

# Feminist Coalition Letters

Access and  
Never-Enrolled Children

Letter 1: Aissatou and Fatou



*In September of this year, UNGEI convened its first meeting of the Global Feminist Coalition of Transformative Education, the convening was a powerful opportunity for civil society organisations and young feminist activists to come together, learn and share evidence. During the convening, the coalition dedicated time to mapping solutions for different thematic priorities for gender equality in education and felt that the power of stories is un-matched when showcasing the need for action in each of these themes. So, after careful reflection and collaboration, the coalition put together a set of stories on children that may be hypothetical in name but are not hypothetical in experience.*

## **Speaking on behalf of never-enrolled children, here is a letter from Aissatou and Fatou**

Hello, my name is Aissatou. And my name is Fatou. We are twins. We are 9 years old. I live in a small village in Niger

**Aissatou:** I love to learn, especially geography and math. Last year I ended first in my class. Now I have to go to secondary school, but there is none in my village. Luckily, I received a scholarship to go to the big school in town 30 kilometers away.

**Fatou:** I have never been to school. I think its because I'm different. I'm not able to speak the way Aissatou does. Sometimes my body seems to do things that other children's bodies don't. I think it's because of this that other children laugh at me. I think my parents don't send me to school because they are ashamed of me.

**Aissatou:** To go to the big school in town I will stay with my uncle and aunt. I hope they will be nice to me. I heard from my cousin Awa that Uncle Ibrahim beats her when she burns the food. I will try not to burn the food.

**Fatou:** I am going to be alone when Aissatou leaves.

**Aissatou:** I am sad to leave my sister behind. It's not just she who needs me, I need her too. I wish I didn't have to go away. I wish I could find a school closer to home, so I could stay with my sister. I wish she could play with the other kids and be in school with them. I wish a teacher would be nice to Fatou and see how intelligent she is. What will Fatou do when she grows up? She doesn't even know how to read and write.

**Fatou:** My idea of heaven is a place where we all go to school together and parents love their daughters as much as they love their sons.

