

**Guiding Principles for
U.S. Government Implementation of
Let Girls Learn**

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I. Introduction

In 2015, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama launched Let Girls Learn, a global U.S. government initiative to expand access to education for adolescent girls. The U.S. government has invested more than \$1 billion in new and ongoing programs to support adolescent girls' education in over 50 countries across the globe, including more than \$100 million in new funds requested in the FY 2017 budget. In the past year and a half, the U.S. government has worked with nearly a dozen partner countries and more than 100 non-profits and companies that have made commitments to support girls' education.

Looking toward the future, it is clear that educating girls is among the most strategic and effective investments that the U.S. government can make to achieve its foreign policy objectives and promote sustainable development. Advancing girls' education is not just a moral imperative. It is a necessity for stronger global security and inclusive economic growth, which in turn enhances the national security of the United States. Ensuring that a nation's girls are educated unlocks human potential on a transformational scale, advancing progress in every arena. When a girl receives a quality education, she is more likely to earn a decent living, raise a healthy, educated family, and improve the quality of life for herself, her family, and her community. A world in which girls are educated is a safer, more stable, and more prosperous place.¹

Addressing the range of barriers that girls face in attaining an education requires a comprehensive approach that is holistic, sustainable, and forward-looking. This Let Girls Learn document encapsulates the U.S. government's innovative efforts to promote adolescent girls' education and solidifies adolescent girls' education as a U.S. government priority. Let Girls Learn has brought together federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Peace Corps, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Labor (USDOL), to work together through a robust interagency process led by the National Security Council (NSC) and to leverage the full weight of their collective resources and expertise to lift up girls across the world.

The U.S. government has integrated gender equality and equal access to education for adolescent girls into its broader foreign policy and development framework through important advances to support girls under the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* and the *U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*. Adolescent girls' education is a core pillar of the *U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls*. Additionally, USAID will continue integrating and addressing the needs of and opportunities for adolescent girls throughout its Education Strategy.

Fundamental to the work of Let Girls Learn is the overarching policy framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed to by the international community in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. The SDGs and the work of Let Girls Learn are mutually supportive as both efforts seek to lift up women and girls, enabling

their full participation in economies and societies. Specifically, Let Girls Learn inherently supports SDG 4 to ensure inclusive quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning and SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls, as well as SDG 8 to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. By achieving progress towards the SDGs, Let Girls Learn will make a significant contribution to the United States' commitment to mobilize efforts towards a sustainable development agenda, in partnership with developing countries, which have primary responsibility for their own economic and social development.

Through these efforts, the U.S. government has championed the advancement of adolescent girls' education to change the future for the 98 million adolescent girls who are out of school, and for the rest of the world who will benefit for generations to come.

The Case for Adolescent Girls' Education

An extensive body of research demonstrates that investing in adolescent girls, particularly through education, benefits not only girls and their families, but whole communities, economies, and countries.ⁱⁱ Educating girls is a critical step in changing values and norms pertaining to women and girls and spurring improvements throughout their lives. Early, child, and forced marriage and exploitation of girls in the worst forms of child labor represent persistent threats to global development efforts and perpetuate intergenerational poverty and poor health and nutrition outcomes. Keeping girls in school, especially at post primary education levels, is among the best tools we have to combat these threats.ⁱⁱⁱ For example, we know that girls with secondary schooling are up to six times less likely to be married as children compared to girls who have little or no education.^{iv}

Educating girls is also critical for improving maternal and child health outcomes. Researchers estimate that more than 50 percent of the reduction in child deaths between 1970 and 2009 could be attributed to increased educational attainment in women of reproductive age.^v Education, and secondary education in particular, increases women's use of maternal health services, leading to improved health outcomes for mothers and children.^{vi} Children of educated mothers are more likely than those of uneducated mothers to have higher birth weights, are less likely to die in infancy, and are more likely to be immunized and well-nourished.^{vii}

