC’s recommendations

**VAWG is preventable.** It requires political will, alongside resources for prevention and response services, and developing survivor-centred policies and practices. We endorse the Women 7 recommendations on addressing gender-based violence (see **Box 17**).

**A robust legal framework to combat VAWG** is an important starting point, and all governments should prioritise the ratification and implementation of core international agreements, such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention and ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the workplace. This will ensure that regular, consistent and transparent monitoring of implementation can take place, so that states can understand where their interventions are succeeding, where to prioritise action and how they compare internationally.

**Investing in prevention** is likely to be the most cost-effective approach to addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) over the long term.<sup>326</sup> This includes addressing the structural causes, as well as the risk and protective factors,<sup>327</sup> associated with violence by focusing on areas such as early education, respectful relationships, and working with men and boys. UN Women’s Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence Against Women outlines roles that stakeholders working across countries, regions, communities, sectors and disciplines can play in contributing to its eradication, with the aim of building a coordinated and multi-sectoral approach at individual, community and societal levels.<sup>328</sup>

<sup>316</sup> Nieves et al., “Gender and COVID-19,” pp. 21–22.

<sup>317</sup> The Five Foundation, [“The Five Foundation, The Global Partnership To End FGM.”](#) accessed 21 September 2021.

<sup>318</sup> UNFPA, “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage,” p.2.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>320</sup> Erskine, D. (2020), [“Not just hotlines and mobile phones: GBV Service provision during COVID-19”](#) Unicef, p.1; and UN Women (2020), [“Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls and service provision: UN Women rapid assessment and findings”](#) p.3.

<sup>321</sup> UN Women, “Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls and service provision,” p.3.

<sup>322</sup> VOICE (2019), [“Where is the Money? How the Humanitarian System is Failing in its Commitments to End Violence Against Women and Girls”](#) International Rescue Committee, p.15.

<sup>323</sup> International Rescue Committee, “Safety First,” p.36.

<sup>324</sup> UN Women (2021), [“COVID-19 and women’s rights organizations: Bridging response gaps and demanding a more just future”](#); UN Women (2020), [“Impact of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women and Girls: Through the Lens of Civil Society and Women’s Rights Organizations”](#); and Oxfam et al. (2021), [“Impact of COVID-19 on Women Rights Organisations: A call for global alliance to support Women Rights Organizations”](#) accessed 24 September 2021.

<sup>325</sup> The World Bank (2019), [“Gender-Based Violence \(Violence Against Women and Girls\)”](#) 25 September 2019.

<sup>326</sup> Remme, M., Michaels-Igbokwe, C. and Watts, C. (2014), [“What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence Review of Approaches to Scale up VAWG Programming and Assess Intervention Cost-effectiveness and Value for Money”](#) Department for International Development.

<sup>327</sup> Defined by UN Women as follows: Risk factor = an attribute or exposure that increases the probability of the occurrence of a disease or other specified outcome. Protective factor = an attribute or exposure that reduces the probability of the occurrence of a disease or other specified outcome. UN Women (2015), [“A framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women”](#) pp.10–11.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

## Box 17: Recommendations of the Women 7 (W7) to address violence against women and girls/gender-based violence<sup>329</sup>

1. Prioritise and increase spending on GBV/VAWG, both nationally and as part of development and humanitarian assistance.
2. Ensure that GBV/VAWG and domestic violence programmes are informed and led by specialist women's rights organisations and girl-led groups.
3. Invest in the creation and implementation of national action plans to end GBV/VAWG, as well as ongoing research and investment into evidence-based programming.
4. Prioritise long-term, sustainable GBV/VAWG (including online violence) prevention, mitigation and response interventions and recognise that these are essential and life-saving services, especially in, but not limited to, pandemic responses.
5. Legislate nationally and implement existing laws and international agreements to address GBV/VAWG and criminalise those who perpetrate this violence.

Given the sharp rise in VAWG globally as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, responding to instances of VAWG and adopting a survivor-centred approach<sup>330</sup> is more important than ever to ensure survivors have access to the multi-sectoral services that meet their individual needs. Governments must ensure **adequate funding** is available so that access to helplines and essential services for survivors can be maintained or expanded, and should increase communications and information sharing across health, police and justice, and social services sectors.<sup>331</sup> This should, in particular, prioritise autonomous women- and girl-led groups and movements, which have been shown to be highly effective in tackling violence and advancing women's rights.<sup>332</sup>

The Generation Equality Forum's Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence, for instance, advocates for **supporting autonomous girl-led and women's rights organisations** to enable and empower them to exercise their expertise.<sup>333</sup> Similarly, by supporting grassroots initiatives, such as the Africa-led movement to end FGM, it is possible to develop locally-owned strategies to address local contexts and needs to help achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5.3 to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation". The Girl Generation disbursed US \$850,000 to over 100 local groups working with over 900 members in 10 of the countries most affected by FGM in Africa in 2016-17.<sup>334</sup> In Kenya, for instance, work with Brighter Communities Worldwide resulted in preparations for 'alternative rites of passage' for up to 2,500 young girls and women, so that they could celebrate coming of age without undergoing FGM.<sup>335</sup>

<sup>329</sup> W7 (2021), "[Making gender equality a reality: Recommendations to the G7](#)"

<sup>330</sup> Defined by UN Women as "considering their multiple needs, assessing risks and vulnerabilities, keeping them safe and secure, adhering to principles of confidentiality and privacy and doing no harm": UN Women, UNFPA, UNODC, WHO and UNDP (2020), "[COVID-19 and Essential Services Provision for Survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls](#)," p. 5.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Girard, F. (2019), "[Philanthropy for the Women's Movement, Not Just 'Empowerment'](#)," Stanford Social Innovation Review [Webpage], 4 November 2019, accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>333</sup> Generation Equality Forum (2021), "[Action Coalitions: Global Acceleration Plan](#)" p.40.

<sup>334</sup> The Girl Generation (2017), "[Impact Report: August 2016 to July 2017](#)," p.51.

<sup>335</sup> The Girl Generation, "[End FGM Grassroots Fund](#)" accessed 21 September 2021.

Recommendation 12:

## Online harassment and abuse of women and girls

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Build a commonly agreed definition of VAWG online in order to comprehensively eliminate this form of violence against girls and women.
- Introduce legislation that establishes a duty of care on companies to improve the safety of their users online, addresses the full range of harmful online activity and holds the private sector to account in remedying any adverse impacts in which they are involved.
- Introduce regulation to ensure that companies implement accurate age verification technology; and that websites containing pornography and other harmful content have proper controls in place to track and report illegal activity.



## The issue

Globally, illegal and harmful online content and activity is widespread, with online harassment and abuse a **growing and disproportionate problem for girls and women**.<sup>336</sup> A 2020 Economist study into the prevalence of online violence against women worldwide found that 38% of women in 51 countries had direct experience of online harassment, rising to 45% for women under the age of 40.<sup>337</sup> This included everything from cyber-harassment and hate speech to hacking and impersonation.<sup>338</sup>

Women in **countries with long-standing or institutionalised gender inequality were found to experience online violence at higher rates**.<sup>339</sup> Research by Amnesty International in 2018 also found that certain groups of women, including female politicians and journalists across the political spectrum, suffered abuse on a vast scale.<sup>340</sup> Black women in the study were 84% more likely than white women to be targeted by abusive tweets.<sup>341</sup>

There is also evidence in the US of a link between viewing violent pornography online and sexually aggressive behaviour,<sup>342</sup> which may skew young people's views of sex and relationships,<sup>343</sup> and have **particularly harmful effects on women**. There is evidence that young people in the UK are frequently exposed to and accessing adult content online, such as pornography or violence<sup>344</sup> (see **Box 18**). Many adult websites have no mechanisms to prevent under 18s from accessing content; while some do have age checking in place, many do not actually verify the age of the user.<sup>345</sup>

“How can we expect girls to aspire to enter the world of tech if their day-to-day experiences of being online are so poor? Platforms need to commit to greater protections now.”



Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England

<sup>336</sup> UN Women (2020), [“Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19”](#).

<sup>337</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit (2020), [“Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women”](#), accessed 21 September 2021.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* Misinformation and defamation (67%); cyber-harassment (66%); hate speech (65%); impersonation (63%); hacking and stalking (63%); astroturfing – a coordinated effort to concurrently share damaging content across platforms (58%); video- and image-based abuse (57%); doxing – posting personal real-world information, such as addresses, to perpetuate violence (55%); and violent threats (52%).

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>340</sup> Amnesty International (2018), [“Toxic Twitter – Women's experiences of violence and threats on Twitter”](#), pp. 15 – 16; and Amnesty International (2018), [“Troll Patrol Findings: Using Crowdsourcing, Data Science & Machine Learning to Measure Violence and Abuse against Women on Twitter”](#), which found that 71% of tweets sent to the 778 women in the study were “problematic” or “abusive”. This amounts to 1.1 million tweets mentioning 778 women across the year, or one every 30 seconds.

