



3rd GIRLS Forum Revolutionary Document 2023

We, the Girl Leaders of the 3rd GIRLS Forum 2023, from the Western Division of Fiji Islands, with the theme “GIRLS Succeed” convened at the Tanoa Waterfront from the 15th-17th of May 2023, declare our voices of concern identified for the three thematic key areas mentioned below:

From herein with the recognition and commitment of the State and relevant stakeholders towards the 2014 Fiji National Gender Policy¹, Fiji National Action Plan (NAP) to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) (2021-2026)², Policy on Child Protection in Schools³, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)⁴, United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)⁵ we welcome the achievements in Fiji. However, with the remarkable progress, after deliberations and consensus considering our intersectional lived realities we hereby with the plurality of our voices advocate for:

Girls' Meaningful Participation in Public Life

Article 12 of the UNCRC:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

As such we call upon:

- ✓ We call upon meaningful inclusive education approaches that are considerate of all dis/abilities
- ✓ We call upon the inclusion of girls' voices that is representative of girls' lived realities from the Western Division. Particularly, we need existing national policies to be reviewed and strengthened to ensure girls' lived realities are addressed within these.

¹ <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/db294b55-f2ca-4d44-bc81-f832e73cab6c/NATIONAL-GENDER-POLICY-AWARENESS.aspx>

² <https://sites.google.com/view/fijiinap/home>

³ <https://www.education.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/CPReview2015Final-1.pdf>

⁴ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=60&Lang=EN

⁵ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Article 24 of the UNCRC⁶ recognizes “the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health” and the UNSDG 3 recognizes “Good Health and Well Being - Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development”⁷. As such we call upon:

- ✓ Gender Responsive education on SRHR by the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA). The 3rd Girls Forum have identified the need to have Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into our curriculum. We believe having CSE in our curriculum will create positive and healthy discussions about our bodies, create a healthy learning environment in our classrooms while creating a lasting positive impact on girls’ sexual and reproductive health.
- ✓ We urge the MEHA to consider having all trainee and current teachers go through appropriate training on delivering the current Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum and the proposed CSE. This will ensure teachers are confident in their own bodies, well informed about the subject and will in turn effectively deliver relevant content to students. Currently, most FLE periods in schools are used for other subjects and/or taught by teachers who do not deliver the subject effectively.
- ✓ We thank MEHA with the Ministry’s current efforts in supplying girls’ free sanitary pad vouchers in schools. However, we call for the Ministry to ensure accessible, safe, functioning and hygienic Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities are available in every school with regular maintenance of these facilities.
- ✓ We also call for considerations on girls’ menstrual health realities where girls are well supported when going through their menstruation during school days. This would include having hot water bags, spare uniforms that girls can use in schools to ensure girls are not missing classes due to their periods.

Prevention and Elimination of Violence

Article 19 of UNCRC recognizes “States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse...”⁸ As such we call upon:

- ✓ The elimination of systematic patriarchal structures and biasness on age, gender, race, and sexual orientation discrimination and stigmatisation in all leadership spaces inclusive of school.
- ✓ MEHA to review the current FLE / social studies and vernacular curriculum that may perpetuate gender stereotypes. In particular, the FLE curriculum needs to be reviewed

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

⁷ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>

⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child#:~:text=Article%2013,media%20of%20the%20child's%20choice.>

and incorporate gender equality modules that will allow for students to form better relations amongst themselves and ultimately their communities at large.

- ✓ Urgently, we call for safer public spaces for girls. We need our public transports, bus stations, streets to be free from all forms of violence including sexual harassment.
- ✓ We urge the need to have police to be gender responsive and girl-child friendly in their approach to addressing reports on violations of girls' rights.
- ✓ Moreover, in solidarity with the 2nd Girls Forum, we call for the current national call free line 1325 to be accessible to all girls including Deaf girls. There needs to be a free SMS platform to allow for our Deaf sisters access to such this child-centered service.

Our Revolutionary Commitment

In solidarity with all diverse girl leaders in Fiji we demand to be recognized as girl leaders for now and the future and call upon every citizen to act for the progression of the rights of the girls and children! We believe in the leadership power of our voices and will continue to rise!

GIRLS Succeed!

The 3rd Girls Forum is convened by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), Grow. Inspire. Relate. Lead. Succeed – GIRLS Programme and supported by the Australian Government through the Pacific Girl Programme, managed by the Pacific Women Lead at the Pacific Community (PWL at SPC).

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