The benefits of educating girls go beyond health and nutrition. When women and girls are educated, they have the tools to better participate in the formal economy and earn a decent income. A World Bank study found that every year of secondary school education is correlated with an 18 percent increase in a girl's future earning power.^{viii} Decreasing the gender differential in secondary education is significantly and positively correlated with increases in a country's per capita growth.^{ix} Closing the gender gap in workforce participation would grow global gross domestic product (GDP) by an estimated \$28 trillion, or 26 percent, by 2025.^x Women are also more likely to reinvest their earnings back into their families to improve education, nutrition, and health, helping to break the cycle of poverty.^{xi}

Barriers to Girls' Education

Despite the overwhelming case to educate adolescent girls and global progress to close the gender gap in primary education, adolescent girls continue to face significant barriers to attending and completing secondary school. These challenges may begin long before girls reach adolescence, as the marginalization of girls begins as early as birth. Newborn girls may not survive in communities where female infanticide is practiced. If they do survive, they may not be registered at birth, which prevents them from receiving documents that facilitate establishing legal identity and enrolling in school.^{xii}

As young girls, these gender norms persist and often determine how households allocate resources to sons and daughters and influence family decisions about education, where they work, how much they eat, and how they spend their time. While girls are often expected to complete chores, collect water and firewood, and watch over other children, boys are expected to attend school, become breadwinners, and represent the family in public gatherings and forums. These cultural and social expectations are fundamentally tied to gender.^{xiii}

In many places, as girls approach puberty, their world shrinks considerably as mobility and opportunities decrease further. The fight to get an education becomes even more difficult. Many girls risk long, unsafe walks to school. The schools that are available to them may lack appropriate infrastructure or safe and sanitary facilities which hinders their attendance, especially during menstruation. When they are at school, they may be subject to violence and harassment from teachers, fellow students and others.^{xiv} At least 20 million adolescent girls live in conflict settings that increase the risks of gender-based violence.^{xv} 68 million girls globally are engaged in child labor, which is mentally, physically, and morally harmful to girls and interferes with their ability to attend school.^{xvi} In the worst forms of child labor, girls are victims of forced labor, human trafficking, and modern day slavery. Over half (11.4 million) of all victims of forced labor are women and girls.^{xvii}

In some contexts, girls may be forced to marry as young as 11 or 12 years old. Due to economic pressures, families may be unwilling or unable to pay a daughter's school fees and may see marrying them off as a means to receive a dowry, easing household food burdens and increasing their daughters' chances of having a more secure life. Families may also choose to marry their daughters out of fears surrounding physical safety, including sexual violence, or premarital sexual activity that could result in pregnancy before marriage, which in some cultures would bring perceived dishonor to their family and possible abandonment. In times of insecurity due to poverty, drought, displacement, conflict and instability, the pressure for girls to marry becomes even greater due to economic insecurity, reduced access to educational opportunities, and the weakening of protective social safety networks and legal structures.^{xviii}

Adolescent girls are vulnerable to early pregnancy, especially if they are married, which has grave consequences for their health and that of their children. Maternal mortality is a leading cause of death for adolescent girls. 15 to 19 year old girls are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or child birth as those over age 20, and girls under age 15 are five times more likely

to die. Yet, 16 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 give birth each year, comprising about 11 percent of all births globally.^{xi} Adolescent girls and young women are also disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, where they are up to 14 times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than young men.^x

For these reasons, and many more, 98 million adolescent girls remain out of school.^{xi} And as girls enter adolescence, the gap in educational attainment widens: in primary education, 66 percent of countries have achieved gender parity, compared to 50 percent in lower secondary, 29 percent in upper secondary, and only 4 percent in tertiary.^{xii}

II. The United States' Response: Let Girls Learn

In March 2015, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama launched Let Girls Learn as a U.S. government initiative with the recognition that the solution to addressing the complex challenges facing adolescent girls is not through any one sector, such as health or education, but through a holistic, whole-of-girl approach that addresses all the varied needs of adolescent girls. Let Girls Learn builds on existing U.S. government effort to foster an enabling environment for adolescent girls' education, particularly at the lower and upper secondary school levels, while also seeking to change the perception and the value of girls at the individual, community, and institutional levels. In other words, Let Girls Learn not only seeks to overcome specific barriers, such as parents' inability to pay for school fees for girls, but also the traditional gender norms that devalue girls' education in the first place.