<sup>341</sup> Amnesty International, “Troll Patrol Findings.”

<sup>342</sup> Ybarra, M. L., Mitchell, K. J., Hamburger, M., Diener-West, M. and Leaf, P. J. (2011), [“X-rated material and perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior among children and adolescents: is there a link?”](#) *Aggressive Behaviour*, Volume 37, Issue 1, pp.1-18.

<sup>343</sup> Parker, I. (2014), [“Young people, sex and relationships: The new norms.”](#) Institute for Public Policy Research, p.4.

<sup>344</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2016), [“Consultation: Child Safety Online: Age Verification for Pornography”](#), p.7.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37

## Box 18: Viewpoint — Rachel de Souza

***“Online platforms can also shape the underlying beliefs and attitudes which drive abuse”.***

In the UK, half of 11–13-year-olds have seen pornography at some point, rising to two-thirds of 14–15-year-olds and four in five 16–17-year-olds.<sup>346</sup>

Porn often features violence and degradation, which raises serious concerns about the impact it has on children. A recent UK survey of over half a million children showed that children themselves worry about this:

*“I was pressured into... watching horrific pornography that affects how young boys behave towards and think they can treat women. As a boy myself, I was unable to understand the everyday struggle of the girls in my class, then one day I did. I was ostracised for not cat-calling girls in the class, watching pornography or sexually assaulting any girls.”* Boy, 16

This is a societal problem, and all of us have a role to play in tackling it. Education is one piece of the puzzle, with many parents lacking the knowledge or confidence to talk to children about their online lives and relationships, but the online platforms themselves must take action.

To address online sexual harassment and abuse, a key priority must be in reducing children’s access to pornography. As things stand, any child can access pornography, including in its most extreme and violent forms, with a simple click of a button. There is widespread consensus that effective age verification technology exists, and it must be deployed as a matter of urgency to prevent children from accessing pornography and other inappropriate content. If adult sites refuse to take these steps, then governments across the world must consider their responsibility to intervene.

Lockdown measures have contributed to a 50–70% increase in global internet use over the course of the pandemic.<sup>347</sup> Given that women and girls were already subject to disproportionate internet abuse before the pandemic, some studies suggest that **increased internet use is resulting in increased levels of online abuse** against women and girls globally.<sup>348</sup> In Australia, reports of online abuse and bullying increased by 50% over the course of a month in 2020,<sup>349</sup> and in the UK, traffic to the government helpline for adults experiencing intimate image abuse almost doubled during the lockdown in spring 2020.<sup>350</sup>

Online abuse has **very real impacts**, including mental and physical harm,<sup>351</sup> **particularly for women**. Both Amnesty and UN Women have found that women who experience abuse or harassment online often feel that their physical safety is threatened,<sup>352</sup> and reports of physical attacks of women human rights defenders following online violence are not uncommon.<sup>353</sup> One in 10 women in the Economist’s global study experienced physical harm as a result of online threats.<sup>354</sup>

There are wider societal impacts too: online harassment and abuse violates the right to free expression, non-discrimination, privacy, and to live free from violence. **Women’s voices are underrepresented in online debate**, where women often silence or censor themselves to avoid abuse.<sup>355</sup> Those who rely on tech platforms for their livelihoods may be forced to change jobs following online harassment or abuse, exacerbating the digital gender divide with damaging economic repercussions.<sup>356</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC’s recommendations

We welcome the work of **G7 Digital and Technology Ministers on joint Internet Safety Principles**<sup>357</sup> to guide G7 approaches to improving online safety and that of **Interior Ministers to develop a robust G7 agreement on sharing of information** and evidence-based practice on tackling existing and emerging online forms of VAWG. A **regulatory and policy environment** that takes into account this specific form of VAWG is critical to enabling everyone to fully participate in and benefit from digital technologies, and to the online world being a safe and welcoming place for all (see **Box 19**). Online abuse does not recognise physical

<sup>346</sup> BBFC (2020), “[Young people, Pornography & Age-verification](#),” p.15.

<sup>347</sup> UN Women, “Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19,” p. 2.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid, p.3.

<sup>350</sup> UN Women (2020), “[The shadow pandemic: Online and ICT\\*-facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19 \(Infographic\)](#),” accessed 1 October 2021.

<sup>351</sup> 7% of women surveyed lost or had to change their jobs due to online violence. 35% of women reported mental health issues. Nearly three-quarters of women surveyed expressed concern about online abuse escalating to offline threats. Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women.”

<sup>352</sup> Amnesty International, “Toxic Twitter,” ch.1.; and UN Women, “Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19”.

<sup>353</sup> See, for example: OHCHR (2018), “[The impact of online violence on women human rights defenders and women’s organisations: Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein](#),” 21 June 2018.

<sup>354</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women.”

<sup>355</sup> Amnesty International, “Toxic Twitter,” ch.1.

<sup>356</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women.”

<sup>357</sup> G7 Digital and Technology Ministers (2021), Ministerial Declaration, G7 Digital and Technology Ministers’ meeting 28 April 2021, Annex 3 — [G7 Internet Safety Principles](#).

borders and therefore requires strong cooperation at international level.

With a huge volume of online abuse taking place on **social media platforms**,<sup>358</sup> governments must **incentivise and regulate private companies** to take action to improve online safety. In the US, the SHIELD Act has been passed as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021, with the aim of providing protection against unauthorised disclosure of private, sexually explicit visual imagery. The UK's draft Online Safety Bill (2021)<sup>359</sup> aims to make companies more responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their users, especially children. However, it is four years since the legislation was first proposed, and likely another three years before the new regime will come into effect.

Government action alone cannot solve this issue. **Companies need to take their duty of care to their users more seriously**, including by adequately investigating and responding to abuse.<sup>360</sup> The Web Foundation's consultations with tech companies, civil society organisations and women in public life to examine the threats to women's rights online established two clear priorities for tech companies based on users' self-reported needs:<sup>361</sup>

- Give people greater control to manage their safety so that women can decide who can interact with them on tech platforms, and have more choice over what, when and how they see content online.
- Improve reporting systems so that women can easily report abuse and track the progress of these reports.

### Box 19: A note on terminology — the need for a commonly agreed definition of online VAWG

On 8 September 2021, GEAC member Dr Aldijana Šišić urged G7 Interior Ministers to work with information and communications technology (ICT) intermediaries and civil society to agree a robust definition of online

violence, which reflects the gravity and impact of the issue. It is essential that this recognises the serious physical, sexual, economic and psychological harms this crime can cause.

<sup>358</sup> One UK survey found that most of the online abuse experienced by women took place on mainstream social media platforms (Twitter 65%, Facebook 29%, Instagram 18%): Glitch UK and End Violence Against Women Coalition (2020), "[The Ripple Effect: COVID-19 and the Epidemic of Online Abuse](#)", p.7.

<sup>359</sup> Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (2021), "[Draft Online Safety Bill](#)" accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>360</sup> Amnesty International, "Toxic Twitter," ch.1.

<sup>361</sup> The Web Foundation (2021), "[Tech Policy Design Lab: Online Gender-Based Violence and Abuse. Outcomes & Recommendations](#)" pp.11–21.

Recommendation 13:

## Conflict-related sexual violence

Recommendations  
to G7 Leaders:

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- Integrate gender equality into their wider peace and security agendas by putting women's and girls' human rights at the centre of development and security strategies and policies, with mandatory inclusion of 50% women and girls, including those from diverse communities, at all G7-supported peace talks and security processes, including ceasefire monitoring mechanisms, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.
- Commit to a funded National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in line with the recommendations of the Women 7, with a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of violence.
- Condemn the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war as a 'red line', and lead the development of an International Convention to eliminate it, establishing clear consequences for perpetrators and governments who fail to act, to prevent and respond to the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and bring the approach into line with other prohibited weapons of war, such as chemical weapons and landmines.

## The issue

Women, men, girls and boys experience and are affected by conflict differently.<sup>362</sup> **Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) disproportionately affects women and girls.** It causes immense human suffering, not only affecting victims, their families and communities, but also causing harm over generations.<sup>363</sup> CRSV manifests itself in a range of ways, and in some cases sexual violence is used as a systematic strategy of war.<sup>364</sup> Despite the devastation it causes, sexual violence in conflict does not evoke the international outcry and action it deserves. While justice and accountability are essential in preventing the recurrence of CRSV, justice and accountability for these most grave crimes remain the exception rather than the rule.<sup>365</sup> There are likely to be continuities between the way that gender-based violence is manifested pre-conflict, and during conflict in a given context.<sup>366</sup> Development and security policies, strategies and interventions often do not adequately take account of gender inequalities and differences.<sup>367</sup>

**CRSV is a feature of many conflicts**, for example, the current conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia has been accompanied by serious allegations of sexual violence.<sup>368</sup> The 2020 report of the UN Secretary-General on CRSV noted 2,542 documented cases of CRSV in 18 conflict affected or post-conflict countries, including Afghanistan, DRC and Somalia.<sup>369</sup> **In Afghanistan, CRSV was an issue before the Taliban takeover** in August 2021, with 18 verified cases in 2020.<sup>370</sup> According to the UN, although the Taliban have provided assurances that the rights of women will be respected, women have been prohibited from appearing in public places without male chaperones, and prevented from working. Girls' access to education in some regions has been limited, Departments of Women's Affairs across Afghanistan have been dismantled, and women's rights organisations have been targeted.<sup>371</sup> See the GEAC's open letter on protecting the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan at **Annex III**.

