

## International Day of the Girl 2018

### Theme – With Her: A Skilled GirlForce

#### **BACKGROUND**

Today's generation of girls are preparing to enter a world of work that is being transformed by innovation and automation. Educated and skilled workers are in great demand, but roughly a quarter of young people – most of them female – are currently neither employed or in education or training.<sup>1</sup>

Of the 1 billion young people – including 600 million adolescent girls – that will enter the workforce in the next decade, more than 90 per cent of those living in developing countries will work in the informal sector, where low or no pay, abuse and exploitation are common.<sup>2</sup>

Young women are often found in the most marginalized segments of the informal economy with fewer assets, greater risks and lower income.<sup>3</sup> The most disadvantaged girls – those in rural areas and humanitarian settings, and those with disabilities – have even less access to decent work.

**To help girls acquire the skills and training they need later to secure decent work or start a business, we need to ensure they can:**

- **Access learning opportunities:** Ten percent of primary aged girls are still out of school.<sup>4</sup> Many more have not been able to progress to secondary school and still need support to develop basic (foundational) skills in literacy and numeracy. At the current rate of progress, by 2030, more than half the world's girls will not be on track to achieve basic skills at the secondary level.
- **Gain transferable skills** – such as self-confidence, problem solving, decision-making, teamwork, or critical thinking – are critical to succeed in the rapidly changing world of work. Yet many schools and out-of-school programmes are not yet focusing on these '21<sup>st</sup> century' skills, including STEM education.
- **Transition from school to work:** Many girls do not have access to the career guidance, female mentors or training they need for the transition from school to work. For example, young men tend to have greater access to apprenticeships than young women, and in a wider range of occupations.<sup>5</sup> Women entrepreneurs also face greater barriers in access to finance and other skills that are essential for leading a profitable business.

Girls' full participation in the future workforce will require tackling gender stereotypes and harmful social norms across professions, and addressing the many systemic barriers to decent work they face, including child marriage, early motherhood and gender-based violence.

#### **THEME**

The world's 600 million adolescent girls each have the potential, strength, creativity and energy to meet global industry demands. For girls to gain access to the skills they need, they are relying on the global community to join with them.

On 11 October, **International Day of the Girl**, let's work alongside all girls to expand existing learning opportunities, chart new pathways and call on the global community to rethink how to prepare them for a successful transition into the world of work.

Under the theme, **With Her: A Skilled GirlForce**, International Day of the Girl marks the beginning of a year-long effort to bring together partners and stakeholders to advocate for, and draw attention and investments to, the most pressing needs and opportunities for girls to attain skills for employability.

IDG is also an opportunity to accelerate efforts towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 to *'increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship'*. Work towards SDG 8 will also contribute to ensuring all girls and women, including those with disabilities, have equal rights, education, and opportunities as called for in SDGs 4 and 5.

To develop **A Skilled GirlForce**, the global community should work to:

- Rapidly expand access to inclusive education and training.
- Improve the quality, relevance and gender-responsiveness of teaching and learning to enable girls to develop the foundational, transferable and job-specific skills needed for life and work.
- Create inclusive and accessible schools, training and learning opportunities to empower girls with disabilities.
- Change stereotypes, social norms and unconscious bias in relation to gender roles to enable girls to have the same learning and career opportunities as boys.
- Increase girls' participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning.
- Create initiatives to support girls' school-to-work transition, such as career guidance, apprenticeships, internships and entrepreneurship.
- Deliver large-scale public and private sector programming for girls' skills and market-adapted training.
- Enable access to finance and enterprise development for female entrepreneurs.
- Form strategic partnerships with governments and private companies which can act as thought leaders and financiers, helping to train girls and bring them into the workforce.

On International Day of the Girl, let's stand with her – the future leader, entrepreneur, teacher, scientist and software engineer – to develop skills now and to remove other gender barriers she faces, so that she and every girl can join **A Skilled GirlForce**.

### **CAMPAIGN**

As part of a year-long effort with and for girls, UNICEF and partners will bring together programming, advocacy, communication, fundraising, and public engagement around building a **Skilled GirlForce**. Illustrative moments are listed below. Additional details will be updated periodically.

<b>KEY MOMENTS</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<p><b>International Day of the Girl</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Digital movements and events globally, including Working Group on Girls SpeakOut event at UN New York and Plan International's New York reception and Geneva month-long mentorship scheme.</i></li> <li>• <i>Release of ILO and UNICEF advocacy brief on girls' school to work</i></li> </ul>	11 October 2018
<p><b>Education World Forum</b></p>	20-23 January 2019
<p><b>International Day of Women and Girls in Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Amplify STEM-related messages and stories from IDG</i></li> </ul>	11 February 2019
<p><b>International Women's Day</b></p>	8 March 2019
<p><b>63<sup>rd</sup> Commission on the Status of Women</b></p>	11-22 March 2019
<p><b>Women Deliver</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Opportunity to showcase innovative solutions and partnerships for skills development for girls' empowerment; potential youth design lab focused on IDG18 theme.</i></li> </ul>	3-6 June 2019
<p><b>2019 ILO Conference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adoption of new ILO Convention and Recommendation on violence and harassment in the world of work; opportunity to highlight the need to protect the human rights of young women in the world of work</i></li> </ul>	10-21 June 2019
<p><b>World Youth Skills Day</b></p>	15 July 2019

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_598669.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_598669.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms\\_618166.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_618166.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002503/250392E.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_447495.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_447495.pdf)