Let Girls Learn Vision and Strategic Objectives

The U.S. government has articulated a clear and powerful vision for Let Girls Learn:

Let Girls Learn seeks to ensure adolescent girls around the world attain a quality education that empowers them to reach their full potential.

To realize this vision, the United States, in collaboration with private partners and foreign governments, has pursued the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing strategic objectives: (1) foster an enabling environment for adolescent girls' education; (2) change the perception of the value of girls at the individual, community, and institutional levels; and (3) engage and equip girls to be agents of change.

Strategic Objective #1: Foster an enabling environment for adolescent girls' education

Fostering an enabling environment for girls means making education more accessible to girls, including access to lower and upper secondary education, and ensuring that they are able to stay in school and learn. This is achieved by increasing the availability and safety of formal schools, improving the quality and relevance of education that is offered, ensuring that instruction is accessible to all students and does not reinforce harmful gender norms, and improving legal and policy frameworks. Fostering this enabling environment is also achieved by examining and addressing health barriers to education such as early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and lack of access to resources that enable hygienic practices. Let Girls Learn activities to address these barriers include:

- Building schools, particularly secondary schools, with separate and safe dormitories for adolescent girls;
- Supporting the construction of water and sanitation facilities to help girls avoid stigmatization and absenteeism during menstruation;
- Providing girls with safe transportation to schools;

- Training and hiring female teachers, who can serve as important role models for both boys and girls and help parents feel more assured about the safety of their girls in schools;
- Addressing school-related gender-based violence through in-school and out of school activities, as well as awareness raising within the family and within the community;
- Creating a supportive environment for girls to learn through gender equitable pedagogy, including the use of textbooks and instructional techniques that do not promote negative gender stereotypes; and
- Tailoring the curriculum to respond to the local economic context so that girls gain skills that allow them to transition into the workforce and earn a decent livelihood, and so that parents see value in continuing to send their girls to school.

Strategic Objective #2: Change the perception of the value of girls at the individual, community, and institutional levels

Girls around the world are often viewed as less valuable and less capable than boys. The range of roles and livelihoods that are available to them is restricted, and they are often expected to provide unpaid labor as daughters, wives, and mothers or work in the informal economy. Consequently, for many girls, a low premium is put on their education by their families and they are not encouraged or permitted to take active roles in their community's political, social, or economic life. They are often forced into early marriage or into hazardous work situations, both of which result in effectively ending their childhood and perpetuating cycles of poverty and poor health and nutrition in communities and nations.

Advancing gender equality and girls' education requires engaging entire communities to fundamentally alter these negative perceptions. Investments in this space help individuals, communities, and institutions recognize the positive implications of investing in accessible education for girls and allowing them to complete their educations and will continue to address the cultural, social, and financial barriers to girls' education. This work specifically includes engaging men and boys as supportive partners and peers and as agents of change. Let Girls Learn aims to change harmful beliefs and norms and increase the perceived value of adolescent girls' education by:

- Changing incentive structures that hamper adolescent girls' education, including through providing scholarships, stipends or other financial support to parents to reduce or eliminate financial barriers to girls' education, especially at lower and upper secondary school levels, and encourage them to keep their daughters in school;
- Working with parents, caregivers, and communities to change persistent negative stereotypes about girls and girls' education and increase the acceptability of alternative roles for women in the formal sector, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields and non-traditional occupations;

- Demonstrating to parents and communities that educating girls boosts household incomes, local economies, and national GDP and thus provides a positive alternative to school dropout and early marriage;
- Raising awareness about girls' rights, legal frameworks protecting girls, and the negative consequences for girls, their families, and communities when adolescent girls drop out of school, become married or pregnant, are exploited in child labor, and are prevented from engaging in a positive way in economic, social, and political activities;
- Working with traditional leaders and men and boys to help them understand the value of educating girls and engaging men and boys as partners and allies; and
- Engaging parents and communities to ensure that girls get adequate nutrition to enable them to learn once they get to school.