While 88 UN member states and territories have **National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security**,<sup>372</sup> limited financing remains a challenge for their implementation. As of June 2020, only 24% of national action plans included a budget.<sup>373</sup> In a 2020 survey of countries in the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, of which the majority of G7 countries are members, 86% of participating states'

“Sexual violence will remain a method of warfare until the international community decides to say it is enough.”



Dr Denis Mukwege, gynaecologist, human rights activist and Nobel peace laureate

<sup>362</sup> See, for example: Plumper, T. and Neumayer, E. (2005), [“The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy”](#) University of Essex; and Buvinic, M., Das Gupta, M., Casabonne, U. and Verwimp, P. (2012), [“Violent Conflict and Gender Inequality: An Overview”](#) University of Sussex.

<sup>363</sup> United Nations (2020), [“Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence \(S/2020/487\)”](#) p.6.

<sup>364</sup> Leatherman, J. (2007), [“Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict: Complex Dynamics of Re-victimization”](#) International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 12, No.1, pp.53-71.

<sup>365</sup> UN, “Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2020/487),” p.6.

<sup>366</sup> Swaine, A. (2018), [“Conflict-Related Violence Against Women: Transforming Transition,”](#) Cambridge University Press.

<sup>367</sup> OECD (2008), [“OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform,”](#) ch.9.

<sup>368</sup> UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2021), [“United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, urges all parties to prohibit the use of sexual violence and cease hostilities in the Tigray region of Ethiopia,”](#) Press Statement, accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>369</sup> UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (2020), [“12th Report Of The United Nations Secretary-General On Conflict-Related Sexual Violence”](#) Factsheet, p.1.

<sup>370</sup> UN Security Council (2021), [“Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General \(S/2021/312\)”](#) p.8.

<sup>371</sup> UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (2021), [“Briefing to the United Nations Security Council by the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan,”](#) p.2.

<sup>372</sup> UN Women, “Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security,” accessed 21 September 2021.

<sup>373</sup> United Nations Security Council (2020), [“Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General \(S/2020/946\)”](#) p.3.

national action plans had “minimal or zero information” on budget or financing mechanisms.<sup>374</sup>

This **lack of funding** is also apparent in global efforts to combat CRSV. Humanitarian services and programmes that prevent and respond to CRSV are hampered by chronic funding shortfalls.<sup>375</sup> This results in gaps in services for survivors of CRSV, including sexual and reproductive healthcare.<sup>376</sup> As outlined in **Chapter 11**, the COVID-19 pandemic has further disrupted the availability of sexual and reproductive healthcare for survivors of violence.<sup>377</sup>

In some conflict settings, the COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated two key prerequisites for CRSV: existing gender inequalities, and conflict and insecurity.<sup>378</sup> A study on the impact of COVID-19 on conflict in Nigeria, Colombia and Afghanistan (published in June 2021) found that the pandemic, and government responses to it, are exacerbating the drivers of conflict by decreasing trust in government leaders and institutions, increasing economic hardship and resource scarcity, and disrupting social cohesion.<sup>379</sup> **Women and girls therefore face a double burden in conflict- and COVID-affected contexts.**

Ending CRSV must be understood as an **integral part of agendas to drive peace and security as well as gender equality**. Women around the world continue to lead action for peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. There is evidence that women’s participation in peace processes contributes to longer, more resilient peace after conflict.<sup>380</sup> But women remain largely invisible to, and excluded from, peace processes and negotiations. Between 2015 and 2019, women constituted on average only 14% of peace negotiators worldwide.<sup>381</sup>

## What works: the case for the GEAC’s recommendations

A **robust legislative framework** that tackles all forms of gender-based violence — addressing both sexual violence and the gender inequalities that contribute to its prevalence — is essential. For instance, while some tactics of war, such as pillaging and starvation, have been prohibited and the use of certain weapons, such as landmines and chemical weapons, have been banned by international conventions based on their humanitarian consequences, no such treaty exists for sexual violence used as a method of warfare. At the

Carbis Bay Summit, G7 Leaders tasked their Foreign and Development Ministers with considering options to **strengthen the international architecture** around CRSV. The G7 should use this opportunity to agree clear, measurable joint action which takes account of wider peace and security agendas and ensures the rights of women and girls are at the centre of development and security policy.

A paper from the Global Justice Center in New York argues that **treating strategic rape as an unlawful tactic under the ‘means and methods of war’** of international humanitarian law would increase its stigmatisation, a critical factor in stopping the use of abhorrent weapons or tactics in war.<sup>382</sup> This may also help to address the issues with consistent definitions and data collection — for instance, as reflected in the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s tendency to code men’s experiences of sexual torture as torture (which is generally considered to have a higher threshold of severity), but women’s as sexual violence.<sup>383</sup>

The **women, peace and security (WPS) agenda**, which calls for women and girls to have their voices heard and rights and needs addressed in situations of conflict, should be at the heart of the G7 peace and security agenda. All G7 countries have adopted National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, but these must be fully costed and include impact-oriented monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

On the ground, work on preventing, monitoring and responding to CRSV should be tailored to the local context by supporting the inclusion of **women’s rights organisations and survivor-led groups** working in their communities. The critical role of women human rights defenders, who take on a wide range of vital responsibilities, including long-term prevention work, documentation, victim and survivor support, and pursuit of justice,<sup>384</sup> should be recognised with a combination of resources, security and diplomatic interventions.

To deepen understanding of wartime sexual violence and ensure justice for survivors, **systematically sampled surveys** in conflict and post-conflict areas are essential.<sup>385</sup> A United States Institute of Peace special report suggests that monitoring and intervention efforts focused on armed groups and group dynamics may prove particularly effective.<sup>386</sup> In addition, undertaking **research with combatants**

<sup>374</sup> Myrtilinen, H., Shepherd, L. J. and Wright, H. (2020), “[Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE Region](#),” OSCE, p.4.

<sup>375</sup> UN, “Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2020/487),” p.6.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> W7 (2021), “[Making gender equality a reality: Recommendations to the G7](#)” p. 10; Riley, T., Sully, E., Ahmed, Z., and Biddlecom, A. (2020), “[Estimates of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sexual and reproductive health in low- and middle-income countries](#),” International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 46, 73–76; and UNFPA (2021), “[Impact of COVID-19 on family planning: what we know one year into the pandemic](#).”

<sup>378</sup> Research commissioned by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2021), “[Now and the Future — Pandemics and Crisis: Gender Equality, Peace and Security in a COVID-19 World and Beyond](#),” p.3.

<sup>379</sup> Mercy Corps (2021), “[A Clash of Contagions: The Impact of COVID-19 on Conflict in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Nigeria](#).”

<sup>380</sup> O’Reilly, M., Ó Súilleabháin, A. and Paffenholz, T. (2015), “[Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes](#),” International Peace Institute.

<sup>381</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, “[Women’s Participation in Peace Processes](#),” accessed 21 September 2021

<sup>382</sup> Benschopf, J. (2014), “[The Other Red Line: The Use of Rape as an Unlawful Tactic of Warfare](#),” Global Policy, Volume 5, Issue 2, pp.146–158.

<sup>383</sup> Leiby, M. (2009), “[Digging in the Archives: The Promise and Perils of Primary Documents](#),” Politics & Society, Volume 37, Issue 1, pp.75–99.

<sup>384</sup> Dwyer, A. (2020), “[Women Human Rights Defenders: Left behind in the women, peace and security agenda](#),” LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security, Policy brief 02/2020

<sup>385</sup> Cohen, K., Hoover Green, A. and Wood, E. J. (2013) “[Wartime Sexual Violence: Misconceptions, Implications, and Ways Forward](#),” United States Institute of Peace, p.11.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid, p.13.

and perpetrators in these investigations offers the possibility of understanding the causes and contexts of wartime sexual violence from the perspective of those who may have actually committed it, to inform evidence-based prevention strategies.<sup>387</sup> Linked to this, G7 governments should support use of the **Murad Code**,<sup>388</sup> a global code of conduct for those collecting information from survivors of CRSV in a safe, ethical and effective way, which upholds their human rights.

G7 countries should also adopt the **UN Secretary General's commitment to dedicate at least 15% of UN-managed funds** in support of peacebuilding to projects whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs. This will result in sustainable projects where women human rights defenders can participate in and contribute towards resolving conflicts, building sustainable peace and reducing sexual violence.

