

## Department of State Implementation Plan

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March 15, 2016

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### The Department of State's Commitment to Adolescent Girls

This plan outlines how the Department will implement the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy. The Department recognizes that a concerted effort to empower adolescent girls globally and address the harmful norms and practices that impede their full socioeconomic participation is essential to safeguarding girls' human rights and is of central importance in maximizing the effectiveness of efforts to advance U.S. security interests and development priorities. When a girl drops out of school, is forced into marriage, or becomes pregnant before she is physically and mentally ready, her rights are compromised and she is constrained from achieving her full potential. In addition, her welfare and that of any future children is threatened, which can perpetuate cycles of under-education, poverty, and poor health. At the national level, these outcomes undermine economic productivity, threaten sustainable growth and development, and drive conditions that enable violence or insecurity.

Our commitment to promoting the rights and welfare of adolescent girls is grounded in the Department's broader efforts to empower women and girls globally, as outlined in the Policy Guidance on Promoting Gender Equality to Achieve our National Security and Foreign Policy Objectives, issued in March of 2012 by Secretary Clinton. This guidance directs the integration of gender equality and the advancement of the status of women and girls in all policy development, strategic and budget planning, implementation of policies and programs, management and training, and monitoring and evaluation of results. It sets forth priority areas where efforts to address the status of women and girls should be integrated into the Department's work, including political and civic participation, economic participation, and peace and security.

In June 2014, Secretary Kerry issued additional policy guidance on Promoting Gender Equality and Advancing the Status of Women and Girls, which directs all U.S. embassies and Department bureaus to prioritize efforts to empower adolescent girls, including by eliminating impediments to their education and addressing the specific challenges they face such as GBV and harmful practices. This guidance places particular emphasis on including girls from disadvantaged populations and girls who are pregnant or have been married. Together, these policies offer a structure to guide the Department's internal and external efforts.

### Operational Structure

The implementation of this strategy will be led by the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI), in coordination with other bureaus, offices, and embassies.

As part of this implementation plan, the Department is already building partnerships, investing in programs, and coordinating strategic efforts to address challenges facing adolescent girls. In addition to the efforts of U.S. embassies around the world, including our multilateral engagement, the Department of State bureaus and offices implementing programs benefiting adolescent girls include the Secretary's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (S/GAC), the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO), the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

For example, S/GAC leads the implementation of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and works to prevent the transmission of HIV to key populations, particularly adolescent girls and young women. IO leads on U.S. engagement with the United Nations, which includes advancing a variety of goals relating to the protection of the human rights of women and girls and advancement of the status of women and girls through a myriad of UN bodies, including the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Council, Commission on the Status of Women, and UN executive boards. PRM leads Department efforts on the protection of girls in humanitarian response and on sexual and reproductive health and rights policy issues more broadly.

DRL seeks to end discrimination, violence and exploitation, and harmful practices against women and girls; promotes the full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; and works to strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment. ECA creates programs in tandem with our overseas posts and regional and functional bureaus in order to open dialogues with important public audiences—particularly women, youth, and civil society groups. These programs inform, develop skills and motivation, and create people-to-people networks that empower participants to improve their lives and their communities.

## Strategic Objectives

Priority thematic objectives for the Department's implementation of this strategy will include addressing harmful practices, in particular CEFM and FGM/C, and promoting legal and policy frameworks that protect girls' universal human rights. Among U.S. government agencies, the Department of State is uniquely positioned to address these issues given its focus on ensuring human rights are protected and fulfilled by governments, and that governments are effective and accountable. These priorities are aligned with the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a specific target on eliminating harmful practices as part of Goal 5 and emphasizes transparent and accountable governments as part of Goal 16.