Strategic Objective #3: Engage and equip girls to be agents of change

Girls benefit from a range of skills, services, information, and support networks beyond formal education in pursuit of reaching their full potential. In order to stay in school and reap the benefits of education, they must be healthy and empowered to make informed and responsible decisions about their lives. They must also be aware of their rights and the full range of opportunities that are available to them and equipped to advocate for themselves and others. Girls who never attended formal schools or dropped out can benefit from vocational skills training as a mechanism to secure decent work opportunities and further empower them to make important decisions about their lives.

Let Girls Learn programs work to increase girls' agency and self-confidence, raise their aspirations, and motivate them to be leaders in their communities. They also engage adolescent girls directly in informing and shaping the programs and policies that affect their lives. Let Girls Learn helps empower girls to become agents of change by:

- Providing safe spaces for girls both within and outside school where they can receive life skills and leadership training, learn about health and nutrition, build social networks and overcome isolation, and improve their communication and negotiation skills and self-confidence;
- Creating opportunities for non-formal or alternative education for girls who dropped out or never entered school and providing vocational skills training and apprenticeships that can lead to decent work and well-paying jobs;
- Establishing mobile clinics, one-stop centers, and promoting youth friendly health services to improve the ability of adolescent girls to build the foundation for a lifetime of healthy behaviors;
- Consulting with girls about the challenges they face and the changes they seek, involving them in the planning and implementation of Let Girls Learn programs and other efforts designed to address their needs, and encouraging and equipping them to be advocates and leaders; and

- Supporting and highlighting girls who are championing the cause of girls' education around the world to be peer mentors and community leaders and helping them to advance gender equity in their communities.

Target Population

Let Girls Learn has honed its focus on adolescent girls aged 10 to 19. The 10 to 19 years old age range corresponds with the United Nations definition of adolescence, encapsulating the second decade of a person's life and the key transitional time between early childhood and adulthood.^{xxiii} For girls in particular, it is in this age range when they are often expected to assume significant family and work responsibilities, closing them off from opportunities to access a quality education. The focus of Let Girls Learn on girls aged 10 to 19 builds on progress made towards gender parity in primary education for younger children and ensures that U.S. government interventions continue to benefit girls all the way through the completion of secondary school, maximizing the benefits of girls' education to their communities and economies.

The most recent and comprehensive data available on children out of school comes from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics (UIS). At the launch of Let Girls Learn in March 2015, the focus of the initiative was on the 62 million girls out of school at the primary and lower secondary age levels, as highlighted in a 2014 UNESCO report.^{xxiv} Over the past year and a half, the narrative on girls' education has evolved, highlighting the urgent need for all girls to not just complete primary and lower secondary school, but to also receive a quality education through the upper secondary school level. According to a recently released UNESCO report,^{xxv} there are millions more upper secondary school-age girls who are unable to access an education. The 2016 UNESCO report highlights that, when counting older girls, there are a total of 98 million adolescent girls out of school, which includes girls of lower secondary school age (29 million) and upper secondary school age (69 million). As a result, Let Girls Learn has adopted the 98 million number to continue to shine a light and bring attention to the enormous challenges faced particularly by adolescent girls aged 10 to 19.

III. Four Pillars of Let Girls Learn Work

To complement the Let Girls Learn whole-of-girl approach, the U.S. government has deployed a whole-of-government response to leverage the wide range of expertise and capabilities throughout the U.S. government. The U.S. government effort is bolstered by strong collaboration with private sector collaborators, foreign governments, and the civil society, working to address different socio-economic challenges on multiple political levels. In short, Let Girls Learn combines the necessary political will, diplomacy, grassroots organizing, and development expertise to create lasting change.

Let Girls Learn advances and achieves its strategic objectives through four core pillars of work leveraging the efforts of all these actors through: (1) coordinated U.S. government programming; (2) diplomacy; (3) strategic communications; and (4) stakeholder engagement.