## Box 20: Viewpoint – Dr Denis Mukwege

### *The Red Line: towards an International Convention for the Elimination of the use of Sexual Violence as a Method of Warfare*

The Mukwege Foundation believes that 'clear, robust, and concise action' is needed to address CRSV through an International Convention for the Elimination of Sexual Violence used as a Method of Warfare. Currently, there is a strong legal normative framework and UN Security Council resolutions, but strong and timely responses are often absent.

The Foundation's approach seeks to evoke a moral rejection of sexual violence used as a method of war, notably by adopting the legal tools to be able to prevent and deter it, and by galvanising the political will to implement a robust and timely response.

Over the past century and a half, the world has undergone a massive moral shift that has translated into nearly universally accepted prohibitions on the tactics of pillaging and starvation, as well as the use of certain weapons, such as landmines and chemical weapons.<sup>389</sup> Yet, left behind has been the use of sexual violence as a method of warfare.

The proposed Convention would be the first of its kind and act as an instrument that draws a red line against the use of sexual violence as a method of warfare and establish a framework for action. The Foundation stresses that there should be clear legal obligations that increase the costs for individuals and governments who fail to act, united with a shared responsibility. The increased visibility this would bring to the public and the increased possibility of sanctions would double up as an even greater deterrent of CRSV.

With a wide-ranging approach, the Convention would clarify and reinforce existing international obligations, outline procedures to stop and prevent sexual violence as a weapon of warfare, and gradually build an international norm against the use of sexual violence in war. Implementation could include training armed actors on the Convention, improving the protection of civilians, speeding up the delivery of emergency aid to survivors, and enhancing the possibilities for reparations and restitution to the survivors to ease the consequences of CRSV.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid, p.11.

<sup>388</sup> Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI) and the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative of the UK government (PSVI), in consultation with Nadia's Initiative, ["The Murad Code: Global Code of Conduct for Documenting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence,"](#) accessed 22 September 2021.

<sup>389</sup> Bryden, A. (2012), "International Law, Politics, and Inhumane Weapons: the Effectiveness of Global Landmine Regimes"; Finnemore, M. and Sikkink, K. (1998), ["International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,"](#) International Organization, Volume 52, Issue 4, pp.887–917.

## Recommendation 14:

# Accountability and monitoring progress

### Recommendations to G7 Leaders:

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- Increase their efforts to close the gender data gap, to ensure the data that underpins the design of policies and interventions takes gender differences into consideration, and encourage the private sector to do so as well.
- Implement the GEAC's monitoring proposal, which will include, but not be limited to, reporting on their country's progress towards gender equality on an annual basis at the G7 Leaders' Summit and tracking the implementation of all GEAC recommendations since 2018; and should complement the work of the G7 Accountability Working Group on gender-related development commitments.
- Use evidence and data from these annual reports to inform policy discussions on gender equality, and ensure progress year-on-year.
- Convene the GEAC as a standing feature of all G7 Presidencies to ensure a consistent and coherent approach and project the G7's global leadership on gender equality.

This chapter will also address the following recommendations, which were originally covered in the recommendation on digital inclusion (Chapter 9).

- Pursue harmonised principles of data collection for use in the private sector.
- Provide clear guidance, working with regulators, on the collection and use of sex- and/or gender-disaggregated data in outcome monitoring and decision-making processes.



## The issue

Gender is a key organising principle in our societies, and a key determinant of opportunity and life choices. Too often, however, data does not differentiate between men and women, or, even more problematic, is gathered from a default male population and then used to inform decisions that affect women's lives. Robust and detailed data on men and women must be collected and tabulated separately in order to measure the differences between them on key social and economic dimensions.<sup>390</sup> Without gender-disaggregated data, there is an incomplete picture of the size and nature of gender gaps, and their causes and consequences. This data is **crucial for designing targeted policies** and interventions to improve the lives of women and girls, understand whether they are working, and hold governments and organisations to account.<sup>391</sup>

In some policy areas, there is data that demonstrates the differences between men and women's experiences: for example, almost 80% of countries regularly produce sex- and gender-disaggregated data on mortality, labour force participation, education and training.<sup>392</sup> However, other **areas of women's lives are missed by statistics**: these are gender data gaps. Less than one third of countries disaggregate statistics by gender on informal employment, entrepreneurship and unpaid work, or collect data about violence against women.<sup>393</sup> Most countries are also not collecting or disaggregating data by other intersecting characteristics, including age, class, race, location, disability and migration status,<sup>394</sup> making it even more difficult to craft and monitor policies that address the experiences of all women and girls. This is exacerbated in many cases at the regional level (see **Annex II: How are GEAC recommendations relevant in Cornwall?**).

At the global level, only **39% of the gender data needed to robustly measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is available**.<sup>395</sup> In many areas, official country-level statistics on issues related to gender equality in the SDGs are missing: only 22% of the 54 gender-specific indicators have data that is adequate for monitoring progress.<sup>396</sup> In 2020, no region had data available for even half of the SDG gender indicators: the leading regions — Europe and North America — had just 44% of gender data available.<sup>397</sup>

High quality, **gender-disaggregated data is not just important for governments, but for the private sector too**. If products and services are not taking into account women's bodies and lifestyles, as well as those of men, there is a risk that products and services will be poorly designed or even dangerous for women. For example, it took until 2011 for carmakers in the US to start using crash test dummies based on the female body, while in many instances drugs are not routinely tested on women, and may entail unanticipated risks

<sup>390</sup> The World Bank (2016), "[More and Better Gender Data: A Powerful Tool for Improving Lives](#)."

<sup>391</sup> See Buvinic, M. and Levine, R. (2016), "[Closing the gender data gap](#)," The Royal Statistical Society; UN Women (2018), "[Making women and girls visible: Gender data gaps and why they matter](#)"; UN Women (2021), "[Action Coalitions: Global Acceleration Plan](#)," p.148; and Data2X (2021), "[It's Time to Make Bold Commitments to Gender Data](#)."

<sup>392</sup> The World Bank, "More and Better Gender Data."

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> UN Women (2020), "[From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19](#)" p.3.

<sup>395</sup> Encarnacion, J. and Maskey, S. (2021), "[We now have more gender-related SDG data than ever, but is it enough?](#)" UN Women — Women Count Data Hub.

<sup>396</sup> UN Women, "Making women and girls visible," p.2.

<sup>397</sup> UN Women, "We now have more gender-related SDG data than ever, but is it enough?"

and side-effects.<sup>398</sup> Better measurement of gender and diversity data also supports better management decisions, according to the Gender & Diversity KPI Alliance (GDKA), an alliance of more than 50 businesses with advocates and academics.<sup>399</sup>

There is also a **funding gap** for gender data systems: a 2021 report by Data2x found that gender data systems globally were underfunded by almost US \$450 million every year since 2015.<sup>400</sup> The report suggests that to build and sustain core gender data systems, an additional US \$500 million from donors is needed every year from now until 2030.<sup>401</sup>

The G7 currently lacks a mechanism by which their **fulfilment of gender equality commitments** can be measured. Launched in 2009, the **G7 Accountability Working Group (AWG)** reviews progress on development and development-related commitments made at G7 Leaders' summits.<sup>402</sup> While the AWG does include some indicators relating to gender equality, it focuses only on development-related commitments, meaning that commitments relating to domestic or wider foreign policy areas are currently not covered by an accountability mechanism. In 2017, the **G7 Taormina Roadmap** for a Gender-Responsive

Economic Environment tasked the G7 Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment with monitoring countries' progress towards implementing the commitments set out in the Roadmap.<sup>403</sup> While some of the Roadmap's commitments relating to development were assessed in a review by the G7 Accountability Working Group in 2019,<sup>404</sup> no mechanism was established to track domestic commitments.

There is therefore a gap in the G7 monitoring and accountability infrastructure both for **monitoring key gender equality indicators within G7 countries, and for tracking the implementation of commitments relating to gender equality** beyond the international development policy area. This gap — coupled with the fact that the GEAC, which has an important role in holding G7 governments to account, is not a standing feature of the G7 — threatens to undermine the G7's delivery of gender equality commitments (see **Box 21**). Without a transparent mechanism to assess the extent to which G7 countries are delivering on their commitments, it is difficult for governments themselves — and the GEAC, as independent advisers to the G7 — to make robust assessments, year-on-year, of policy areas that require new or amended commitments.

## Box 21: Viewpoint — Isabelle Hudon

### *“What gets measured gets done”.*

As the only member of all three G7 GEACs, Isabelle Hudon knows that measuring progress is key. Following three years of GEAC reports setting out relevant and ambitious recommendations, it is now time to track the action taken and its impact.