### Promote legal and policy frameworks that empower girls and advance their rights

Through diplomatic engagement, the United States will work with governments and civil society organizations to advocate for policy and legal reform to protect and empower adolescent girls. This should include advocating for national policies and strategies and the passage, amendment, and implementation of laws such as those that:

- **Protect girls' rights**, including those that provide for universal birth and marriage registration, protect girls from statelessness, and establish women's and girls' right to access justice on an equal basis with men; their right to own, transfer, and inherit assets on an equal basis with men; and their right to a divorce.
- **Prevent and respond to gender-based violence**, including those aimed at prohibiting dowries or bride prices, criminalizing the practice of FGM/C including by medical providers, funding women's shelters, updating judicial training programs, or creating units in police forces aimed at prohibiting CEFM or responding to GBV.
- **Expand girls' access to education, health, and services**, including those that extend the period of free and compulsory education for girls through secondary school, preserve the rights of married and pregnant girls and adolescent mothers to attend school, institute comprehensive sexuality education in national curricula, and remove barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights and comprehensive, accessible, youth-friendly health services.

In addition to advocating for the passage of laws, the Department will prioritize ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of existing laws and policies. These efforts will include working with law enforcement to protect girls at risk of violence or who are survivors of violence. As awareness and education about these laws are key, the Department will also work with governments, civil society, and business organizations to inform audiences abroad, and particularly adolescent girls, of the rights and legal protections adolescent girls are granted under the law.

**Address child, early and forced marriage and mitigate its consequences for married girls**

A human rights abuse that affects over 15 million girls each year, CEFM undermines a range of U.S. government policies and programs and stands as a major obstacle to global stability and development. Pursuant to this strategy, CEFM will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue throughout foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and diplomatic efforts. Department policy and programs—particularly those benefiting adolescent girls or affecting high-prevalence countries—should, to the extent practicable, incorporate a specific focus on preventing CEFM and educating audiences abroad about its harmful consequences, including high rates of maternal death and injury among married adolescent girls who become pregnant before their bodies are fully mature. Efforts should also aim to mitigate the harmful consequences of CEFM for married girls, including by helping them reconnect to education; generate income; gain safety from violence; obtain divorce when they wish, along with their share of marital property; and access justice, social support, and sexual and reproductive health information and services. Wherever possible, efforts should be community-led and community-implemented, with support from the U.S. government, and should aim to incorporate men and boys, as well as traditional and religious leaders.

**End female genital mutilation/cutting and address its consequences**

The practice of FGM/C is a grave human rights abuse that is also a social norm in far too many places, justified as a rite of passage into adulthood or to prepare a girl for marriage. It is carried out based on deeply embedded attitudes and views on religion, tradition, culture, women's and girls' sexuality, and their place in society. Its practice

spans religions and socioeconomic status. In many communities, there is a social obligation to undergo the practice and a fear of stigma or even social exclusion if families refuse to conform. In addition to often causing intense, life-long pain and psychological trauma, the procedure carries both short and long-term health risks—including hemorrhaging, recurrent infections, infertility, the potential of increased risk for HIV infection, fistula, complications in child birth, and even death—and has no health benefits. Department policy and program initiatives will focus on raising awareness about the harmful impacts of all types of FGM/C, incorporating a focus on human rights as part of education and awareness-raising efforts, encouraging the enforcement of laws against FGM/C where they exist, encouraging passage in places where laws are weak or nonexistent, and raising the awareness and ability of medical providers of how to best identify and care for survivors of FGM/C. Wherever possible, initiatives should be community-led and community-implemented, with support from the U.S. government, and should look for opportunities to engage local and national religious leaders to counter perceptions that the practice is based in religion. Interventions that include livelihood alternatives for FGM/C practitioners should be considered. Efforts should also focus on providing services for at-risk girls as well as those suffering health consequences from the practice.

## Strategic Goals

The Department of State will implement the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy through five strategic operational goals:

1. Increase diplomatic engagement on issues affecting adolescent girls
2. Engage adolescent girls and their communities through public diplomacy and outreach
3. Enhance and expand programming to empower adolescent girls
4. Strengthen coordination with U.S. government, international, and private sector partners
5. Integrate a focus on adolescent girls throughout the Department's operating structure

This holistic approach, using a range of tools and investments, will significantly improve the lives of girls around the world.