Pillar #1: Coordinated United States Government programming

Let Girls Learn has benefitted from strong leadership from the White House, including the NSC and the Office of the First Lady, coupled with the diverse expertise of various U.S. government agencies, including the U.S. Department of State, USAID, the Peace Corps, MCC, USDOL, and USDA, as well as programs like the U.S. President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Leveraging the synergistic power of multiple agencies ensures that U.S. government investments aimed at advancing adolescent girls' access to education are more coordinated, effective, and sustainable. The United States has invested more than \$1 billion in new and ongoing programs, developing programming and shaping policy in over 50 countries to promote adolescent girls' education.

Within the coordinated interagency process, each agency has particular expertise and capacity to bring to bear to the issue of adolescent girls' education. Let Girls Learn relies on the U.S. Department of State to engage in diplomacy with and public outreach in collaboration with other foreign governments; USAID to contribute its broad development expertise to support education, health, and women's empowerment programs around the world; the Peace Corps to train thousands

Highlights of Coordinated U.S. Government Programming

An example of this coordination is a new partnership between USDA's McGovern Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern-Dole) program and USAID's new Challenge Fund programming in Malawi. USAID will implement the primary programs for a whole-of-girl approach by focusing on its areas of expertise in gender equality and empowerment, education, and community engagement. USDA/McGovern-Dole will use U.S.-donated agricultural commodities to provide a daily school meal in Let Girls Learn target primary schools and a take-home ration incentive to the families of girls and vulnerable boys who attend school at least 80 percent of the time, as well as supporting student scholarships, classroom construction, and nutrition education activities. The joint work in Malawi is demonstrative of similar USAID-USDA collaboration globally to support education efforts. Together, these two agencies are leveraging their expertise, and providing holistic, coordinated programs to girls who face multiple barriers to completing their education.

of Volunteers and community leaders to find community-led solutions at the grassroots level; MCC to integrate its education projects with its mission of poverty reduction through economic growth; the USDOL to combat the worst forms of child labor by educating adolescent girls; PEPFAR to drive down HIV incidence rates among adolescent girls; and USDA to reduce hunger and promote girls education through its school feeding assistance programs around the world.

Let Girls Learn takes a synchronized and coordinated approach to the development and implementation of these U.S. government programs by:

- Conducting a coordinated interagency process that actively seeks to harmonize new and existing agency programming to improve adolescent girls' learning and access to education internationally, ensuring efforts are based on best evidence and practices and avoid duplication;
- Crafting a holistic approach to reducing the number of out-of-school adolescent girls;
- Advocating for targeted funding to support adolescent girls' education initiatives, complementary to existing successful approaches; and
- Aligning the efforts of Let Girls Learn with the U.S. government's implementation of the United States Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls.

For more information about U.S. government efforts and specific agency programs, visit: <https://letgirlslearn.gov/about/>.

Measuring Results:

The U.S. government will continue to ensure its programming for adolescent girls' education is impactful, measurable, and evidence-based. U.S. government programming under Let Girls Learn consists of new programs designed specifically to implement the Let Girls Learn objectives, as well as existing programs that align with those objectives. All programs implemented under the Let Girls Learn umbrella focus on achieving one or more of the following outcomes:

- (1) Ensuring relevant, quality education that benefits adolescent girls;
- (2) Empowering adolescent girls with information, skills, services, and support as a part of their education;
- (3) Reducing barriers to adolescent girls' access to and completion of school; and
- (4) Addressing harmful practices (such as gender based violence; child, early, and forced marriage; and worst forms of child labor) and attitudes that hinder adolescent girls' education and attainment.

Each Let Girls Learn program contributes to these outcomes in accordance with the implementing agency's mission and expertise, while also taking into account the local context within which the program is operating and a country's plans for achieving progress on the SDGs. Given the wide breadth of U.S. government programming and the need for an extensive range

of efforts to fully address the needs of adolescent girls, each agency necessarily deploys a variety of metrics to measure progress against program and Let Girls Learn objectives. Each agency will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of its programs according to existing program design and agency requirements.

For new programs designed specifically to implement Let Girls Learn, agencies are developing a monitoring and evaluation framework that allows the implementing agency to accurately measure the program's impact on adolescent girls aged 10 to 19.

