

Ernestine NGO MELHA



**Why bring the voices of girls with disabilities to the
generation equality forum ?**

Priorities and recommendations

Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé



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Cover image: A disabled girl on her chair in a classroom in front of the blackboard helped by a boy

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Priorities and recommendations

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Introduction

The Generation Equality Forum kicked off in Mexico city (March 29-31) and will culminate in France (June 30-July 2) is a global gathering for equality between women and men. It is organized by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico. It sets itself the goal of defining an innovative and ambitious plan for the future in favor of women and girls. The result will be a permanent acceleration in equality, leadership and opportunity for women and girls worldwide. It brings together governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector in action coalitions to advance the rights of women and girls and fully implement the Beijing +25 framework by 2025.

The actions are grouped under 6 themes: Gender-Based Violence, Economic justice and rights, Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), Feminist action for climate justice, Technology and innovation for Gender Equality, Feminist movements and leadership.

The Generation Equality Forum is a key moment to advocate and generate action and accountability for gender equality. Because girls and women with disabilities are women first and foremost, they are part of this global conversation, the results of which will impact their lives; their voices deserve to be heard and their concerns taken into account in the future agenda.

Our organization (AAEEH) carried out, between January and March 2021, a consultation with disabled girls, their parents or the institutions that supervise or represent them on the themes of action coalitions. The themes identified as major according to the respondents are as follows: Gender-based violence, Right to dispose of one's body and sexual and reproductive health and rights, Feminist movements and leadership. These themes were enriched by additional contributions from the signatories of the document and also during hybrid events (virtual and face-to-face) organized as part of our “career story” series devoted to feminist leadership and disability (March 2021), menstrual hygiene and disability (June 2021) and gender-based violence and disability (June 2021 and #StopTalkingStartFunding campaign).

The recommendations contained in this document are a compilation of all these contributions and constitute our roadmap as a committed maker organization.

This document was produced by Ernestine NGO MELHA, Founder and Executive Director.

Priorities et key recommendations

The priorities and expectations/ recommendations by theme are as follows:

Priority n ° 1: Actions to eliminate all specific forms of gender-based violence (GBV) suffered by girls with disabilities, promote access to justice and support services and fund organizations that support girls with disabilities victims of violence.

Girls with disabilities not only experience the same forms of gender-based violence as any other girl, but also other forms of violence such as psychological, physical, domestic and economic violence.

Girls with disabilities also face information and communication barriers to accessing justice and support services for victims of gender-based violence; they face stereotypes about their sexuality and their ability to accurately account for violence committed against them that cause those responsible to disbelieve them when they denounce violence.

Recommendations

- Girls with special needs voices are key and need to be included when violence is being mentioned
- the development and adoption of laws and policies aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence from a disability perspective, taking into account the specific barriers faced by girls with disabilities and the socio-environmental factors that increase the risk of violence,
- the adoption of laws and policies aimed at eliminating harmful stereotypes towards girls with disabilities as well as social and cultural practices that increase the risk of violence and measures to support and accompany victims
- the promotion of campaigns in accessible formats to raise awareness, prevent all forms of violence and respond to gender-based violence
- funding of organizations which support disabled girls who are victims of gender-based and sexual violence.
- That national documents on violence against women can include specific violence against girls and women with disabilities
- the need to advocate so that organizations of women with disabilities can take action in the event of violence against girls or women with disabilities

- Better appropriation of laws by women with disabilities
- data collection on gender-based violence sensitive to disability
- the establishment of funding mechanisms on gender-based violence sensitive to disability, flexible, sustainable and long-lasting
- the implementation of measures to support victims of gender-based violence in schools

Priority n°2: Actions aimed at combating stigma and stereotypes at the intersection of gender and disability and eliminating obstacles to access to information and services relating to bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Girls with disabilities are just as likely to be sexually active as their non-disabled peers. They need to have knowledge of sexuality education, to benefit from awareness campaigns as well as to have access to information in accessible format on reproductive health. They also need to develop self-confidence and have the skills and autonomy to make free and informed decisions.

Recommendations

- public awareness of the sexuality of girls with disabilities and their need for information
- access to sexual and reproductive health services that take into account the specificities of girls with disabilities,
- funding of community organizations to reach all girls with disabilities
- the development of national sex education programs, in accessible formats, which take into account disability
- the introduction of reproductive health issues into curricula, the contribution of education,
- the participation of families and the community, positive masculinity
- access to flexible, sustainable and sustainable funding by community organizations to reach all girls with disabilities

Priority n°3: Actions to promote feminist movements and leadership sensitive to disability.

Women with disabilities have historically been invisible in various spheres including the feminist movement, due to social norms, ableism, cultural barriers and the lack of intersectionality.

Recommendations

-promotion of the empowerment of girls with disabilities through training, activities that allow meetings between peers with and without disabilities;

-the importance of the participation of girls and women with disabilities in decision-making, even within their families and communities.

-providing and guaranteeing girls with disabilities a quality education, accessible with sufficient resources

-providing engagement opportunities for girls with disabilities and creating mechanisms to involve girls with disabilities in advocacy, ensuring their participation in the design and implementation of actions.

-Equip girls with disabilities with skills for systemic change

-Give disabled girls the means to realize their potential as leaders (e.g. participation in decision-making processes, school governance)

-Offer civic engagement opportunities

-Ensure quality education with sufficient resources

-Give the possibilities to have models that inspire

-Make disabled leaders visible in textbooks (Ex: Helen Keller)

The Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH), and its partners thank the individuals and organizations who have endorsed and shared this statement to date.

List of endorsement (French and English versions)

Organizations

Action Femmes Sourdes
Enable the Disable Action, EDA ONG
Congo Handicap
Care France
Humanity Diaspo
Equipop
Amnesty International
Fonds pour les Femmes en Méditerranée
Barbara VINEYARD
UNGEI
Miki Denis Foundation
Y+Global
Polycom development project
OMEP – Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Préscolaire
World Vision
UNESCO
At the Front
Equator Institute of Technology and Professional studies
The Action Foundation
Somali Institute of Educational Needs and disability (SISEND) ADRA Norge

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Read more

The French version of document available [here](#)



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Founded in 1998, Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH) is an international organization in special consultative status with UN ECOSOC since 2013 that works for quality education for children with disability through advocacy, awareness, research and multifaceted support to learners with disabilities and their families. It works for a world where children with disabilities acquire skills and competences for their empowerment through education.

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