*“There is great value in continuity: if progress is measured from one G7 Presidency to the next, our recommendations will achieve real results. In so doing, we will not only gain back the 35 years of equality we have lost over the course of the pandemic, but will make great strides during the 2022 German Presidency.”*

## What works: the case for the GEAC's recommendations

The GEAC welcomes G7 Leaders' recognition that “[we] know that we cannot make true progress towards gender equality without robust data and a way to track it over time. We invite the GEAC to work with existing accountability mechanisms, such as the Accountability Working Group and the Taormina Roadmap to monitor G7 commitments to achieve gender equality on an annual basis”.<sup>405</sup>

Following wide consultation, **proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for a monitoring and accountability**

**mechanism are available at Annex I.** The aim of the new mechanism is to use existing internationally comparable data on gender equality to inform and support G7 decision-making and action in the field of gender equality, including by Leaders, Sherpas and future GEACs. The proposed mechanism includes a scorecard of gender equality indicators drawn from existing data sources,<sup>406</sup> as well as a report documenting progress on the implementation of Leaders' gender equality commitments. The ToR constitute the GEAC's formal proposal to the G7. G7 partners should agree the ToR and take forward implementation of the mechanism as quickly as possible.

<sup>398</sup> Criado-Perez, C. (2019), “Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men.”

<sup>399</sup> Gender and Diversity KPI Alliance, “[The GDKA Vision](#),” accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>400</sup> Data2x and Open Data Watch (2021), “[State of Gender Data Financing 2021](#).”

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> G7 Presidency (UK) and G7 Accountability Working Group (2021), “[G7 Carbis Bay Progress Report](#).”

<sup>403</sup> G7 Leaders (2017), “[Taormina Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment](#).”

<sup>404</sup> G7 Presidency (France) and G7 Accountability Working Group (2019), “[Biarritz Progress Report: G7 Development and Development-Related Commitments](#),” p.83.

<sup>405</sup> G7 (2021), “[Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué: Our Shared Agenda for Global Action to Build Back Better](#),” accessed 30 September 2021.

<sup>406</sup> For example, including, but not limited to, the UN Sustainable Development Goal indicators, UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) country reports, UN Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index, OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index and World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Reports.

The GEAC itself plays a key role in galvanising progress on gender equality and holding G7 Leaders to account on their commitments. Since the GEAC was first convened in 2018, it has helped G7 governments to put gender equality at the heart of their presidencies, including through reviewing texts, advising ministers on proposals for action and securing stronger commitments in Leaders' statements. We are pleased that the G7 has now publicly stated its **intention to convene the GEAC as a standing feature of all G7 presidencies** to ensure a consistent and sustained focus on gender equality, and call on them to project global leadership on this issue.

The proposed GEAC mechanism is in line with the GEAC's broader call for **better monitoring of progress against gender equality indicators**, to help governments design evidence-based policies. It is crucial that governments' commitments to gender equality are implemented, and that this implementation is tracked and assessed. The World Bank Group highlights how better data can contribute to a meaningful policy dialogue on gender equality and **provide a solid evidence base for policy development**.<sup>407</sup> Existing country data should also be made more accessible to policymakers and development practitioners. Investment in initiatives, such as the Gender Action Lab, should prioritise emerging statistical areas and where country-level data gaps impede national monitoring of progress towards the SDGs.<sup>408</sup>

The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation suggests that governments should support the creation and development of data-focused **public-private partnerships**, and use these partnerships to agree principles and shared standards to address bias in data collection.<sup>409</sup> Promising examples include a World Economic Forum International Business Council initiative on shared environmental, social and governance reporting standards<sup>410</sup> which has been adopted by 50 companies, and the Internet Association's Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark Report, which uses evidence-based standards to improve diversity in the internet industry.<sup>411</sup>

<sup>407</sup> The World Bank, "More and Better Gender Data."

<sup>408</sup> UN Women, "Making women and girls visible," p.2.

<sup>409</sup> Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, "Review into bias in algorithmic decision-making," p.10 (Recommendation 8).

<sup>410</sup> World Economic Forum, "[Measuring Stakeholder Capitalism: Towards Common Metrics and Consistent Reporting of Sustainable Value Creation](#)," accessed 4 October 2021.

<sup>411</sup> Internet Association (2021), "[Internet Association 2020 Diversity & Inclusion Benchmark Report](#)," accessed 4 October 2021.

# Methodology

This report was developed between June and October 2021 following the presentation of GEAC recommendations to G7 Leaders. GEAC members agreed that the objectives of the report should be to:

- Provide further evidence and data around the scale of the issues, and the rationale for the specific proposals, as presented in the recommendations to G7 Leaders.
- Showcase examples of case studies and views from members and their networks that illustrate the issues underlying the recommendations, as well as how to address the issue, including what works, or could be considered 'best practice' or lessons learned.
- Provide an opportunity to hear a range of viewpoints, including from GEAC members.

To fulfil these objectives, the report seeks to answer three key questions:

1. How are women and girls in the G7 and globally affected by the issues that the 2021 GEAC raised as areas for particular attention by G7 Leaders?
2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way women and girls, and gender equality, are impacted by these issues?
3. How can G7 countries build back better to advance gender equality, based on evidence of what works, and the knowledge and experience of GEAC members?

## Approach

The methodology was designed to ensure the report benefited from the wide-ranging, unique expertise and insights of the 2021 GEAC members.

### Data collection

The report draws from three sources:

1. [Recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council 2021 to the Leaders of the G7 \(published in June 2021\)](#): The recommendations document included high-level data and evidence to explain the issue in each section and to support the GEAC's suggested solutions.
2. **Member contributions**: Throughout July 2021, GEAC members were invited to contribute a 500-word submission in support of the recommendation which most reflects their interests and expertise, focusing on an example of a project, programme, initiative, policy or 'viewpoint' that either illustrated the issues underlying the recommendation or demonstrated an approach to addressing the issue, including what works, 'best practice' or lessons learned.

Some members also submitted additional contributions and material in support of specific recommendations, to expand the evidence base and strengthen the rationale. Materials such as data, reports, evaluations, reviews and impact assessments were provided, including via members' organisations and networks.

3. **Desk research:** The GEAC Secretariat conducted desk research for key additional sources of data and evidence. The Secretariat focused its efforts on the subject areas in which there was less evidence provided by member contributions or in the initial recommendations document. The Secretariat conducted online searches, using the Google search engine, for relevant open sources to help answer the report's research questions and supplement the evidence provided by members and already presented in the recommendations document. This was not an exhaustive review of all relevant literature and evidence, but an exercise to identify selected robust, credible, relevant and clear data sources for each issue.

For each recommendation, the Secretariat reviewed a number of sources within the search results, identifying and drawing on at least five to 10 sources based on a light-touch review of relevance, authority, accuracy, likelihood of bias and currency of the information. The following types of sources were prioritised:

- databases from international organisations and national government databases;
- systematic reviews and literature reviews (of pre-existing research on topics relevant to GEAC recommendations);
- peer-reviewed journal articles;
- qualitative reports, research papers and briefings from international organisations, non-governmental organisations (including think tanks), and national governments;
- case studies and impact reports from international organisations, non-governmental organisations (including think tanks), and national governments; and
- information on official websites of international organisations, non-governmental organisations (including think tanks), and national governments.

## Data analysis

For each recommendation, the Secretariat collected information from the relevant sources that best contributed to answering the report's three questions. In each chapter, the Secretariat presented evidence and analysis on:

### The issue

1. The scale and importance of the issue the recommendation seeks to address.
2. How the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way women and girls, and gender equality, are impacted by this issue.

### The case for the GEAC's recommendations:

3. What pre-existing evidence, combined with the unique knowledge and expertise of our members, can tell us about the potential solutions to this challenge.

## Scope and limitations

This report has been researched, compiled and drafted by GEAC Secretariat officials, under the direction of the GEAC Chair and members, over the course of three months, with input from analysts in other UK government departments.<sup>412</sup> The report is primarily a policy paper – it sets out the GEAC's policy recommendations and makes the case for them, coupling member insights with a light touch review of key evidence sources. The methodology applied is designed to fulfil the report's objectives with the most rigorous approach possible within the time and resources available. It is not intended to be an original research paper.

The report relies almost exclusively on secondary sources and pre-existing databases: it does not present the results of new primary research. In some chapters, the report presents previously unpublished case studies and testimonials from GEAC members. To supplement this, a rapid evidence review was also commissioned on the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality, conducted by The Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development Programme at the Institute of Development Studies.

<sup>412</sup> GEAC members have agreed to the scope of the report, contributed case studies, evidence from their own work, copies of relevant reports, suggestions of databases to consult, personal testimonials and opinion pieces, and have provided challenge and review during the drafting process.