Pillar #2: Diplomacy

World leaders, government officials, and diplomats must continue to work together to remove barriers to adolescent girls' education so that every nation can benefit from the contributions of all of their citizens—men and women, boys and girls. In alignment with the *United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls*, Let Girls Learn promotes adolescent girls' education and empowerment through multilateral, bilateral, and regional engagement, both by communicating directly with foreign governments and by working with civil society groups, businesses, and with girls themselves to empower them to serve as effective advocates to influence families, communities, schools, policy makers, and host governments.

Where appropriate, U.S. officials raise issues affecting adolescent girls in bilateral strategic dialogues to share best practices for addressing these issues, promote accountability, and encourage countries to take specific and effective actions that measurably improve the lives of girls and their communities. Let Girls Learn employs diplomacy to advance its objectives by:

- Incorporating Let Girls Learn messaging into multi- and bilateral meetings, official state visits, and senior leader trips;
- Collaborating with partner countries and multilateral organizations, particularly in regions of conflict and crisis;
- Partnering with other donor countries and multilateral organizations to drive commitments to support adolescent girls' education;

Highlights of Diplomatic Successes

Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom have collectively pledged nearly \$600 million towards global girls' education programming, as a result of U.S. diplomatic outreach.

During state visits to the United States, Canada and the Nordic States issued joint statements solidifying arrangements to share resources and leverage expertise to address barriers to education for adolescent girls around the world.

In 2016, the World Bank announced \$2.5 billion in adolescent girls' programming, in support of Let Girls Learn. Since then, the World Bank has already invested \$530 million to help adolescent girls gain access to quality education in some of the world's most challenging environments, such as Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon, in Pakistan where few girls complete secondary school, and conflict-affected areas in northeast Nigeria.

- Strategically communicating and coordinating with new and ongoing girls' education initiatives led by foreign governments that align with Let Girls Learn; and
- Engaging with audiences abroad through public diplomacy to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education.

Pillar #3: Strategic Communication

Let Girls Learn focuses on changing attitudes and harmful gender norms. Raising awareness, both domestically and internationally, about the issues surrounding adolescent girls' education is critical to ignite and perpetuate that change. Through the awareness-driving efforts of President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and senior U.S. government leaders, as well as leveraging a broad range of communication vehicles, Let Girls Learn has galvanized countries, the private sector, and citizens worldwide to not only become aware of this issue, but to take action. Let Girls Learn employs strategic communication to achieve its objectives by:

- Engaging stakeholders through creative earned media opportunities, including social media, newsletters, blogs, websites, and by leveraging existing media partners;
- Including Let Girls Learn messaging in relevant speaking engagements by senior leaders across the U.S. government;
- Seeking unique opportunities for senior U.S. government leaders to participate in events that will amplify the adolescent girls' education message far and wide;
- Engaging well-known personalities and role models as champions for girls' education;
- Telling the stories of adolescent girls through outlets such as the USAID Extreme Possibilities site and the media; and
- Engaging girl groups, non-governmental organizations, and other civil society partners to work together toward drawing attention to this issue.

Pillar #4: Stakeholder Engagement

Recognizing that the U.S. government cannot solve this challenge alone, Let Girls Learn brings together stakeholders and encourages them to take action in support of adolescent girls' education. The initiative has forged new connections with over 100 companies, foundations, media organizations, and civil

Highlights of Strategic Communications

First Lady Michelle Obama galvanized public support for adolescent girl's education at high profile events, including the *Fortune Most Powerful Women's Summit* and events timed with the 2015 and 2016 United Nations General Assembly meetings.

Let Girls Learn launched the #62milliongirls campaign resulting in more than 70,000 citizens tweeting their support of Let Girls Learn.

The First Lady launched the new Diane Warren Song "This is for my Girls", which supported Let Girls Learn.