### **GOAL 1. INCREASE DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT ON ISSUES AFFECTING ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

High-level, sustained diplomatic engagement on issues affecting adolescent girls is at the forefront of our efforts to implement the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy. Governments have a responsibility to invest in adolescent girls' education, health, and safety. U.S. diplomats will raise these issues—including discriminatory laws and judicial systems, lack of access to or availability of services, particularly education and sexual and reproductive health services, and the prevalence of harmful practices such as CEFM and FGM/C—in bilateral and multilateral meetings and fora with host countries. Efforts related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals present opportunities to reinforce government, private sector, foundation, academia, and civil society attention to

ongoing, persistent challenges to development and achieving full gender equality, including “second generation” education issues and issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, political and economic participation, and GBV.

### **Bilateral and Regional Diplomacy**

The Department of State will continue to promote adolescent girls’ empowerment through 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, Department officials will 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 will measurably improve the lives of girls and their communities. The Department will frame these issues within the context of shared strategic objectives, noting the security and developmental implications of poor educational, health, and economic outcomes for girls. In particular, the Department will encourage governments to develop and implement national strategies to prevent CEFM and address its consequences, including protecting girls who have already been married. For countries that have demonstrated the political will to address CEFM and other challenges facing adolescent girls, the United States will offer policy collaboration and/or technical support as appropriate.

Ambassadors and officers at U.S. embassies can play a strategic role by working with host government officials, including through engagement with relevant ministries, to learn more about the specific issues facing adolescent girls in-country and advocating for greater and more impactful attention to these issues in government policies and programs. Embassies are encouraged to convene stakeholders to facilitate policy-oriented discussions and linkages among stakeholders. For example, embassies could host consultations between government representatives and civil society and/or traditional and religious leaders to discuss education, sexual and reproductive health, GBV, or other issues affecting adolescent girls, or they could bring together representatives from diverse government ministries to improve coordination around these topics. Embassies may also be able to facilitate public-private partnerships—for example, between the government and media outlets to organize national public awareness campaigns.

The United States could also host regional dialogues where countries can exchange strategies and highlight best practices for addressing harmful norms and practices affecting girls, reforming discriminatory legal and policy frameworks, and improving implementation and awareness of law and policies protecting girls. Officials can also use strategic dialogues as an opportunity to partner with other donor countries on adolescent girl related investments.

### **Multilateral Diplomacy**

The United States will leverage its engagement in the United Nations and in other multilateral institutions to advance the rights and well-being of adolescent girls and to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is achieved, especially Goal 4 on education and Goal 5 on gender. Multiple UN fora— including the Security Council, the General Assembly and its

committees, the Human Rights Council, and the Commission on the Status of Women—provide opportunities to continue working with other governments to promote, protect, and realize girls’ rights and highlight the harmful effects of CEFM and FGM/C. The United States has provided strong leadership in the campaign against CEFM at the UN and in other international organizations and will continue to support resolutions on harmful practices and strengthen language related to girls at the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council.

The UN Security Council, UN Human Rights Council, and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly regularly consider resolutions that deal with issues such as CEFM, child protection, violence against women and girls, access to basic education, and women, peace, and security. U.S. negotiators support language in these resolutions that, in the strongest terms possible, notes the ongoing prevalence of and harms caused by discriminatory practices affecting adolescent girls and calls upon states and the Secretariat to take all appropriate action to combat these practices and promote opportunities for girls globally. With respect to CEFM and conflict, the Department will seek through the Security Council to promote accountability by condemning the practice of CEFM in the context of conflict-related sexual violence.