# Glossary

AI	Artificial intelligence
AWG	Accountability Working Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COP 26	Conference of the Parties 26 (26th United Nations Climate Change Conference)
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEAC	Gender Equality Advisory Council
GEOAT	Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GGLI	Gender gap in labour income
GNI	Gross national income
ILO	International Labour Organization
MSMEs	Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STEMM	Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine
TEC	Technology, engineering and creative design
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WPS	Women, peace and security
WROs	Women's rights organisations
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Annex I: Draft Terms of Reference for a G7 Gender Equality Monitoring and Accountability Mechanism (GEAC proposal)

## Background

At the Carbis Bay Summit in 2021 G7 Leaders agreed to:<sup>413</sup>

*“A consistent and sustained focus on gender equality to project our global leadership on this issue, and intend to convene the GEAC as a standing feature of all G7 Presidencies. We know that we cannot make true progress towards gender equality without robust data and a way to track it over time. **We invite the GEAC to work with existing accountability mechanisms such as the Accountability Working Group and the Taormina Roadmap to monitor G7 commitments to achieve gender equality on an annual basis.**”*

The Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC), with support from the GEAC Secretariat in the UK Cabinet Office, has therefore prepared this draft ToR for a monitoring and accountability mechanism, for consultation with G7 partners. An implementing partner is now sought who will undertake the work set out below. The responsibility for agreeing and taking forward the monitoring mechanism will lie with G7 partners.

## Rationale

Gender equality is fundamental for the fulfilment of human rights and a top priority for the G7.<sup>414</sup> The Accountability Working Group focuses exclusively on monitoring implementation of G7 development and development-related commitments. There is however currently a gap in the monitoring and accountability framework of the G7 with regard to domestic gender equality policy. Accountability and transparency are core principles of the G7 and essential in order to maintain the credibility of the decisions of G7 Leaders.<sup>415</sup> A mechanism is needed to observe the current status of gender equality within the G7 and the actions taken by G7 partners to advance it; to assess the impact of those actions; and to determine a way forward.

## Objectives

1. Collate, analyse and provide existing robust, internationally comparable and transparent data on gender equality within the G7 and on the implementation of G7 Leaders' commitments in the field of gender equality.
2. Inform and support G7 decision-making and action in the field of gender equality, including by Leaders, Sherpas and the GEAC, and promote mutual accountability across the G7 by clearly and publicly communicating progress of the G7 and its partners in promoting gender equality across the G7.

## Scope of the mechanism

3. The monitoring and accountability mechanism will be made up of two products, which will be produced by an external implementing partner with support from the G7 Presidency:
  - a) a scorecard produced on an annual basis to monitor gender equality in G7 countries, and progress made, using a framework based on existing key gender equality indicators, agreed by the G7 as set out under Paragraphs 5a and 7 of these ToR; and
  - b) a report (“implementation report”) to be published every 3 years on the implementation of gender equality commitments endorsed by G7 Leaders.

<sup>413</sup> G7 (2021), “[Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué: Our Shared Agenda for Global Action to Build Back Better](#),” accessed 30 September 2021, para. 45.

<sup>414</sup> G7 (2017), “[G7 Taormina Leaders' Communiqué](#),” para. 18.

<sup>415</sup> Preamble, Terms of Reference for the G7 Accountability Senior Level Working Group; also in G7 Presidency (UK) and G7 Accountability Working Group (2021), “[G7 Carbis Bay Progress Report](#),” p.4.



4. The mechanism will cover commitments (actions and measures) agreed by G7 Leaders which:
  - a) Explicitly reference “gender” and/or “female”, “male”, “diverse”.
  - b) Explicitly reference “women” and/or “girls”, “men” and/or “boys” or “diverse gender identities”
  - c) Address issues that are of particular relevance to the advancement of gender equality and particularly relevant to women and girls, the realisation of equal opportunities and their well-being. Issues may be added on a case-by-case basis on agreement by Sherpas.
  - d) and are not already covered by the mandate of the Accountability Working Group. Any reference to development or development-related commitments will be agreed with the AWG and will require no duplication of efforts regarding data or policy reporting.

## Scorecard and implementation report

5. The scorecard and implementation report will be produced by the agreed implementing partner, *[organisation subject to agreement]*, for use by the G7 Leaders, Sherpas and the GEAC in their decision-making processes. As such:
  - a) The scorecard will set out an overview of the current status of and progress made to gender equality within each of the G7 countries, applying an agreed set of key indicators across a range of policy areas that are of importance to progressing gender equality (see for example [Gender Equality Index | European Institute for Gender Equality](#); OECD Gender Data Portal; UNDP COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker. It will be finalised early in the process in order to be available for G7 Leaders and other stakeholders to review when preparing their commitments.
  - b) The implementation report will detail the progress made by G7 members in implementing the gender equality commitments made by Leaders at previous Summits. It will be produced by the implementing partner in conjunction with the incumbent Presidency every 3 years [from 202x]. The report will analyse the implementation of (i) commitments from the previous 6 years, (ii) earlier commitments with deadlines that either post-dated the most recent implementation report or have not yet been reached, and (iii) commitments that Leaders request should continue to be monitored.

## Agreement on commitments, indicators and methodology

6. The implementing organisation will propose the format, indicators, and methodologies for both the **scorecard** and **implementation report**, subject to agreement by G7 Sherpas, in adherence to open data principles and drawing on G7 sectoral experts as available.
7. In doing so, the implementing partner will seek and act in accordance with guidance from Sherpas and advice from the GEAC, the Accountability Working Group (AWG) in accordance with its mandate and the Working Group on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE WG) as well as sectoral expert groups on:
  - a) which indicators should be included in the Scorecard produced on an annual basis; and
  - b) which new commitments should be included in the implementation report, and which existing commitments should lapse.
8. The incumbent Presidency shall have the flexibility to decide, in agreement with the implementing partner regarding delivery, and subject to Sherpa agreement, whether an additional 2-3 indicators are included in the Scorecard to reflect their policy priorities relating to gender equality in that year.
9. The implementation report should clearly identify the baseline, indicators and data sources for each commitment and assess progress using an easily understood methodology, when appropriate. The implementing partner should draw on the knowledge of relevant sectoral experts within the G7, in particular the national statistics offices and also the AWG and GEWE WG in accordance with their mandates, and should provide both qualitative and quantitative information.
10. The implementation report shall be prepared and delivered early enough in each Presidency to allow effective discussion with Sherpas in advance of the Summit, either through the GEAC and/or as part of discussions on gender equality.
11. In the intervening years, the Presidency shall have the flexibility to decide, in agreement with the implementing partner regarding delivery, whether an implementation report be prepared on one or more specific sectors or themes. The selection of the sector or theme will be at the discretion of the Presidency.

12. The Presidency shall circulate the draft products via the Sherpa network, and formally request the inclusion of the AWG and GEWE WG in the review process. Sherpas shall review and agree the products before their submission to G7 Leaders.
13. The maintenance and delivery of the mechanism (scorecard and implementation report) will be independent from the decision by the incumbent Presidency whether or not to convene the GEAC that year.

## Review

14. Opportunity for review and modification of the mechanism should be allowed following the publication of the first implementation report. The monitoring and accountability mechanism will then be subject to review every 5 years. Modifications and amendments will be agreed on by Sherpas to ensure the mechanism remains effective and relevant in tracking G7 progress on gender equality.

# Annex II: How are GEAC recommendations relevant in Cornwall?

The [GEAC recommendations](#) presented to G7 Leaders in June highlighted the challenges faced by women and girls in G7 countries and beyond, how these challenges have been exacerbated by COVID-19, and how they could be addressed. This annex looks at Cornwall, where the G7 Leaders' Summit was held, as an example of the impact these issues have at local and regional levels, and how they are being addressed.

The approach consisted of gathering quantitative, qualitative and interview data through open-source desk research and interviews with Cornish organisations and residents. Key organisations consulted included The Women's Centre Cornwall,<sup>416</sup> Cornwall Council (Local Enterprise Partnership),<sup>417</sup> TECgirls,<sup>418</sup> Transformation Cornwall,<sup>419</sup> The School for Social Entrepreneurs,<sup>420</sup> University of Oxford Research Strategy Consultancy Team, Cornwall Women's Fund,<sup>421</sup> as well as representatives from the UK Government.

Cornwall is situated on a peninsula in the far southwest of England. While it attracts on average 24.8 million tourists per year, it has high rates of unemployment, gender inequality and high rates of poverty relative to the rest of the UK<sup>422</sup>; over three-quarters of neighbourhoods in Cornwall are more deprived than the UK national average.<sup>423</sup> Interviews suggest that the rural and sparsely populated nature of the region and socioeconomic deprivation can lead to particular challenges for women and girls.<sup>424</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have exacerbated inequalities for women and girls in Cornwall, especially those from lower socioeconomic groups, minority ethnic groups, and those with disabilities.