On the 2016 International Day of the Girl, CNN Films launched *We Will Rise: Michelle Obama's Mission to Educate Girls Around the World*, featuring First Lady Michelle Obama and sharing the stories of adolescent girls in Morocco and Liberia who have overcome extreme challenges in attending school due to U.S. government efforts.

society organizations to bring in new resources and expertise to address the diverse barriers to girls' education. Let Girls Learn engages stakeholders by:

- Working with corporations, media organizations, academia, nonprofits, and foundations to expand resources and improve awareness;
- Developing innovative collaborations with civil society organizations, companies, foundations, girl groups, business councils, and others in order to bring in new, creative resources and expertise to address the diverse barriers to girls' education; and
- Working with academic institutions such as universities, think tanks, civil society, and other organizations to develop an evidence base of research on adolescent girls' education and community-based solutions.

Stakeholder engagement, as one of the four Let Girls Learn pillars of work, is critical to the continued success of Let Girls Learn. Let Girls Learn seeks to collaborate with the following types of entities:

- U.S. based or international organizations/institutions in good standing with the U.S. government;
- Private sector organizations that make a donation to the Peace Corps' Let Girls Learn Fund;
- Organizations or individuals that make contributions to Let Girls Learn partners in support of the Let Girls Learn objectives;
- Non-governmental organizations that pledge their own resources in support of girls' education and empowerment programs;
- Media organizations that help raise awareness;
- Academic institutions contributing to the body of knowledge on girls' education;
- Governments and/or relevant government donor agencies that can enter into a strategic partnership agreement with the U.S. Government; and
- Partner government, local civil society groups, private sector entities, and labor unions that can help advance program activities, resolve challenges, ensure sustainability, and deepen program impacts.

Highlights of Stakeholder Engagement

Companies such as Alex and Ani, Lands' End, Johnson & Johnson, Jet Blue, Xerox Foundation, and Time Inc. have contributed \$2.5 million to the Peace Corps' Let Girls Learn Fund, which supports hundreds of community-led, adolescent girls' education projects around the world.

NGOs such as CARE and the International Rescue Committee made commitments in support of Let Girls Learn to invest over \$15 million in programs to impact the hardest-to-reach adolescent girls, including in conflict and crises affected countries.

In 2015, USAID, in partnership with the Department of State, launched the Let Girls Learn Challenge Fund, as \$25 million investment that took a deliberate and innovative approach to bringing stakeholders, including business, non-profits, and academics, together to collectively design new programs in Malawi and Tanzania. New programs in both countries were announced in 2016.

MCC and the Government of Morocco launched a \$4.6 million Partnership Fund that will expect an equal match from private sector and non-governmental organizations to develop innovative secondary education programs focused on improving the learning environment for girls and helping girls enter and remain in the workforce through mentoring programs, internships, and STEM clubs.

For more information about collaborating with Let Girls Learn, visit: <https://letgirlslearn.gov/take-action/> or contact Let Girls Learn at letgirlslearn@usaid.gov.

IV. Conclusion

Let Girls Learn represents a significant undertaking by the U.S. government to lift up adolescent girls around the world and to support their efforts to access a quality education that empowers them to reach their full potential. The goals and pillars of work laid out in this document represent a coordinated and sustainable approach to promoting adolescent girls' education now and in the future. Through continued focus and attention to this issue, the U.S. government and its collaborators can make a meaningful difference in the lives of the 98 million adolescent girls out of school globally and promote more prosperous, more stable societies to the benefit of U.S. national security.

ⁱ <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/What-Works-in-Girls-Educationlowres.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ See Mayesha Alam, Roslyn Warren, and Anna Applebaum. "Closing the Gap: Adolescent Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected Settings." Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. 2016, https://giwps.georgetown.edu/sites/giwps/files/closing_the_gap_adolescent_girls_access_to_education_in_conflict-affected_settings.pdf; UNESCO. "Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?" Policy Paper 27/Fact Sheet 37, July 2016, <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/leaving-no-one-behind-how-far-way-universal-primary-and-secondary-education>; "United States Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls." <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/254904.pdf>; Cathy Russell, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 15, 2016, <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/download/russell-testimony-061516>; Susan Markham, Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 15, 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/congressional-testimony/jun-15-2016-susan-markham-senior-coordinator-gender-equality-girls-education>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Input from forced child labor experts at the U.S. Department of Labor.

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