We will continue to ensure that the human rights of adolescent girls, harmful practices, and adolescent girls’ equitable access to quality education and youth-friendly health services— including sexual and reproductive health services—are addressed at the UN Commission on the Status of Women and UN Commission on Population and Development, including through progressive rights-based language in agreed conclusions. The Department is committed to continuing to develop partnerships that can play an active role in preventing and responding to these practices, including through the Donors Working Group on FGM/C.

## Reporting

The Department will continue robust reporting on issues that affect adolescent girls globally. The Department of State’s annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (Human Rights Reports) and Trafficking in Persons Reports are useful tools to guide our engagements with foreign governments and encourage us to evaluate our own efforts around the world. As part of the Department’s implementation of the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy, diplomats will raise sections of the Human Rights Reports focused on adolescent girls—especially the sections on education, CEFM, FGM/C, reproductive rights, and health—in bilateral and multilateral dialogues with donor countries and countries where adolescent girls are disadvantaged.

The Department will continue to strengthen its reporting from post on issues affecting adolescent girls, including through the Human Rights Reports and cables. We will consider the status of legislation protecting girls’ rights as well as whether it is being effectively implemented and enforced. To better inform human rights reporting on the situation of adolescent girls, political officers will be encouraged to meet regularly with organizations that are working to empower adolescent girls or address barriers to their education, such as HIV/AIDS and GBV, including CEFM and FGM/C, as well as conflict and displacement. Further, internal reporting on the implementation of the U.S. National

Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security will continue to incorporate efforts to advance the status of girls in countries affected by conflict, war, violence, and insecurity.

# Examples of Diplomatic Efforts to Empower Adolescent Girls

## BILATERAL AND REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

### **STRATEGIC DIALOGUES AND OTHER BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS**

As appropriate, Department of State senior officials include girls' rights, health, education or harmful practices affecting girls on the agenda of strategic dialogues and other bilateral engagements, stressing that girls' inability to access rights—be they social, economic, cultural or political—presents obstacles to achieving U.S. foreign policy goals of peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

### **COALITION BUILDING**

The Department of State is working with countries that have experienced the social and economic benefits of increasing girls' education, empowering girls, and curtailing CEFM and other harmful practices to encourage progress on these issues in other capitals. For example, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is working with 11 countries that have updated their citizenship and birth registration laws in ways that will safeguard child brides and their children from statelessness to spread the message around the benefits of reform. The Department will undertake similar initiatives in line with its implementation of the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy.

### **SUBNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

Opportunities and barriers for adolescent girls vary widely within foreign countries. For instance, CEFM and FGM/C may be concentrated in particular regions within a country. Regional advisors within the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues work with the regional bureaus and the Bureau of Public Affairs' Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs to increase the capacity of state and local governments, as well as community and religious leaders, to promote policies that enhance girls' access to education and curb harmful practices.

### **EMERGING CRISES**

Adolescent girls suffer disproportionately when populations are destabilized or displaced by insecurity, conflict, or natural disaster. For example, rates of CEFM among Syrian refugees in Jordan reached 25 percent, compared to 13 percent among Jordanian nationals and 18 percent among Palestinians living in Jordan. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with embassies and relevant regional and functional offices, monitors emerging and ongoing crises to ensure that foreign governments and humanitarian organizations work to protect adolescent girls and prevent CEFM and other detrimental practices for girls in such situations.

## MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

### **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEWS**

The Universal Periodic Review is a process conducted by the UN Human Rights Council through which the human rights records of the United Nations' 193 Member

## GOAL 2. ENGAGE ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND OUTREACH

Public engagement to address and dispel harmful social norms that devalue girls and girls' education, constrain the range of acceptable roles for women, and discourage discussion of adolescent health and rights is critical. Even when legislation against CEFM, FGM/C, or other gender-based violence exists, local authorities may not enforce such laws. Efforts to raise awareness and to engage key local and national decision-makers are often a key driver in shifting public attitudes and encouraging collective action to end harmful practices that affect adolescent girls.