GEAC recommendations that are particularly relevant therefore are those that focus on:

- the fundamental requirement for improved and better resourced social infrastructure (childcare, health care, social care and education) that would support women as workers and carers (see **recommendation 4**);
- barriers to accessing labour markets and capital that would support women's economic empowerment and stability (see **recommendation 5**);
- limited participation from women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and careers (see **recommendation 8**);
- high rates of violence against women and girls (see **recommendation 11**); and
- addressing the gender data gap, where there are limitations on the availability of regional and gender-disaggregated data that could provide a detailed picture of the socioeconomic issues affecting women and girls in Cornwall and how they are comparable to the rest of the UK (see **recommendation 14**).

This annex looks at some of these issues in more depth.

## Organisations in Cornwall

The Women's Centre Cornwall (TWCC) supports Cornish women who are or have been victims of abuse. Through their Open Service project, they work with women in the criminal justice system or who are at risk of offending and those experiencing homelessness. They work with individual women to develop an action plan of goals and objectives and support them with access to external services, such as education, health and accommodation. Cornwall Women's Fund supports community projects in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, where women and girls will be the main beneficiaries.

<sup>416</sup> Webpage: [Women's Centre Cornwall](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>417</sup> Webpage: [The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>418</sup> Webpage: [TECgirls](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>419</sup> Webpage: [Transformation Cornwall](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>420</sup> Webpage: [School for Social Entrepreneurs – Cornwall](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>421</sup> Webpage: [Cornwall Women's Fund](#), accessed 12 September 2021.

<sup>422</sup> Tourism Boards of England and Scotland and Visit Wales (2021), ["The Great Britain Day Visitor: 2019 Annual Report"](#).

<sup>423</sup> Cornwall Live (2020), ["Unseen Cornwall: Our new campaign to tackle poverty and deprivation"](#), accessed 17 August 2021.

<sup>424</sup> Researcher Strategy Consultancy, University of Oxford (2021), "Understanding the areas of greatest need for women and girls in Cornwall and impactful giving strategies: Final report for the Cornwall Women's Fund."

## Access to capital and labour markets

As set out in **Chapter 5** of the main report, **women globally face barriers to fully accessing capital and labour markets that would aid their economic empowerment and financial independence.** In Cornwall, the economy is focused primarily on tourism, as well as agriculture and fishing; a greater proportion of jobs than elsewhere in the UK are seasonal and low-paid; and women in Cornwall are overrepresented in lower paying or insecure jobs.

Cornwall has high rates of poverty relative to the rest of England. Nearly 20 neighbourhoods in Cornwall were amongst the 10% most deprived in England.<sup>425</sup> Interviewees noted that this stems from the very high costs of living and low wages. The gross median wage in Cornwall is 80% of that of the rest of the UK, whilst house prices are nine times the average gross annual wage, compared to seven times for the rest of England.<sup>426</sup> Poverty and financial instability can increase women's financial reliance on men and their vulnerability to gender-based and domestic violence.

Cornwall's relatively high rates of poverty are underpinned by structural issues that create barriers to employment and financial independence.<sup>427</sup> Cornwall, similar to other non-metropolitan areas, has a relatively low number of high-paid, professional jobs. Around 40% of employees who reside in Cornwall fall below the 'low pay threshold', which is typically 60% of full-time median adult earnings (gross).<sup>428</sup> The tourism industry in Cornwall injects £1.5 million per year into the local economy.<sup>429</sup> However, this offers mainly seasonal employment and contributes to low productivity, especially during the winter months. Self-employment is not always a viable alternative to paid work for women, because of inherent insecurity. Access to higher paying employment locally is limited due to Cornwall's rurality and the fact that public transport was developed more around the tourism industry than the labour market.<sup>430</sup> Interviewees indicated that these factors particularly impact women, who are overrepresented in low-paying sectors, such as retail, hospitality and tourism.

As is the case elsewhere in the UK, women are more likely to be in low-paying jobs and non-professional sectors, as they require flexible work conditions or part-time work to balance paid and unpaid care work.<sup>431</sup> Women in the southwest carry out the fourth-highest amount of unpaid work in the UK, at an average of 3.25 hours per day.<sup>432</sup> 45.9% of women in Cornwall work in part-time employment compared to 15.3% of men, higher than the rest of the UK where 41.4% of women work part-time.<sup>433</sup> As a result, women are more likely to have low gross monthly income, which puts them at greater risk of poverty and financial instability.<sup>434</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these risk factors for women across the UK. The pandemic has strained the labour market and led to a significant number of employees being furloughed or made redundant, especially in jobs reliant on tourism as travel restrictions have dented its profitability.<sup>435</sup> With increased unemployment, more families already living in poverty have become worse off during the pandemic. Women are at greater risk of this as they are more likely to be in jobs worst-hit by the pandemic.

There are local initiatives and organisations in Cornwall that support women's economic empowerment, for example, the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE), which offers an Accelerating Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) programme that helps women increase their personal skills and develop their business ideas and knowledge (see box).<sup>436</sup>

<sup>425</sup> Cornwall Live (2021), "[Poorest neighbourhoods in Cornwall revealed and they're among some of the most deprived in England](#)" accessed 17 August 2021.

<sup>426</sup> Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics, "[Labour Market Profile – Cornwall And Isles Of Scilly](#)," accessed 27 July 2021.

<sup>427</sup> Researcher Strategy Consultancy, University of Oxford, "Understanding the areas of greatest need for women and girls in Cornwall and impactful giving strategies."

<sup>428</sup> Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (2019), "[Employment and Skills Strategy Evidence Base](#)".

<sup>429</sup> Tourism Boards of England and Scotland and Visit Wales (2019), "[The Great Britain Day Visitor 2019 Annual Report](#)".

<sup>430</sup> Researcher Strategy Consultancy, University of Oxford, "Understanding the areas of greatest need for women and girls in Cornwall and impactful giving strategies."

<sup>431</sup> Cornwall Live (2017), "[Gender Divide](#)," accessed 4 August 2021.

<sup>432</sup> Office for National Statistics (2015), "[Regional differences in unpaid household service work, leisure and unpaid childcare: 2015](#)" accessed 23 August 2021.

<sup>433</sup> Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (2019).

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Researcher Strategy Consultancy, University of Oxford, "Understanding the areas of greatest need for women and girls in Cornwall and impactful giving strategies".

<sup>436</sup> [Accelerating Women's Enterprise](#) is supported by the [Interreg](#) France (Channel) England Programme, which is contributing €2,641,184.73 of European Regional Development Funds and aims to address economic and social issues in regions on either side of the Channel.

### School for Social Entrepreneurs – BetterThanThis

SSE supports women in Cornwall who are looking to change careers or embark on a second career in social entrepreneurship. They note that women are more likely to join ‘start-up’ programmes as opposed to ‘trade-ups’ as a result of low confidence, limiting the potential for women-led businesses to grow. SSE’s Accelerating Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), an SSE programme that aims to develop women’s business skills and knowledge to address the gender imbalance in entrepreneurship, supported BetterThanThis, a Newquay-based, women-led business.

BetterThanThis is an app designed to assist vulnerable young people who may be experiencing mistreatment at home, by helping them access emergency shelter and child-friendly advice. It seeks to save the NHS over £241,000 per year by providing safe shelter at a significantly reduced cost per night. BetterThanThis makes money through subscription-based donations from the public and funding from Local Authorities, the NHS and the Police Force.

The AWE programme was significant in the development of the business by offering business development modules specifically designed for women entrepreneurs and an action-orientated learning approach, methods that supported the understanding of business challenges and sparked new ideas. The programme offered a step-by-step process to develop a business plan that strengthened the visualisation of the business’ overall goal. As a result, the enterprise is on track to be launched autumn 2021.<sup>437</sup>

## The pipeline into STEM

As set out in **Chapter 8** of the main report, **girls worldwide are faced with barriers that limit their access to male-dominated jobs in STEM**. In the UK, STEM sectors are rapidly growing, but women and girls are underrepresented in these industries – women make up only 24% of STEM professionals.<sup>438</sup> This pattern is evident in Cornwall, where women are under-represented in STEM and in particular technology, engineering and creative design (TEC) subjects and careers, and girls’ participation in TEC subjects is lower than the UK average.<sup>439</sup> This exacerbates labour market issues mentioned above, preventing women from benefiting from jobs resulting from investment in STEM sectors in Cornwall, including £2.246 million in a Creative Tech Hub and £8.4 million in Deep Space Communication.

Research undertaken by the TECgirls organisation in Cornwall suggests that, as is the case in other contexts, girls’ participation in STEM subjects is inhibited by social norms that view boys and men as better suited to STEM subjects and careers, which can lead to a lack of encouragement from parents, teachers and peers. This is despite the fact that parents in Cornwall value science and maths more than other subjects, with traditional subjects, such as History and Art, coming in second, which has supported higher educational attainment of girls in these subjects.<sup>440</sup> However, this same enthusiasm from parents is not evident for TEC subjects. As a result, girls’ exposure to these subjects becomes limited, leading to significantly less participation from girls in these subjects, reducing their participation and entry into these industries.

Another factor identified by TECgirls is low parental knowledge of the benefits of STEM education, and their suitability and importance for girls.<sup>441</sup> Parents were unaware of fast-growing employment opportunities in STEM and TEC in Cornwall. Only 47% knew of the available opportunities in Aerospace Engineering locally, yet in contrast, 87% knew of tourism, 84% hospitality, and 89% were aware of healthcare opportunities.<sup>442</sup> The lack of awareness and emphasis placed on careers in the TEC sector implies that they are less likely to encourage their daughters to pursue it, which is reflected in secondary and further education decisions.

Girls in Cornwall may also be being held back from STEM and TEC subjects by a lack of access to them in their schools. Research from TECgirls revealed that girls are displaying an enthusiasm for STEM and TEC, but are not being offered these subjects at a higher level and are unable to engage in learning that allows them to interact with TEC equipment.<sup>443</sup> For example, Engineering is only offered by 10 out of 30 in Cornwall schools for which data was available, and Statistics only by six.<sup>444</sup> This, coupled with parental expectations and gender norms around STEM, has led to low levels of female GCSE entry, with girls accounting for only 10% of Cornwall’s Engineering entrants.<sup>445</sup>

<sup>437</sup> Personal communication from School for Social Entrepreneurs.

<sup>438</sup> STEM Women (2021), [“Women in STEM | Percentages of Women in STEM Statistics”](#) accessed 27 August 2021.

<sup>439</sup> TECgirls (2020), [“Annual Insights Report – Pilot Study”](#).

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*

### TECgirls

TECgirls is an organisation in Cornwall that works to address the STEM and TEC gender imbalance. TECgirls is a resource for girls, parents and educators to help encourage and inspire girls to join Technology, Engineering and Creative activities and clubs around Cornwall to tackle the gender divide in TEC subjects and industries. TECgirls provides a variety of online and in-person workshops to inspire children and support schools' organisations and clubs through Mentor Workshops, Classroom Workshops and school/club talks.<sup>446</sup>

## Ending violence against women and girls in all their diversity

As set out in **Chapter 11** of the main report, **violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a grave human rights violation with devastating consequences that affects women worldwide**. It is estimated that 43.9% of women over the age of 15 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the UK.<sup>447</sup> Rates of domestic abuse appear high in Devon and Cornwall, relative to the UK national average.<sup>448</sup> Rates of stalking and harassment are also high: the year ending March 2018 saw 40% of all crimes in Cornwall fall under stalking and harassment.<sup>449</sup> Reported sexual offences are around average in Cornwall compared to other police force areas with similar characteristics.

Interviewees reported that the dispersed and sparsely populated settlement pattern in Cornwall exacerbates the issue of domestic abuse, as women are often isolated from services and support that are easier to access in larger cities. As a result, the problem may go undetected for longer: this is a recognised challenge in rural areas, where abuse lasts on average 25% longer.<sup>450</sup> Coupled with this, the close-knit nature of rural communities increases the difficulty in disclosing abuse and receiving support. Those speaking out about abuse in small communities may feel they will not be able to seek help without it becoming known to others, and may feel they are less likely to be believed within their community.<sup>451</sup> This limits women's ability to seek help from services and makes the issue less visible, increasing the vulnerability of women to violence.

As outlined in **Chapter 13** of the main report, the pandemic has exacerbated violence against women and girls in the UK and globally. The increased isolation induced by the numerous lockdowns has left women more vulnerable, as there is greater difficulty in accessing support services, especially older women who are less likely to have technology and be able to access online support.

### The Women's Centre Cornwall

TWCC is a specialist provider of services for women and girls who have experienced any form of sexual violence, rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse and/or domestic abuse. In a case study provided by TWCC, their services supported a victim of abuse with face-to-face support and through their 'The Power Programme'. This offered a safe space to explore and digest her past experiences. Following the support offered from TWCC, she was able to go on to volunteer on helplines and face-to-face, resulting in a contractual job where she can support other women in their journey.

## Conclusions

This annex illustrates how key issues highlighted by the GEAC can play out in women's lives in a specific area, such as Cornwall, including more limited access to capital and decent jobs, low representation in STEM education and careers, and domestic violence. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have exacerbated some of these issues in Cornwall, including because women are overrepresented in casual, part-time and insecure work; and because of the largely rural nature of Cornwall, where dispersed population and limited public transport are other key factors. This underlines the relevance and importance of the GEAC recommendations in all contexts, and the need for targeted interventions to support gender equality.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (2020), "[Gender Equality Index, Index score for the United Kingdom for the 2020 edition](#)," accessed 20 July 2021.

<sup>448</sup> Safer Cornwall (2018), "[Domestic abuse & sexual violence. A needs assessment for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Update 2018](#)".

<sup>449</sup> Office for National Statistics (2018), "[Domestic abuse in England and Wales, appendix tables](#)".

<sup>450</sup> National Rural Crime Network (2019), "[Key Findings](#)," accessed 7 September 2021.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

# Annex III: Open letter on protecting the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan

Published 27 August 2021

We, members of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council, would like to express our solidarity with the women and girls of Afghanistan and we welcome the joint statement from G7 Leaders, along with the Secretary Generals of the United Nations and NATO, that the rights of women must be respected. We further welcome Prime Minister Boris Johnson's strong statements on girls' education.

Around 3.5 million girls are currently in school in Afghanistan and around a third of university students are women. If girls are not in school, they are more at risk of abuse, including child marriage, female genital mutilation, child labour and domestic violence. Without education, their horizons are limited, their choices diminished, their futures constrained. We call on G7 Leaders to reaffirm that the education of girls is at the core of their shared values and the foundation of progress. We ask them to take steps to ensure that the vital education of girls in Afghanistan is not disrupted and that schools and universities remain accessible and safe to girls and women.

The GEAC made several recommendations to G7 Leaders ahead of the G7 Summit in June, focused on girls' education, women's empowerment and ending violence against women and girls. We call on G7 Leaders to take forward relevant GEAC recommendations with regards to the humanitarian response in Afghanistan – not only prioritising financing and support for girls' education, but also tackling gender-based violence and sexual violence, protecting access to sexual and reproductive health services, and promoting women's labour market participation.

We are concerned about the risks facing women who have been involved in public affairs, education, journalism, peacebuilding, economic activities, the security sector and civil society organisations, and urge the international community to offer their support and protection.

The situation in Afghanistan is a powerful reminder of the need to champion the rights of women and girls to live, work and study freely and safely. The core principle of the GEAC is that, as a matter of course, foreign policy should address women's rights, needs and voices. The voices of the women and girls of Afghanistan need to be heard, now more than ever.

**Signed by:** Sarah Sands, Alice P. Albright, Hon Julie Bishop, Prof. Iris Bohnet, Ursula M. Burns, Dr (H.C.) Ritu Karidhal, Bogolo J. Kenewendo, Prof. Reiko Kuroda, Dr Dambisa Moyo, Dr Denis Mukwege, Marie-Christine Saragosse, Emma Sinclair MBE, Dr Aldijana Šišić, Dame Rachel de Souza and Jessica Woodroffe.

# Annex IV: Members of the 2021 G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council

**CHAIR:** Sarah Sands, Former editor of the Evening Standard and BBC Radio 4's Today programme

- **Alice P. Albright**, CEO of the Global Partnership for Education
- **Prof. Jutta Allmendinger**, President of the WZB Berlin Social Science Centre and Professor of Sociology at Humboldt University Berlin
- **Hon Julie Bishop**, 38th Foreign Minister of Australia and current Chancellor, Australian National University
- **Prof. Iris Bohnet**, Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government and co-director of the Women and Public Policy Program, Harvard Kennedy School
- **Ursula M. Burns**, Former CEO and Chairwoman of Xerox Corporation, Former leader of the White House STEM Programme
- **Dr Fabiola Gianotti**, Physicist, Director-General, CERN
- **Prof. Dame Sarah Gilbert**, Lead researcher at Oxford University for the coronavirus vaccine
- **Isabelle Hudon**, President and CEO of the Business Development Bank of Canada
- **Dr<sub>(h.c.)</sub> Ritu Karidhal**, Deputy Operations Director to India's Mars Orbiter Mission, Mangalyaan
- **Bogolo J. Kenewendo**, Global Economist and Former Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry in Botswana
- **Prof. Reiko Kuroda**, Professor of Chemistry & Biology at Chubu University and winner of the L'Oréal-UNESCO award for Women in Science
- **Dr Dambisa Moyo**, Global economist and co-principal of Versaca Investments
- **Dr Denis Mukwege**, gynaecologist, human rights activist and Nobel peace laureate
- **Marie-Christine Saragosse**, President and CEO of France Médias Monde
- **Emma Sinclair MBE**, Tech entrepreneur, and CoFounder and CEO of EnterpriseAlumni
- **Dr Aldijana Šišić**, Chief of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Women)
- **Dame Rachel de Souza**, Children's Commissioner for England
- **Jessica Woodroffe**, W7 Co-Chair and Director of the Gender and Development Network