As part of the Department of State's implementation of the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy, staff in Washington and in U.S. embassies will use the full range of public diplomacy tools—including cultural programming, academic grants, international visitor programs, educational exchanges, alumni programming, media engagement, Bureau of International Information Programs speakers, and public outreach—to inform audiences abroad, including men and boys, about the importance of adolescent girls' education and health and the harmful impacts of gender-based violence, including CEFM and FGM/C. Embassies are also encouraged to engage with youth directly and to conduct outreach to local civil society organizations.

In addition, the goals of this strategy will be promoted through the following:

### Public Engagement and International Days

Embassies can use public engagement opportunities, including media interviews, op-eds, and social media platforms, to raise awareness locally about the importance of girls' education, rights, health, and empowerment. In particular, embassies and officials in Washington may use thematic opportunities—including Women's History Month, International Day of the Girl Child, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, International Human Rights Day, International Women's Day, and other appropriate occasions—to convene events focused on girls and illustrate the benefits to individuals and societies of educating and empowering girls. Whenever possible, embassies should look for opportunities to include adolescent girls and boys in public diplomacy events and activities. To increase girls' attendance at embassy-hosted events, country staff should reach out to schools or girls' organizations.

### Outreach to Youth and Civil Society

Embassies are encouraged to take an inclusive approach to youth and civil society engagement, including outreach to schools, girls groups, and civil society organizations focused on youth empowerment, gender inequality, poverty, social norm change, or adolescent girls' rights, health, or education—especially those organizations that are women- or girl-led. Such organizations can facilitate connections with families, community leaders, religious leaders, and other local influencers to overcome barriers faced by adolescent girls. Dialogues with U.S. government officials can raise the profile of organizations' work and help them improve the efficacy of their efforts.

Youth-centered convenings at embassies and missions as well as large global conferences and gatherings can facilitate a dialogue between diplomats and

development experts with adolescent girls and organizations that serve them to discuss country-level priorities and pathways to action.

### Exchanges

Department exchange programs provide girls with the information, skills, and support they need to reach their full potential and encourage adults to empower girls around the world. Department staff will seek opportunities to nominate appropriate candidates engaged in this sector to participate in U.S. government-sponsored exchanges, such as ECA's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP), Fulbright and Humphrey Fellowships, and teacher and youth exchanges. Posts eligible for the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program may nominate secondary teachers for a specialized six-week program to examine girls' education themes in depth. As part of ECA's partnership with Let Girls Learn, posts eligible for the 2016 Fortune-Department of State Global Women's Mentoring Partnership are encouraged to include among their nominations women who have a demonstrated passion for adolescent girls' education and empowerment.

### Engaging Networks in Mentoring and Advocacy

Embassies can leverage existing youth, professional and alumni networks—including the IVLP, Fulbright, Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI)—to mentor and advocate for adolescent girls. All exchange participants become part of the alumni network and are eligible to join the International Exchange Alumni website, which has 150,000 active users. Members are eligible for small grants and other opportunities, and often choose to implement projects that address the challenges facing girls. Embassy Public Affairs Sections can offer additional opportunities to alumni.

## **Examples of Public Diplomacy and Outreach to Empower Adolescent Girls**

### **ZIMBABWE**

Although one in three Zimbabwean girls is married before age 18, many Zimbabweans were unaware of the prevalence of CEFM and its links to poor health, decreased educational attainment, poverty, and violence. In FY2014, Embassy Harare spearheaded a robust public affairs campaign that included roundtable discussions, social media campaigns, exchanges, public speaking events, and school visits aimed at raising public awareness of Zimbabwe's high rate of CEFM and influencing policymakers to ban the practice. The Mission's sustained engagement on this issue galvanized government officials, civil society organizations, academics, legal experts, and others to action, and in 2016, a Constitutional Court ruling raised the legal age of marriage to 18, effectively banning the practice.

### **SPORTS DIPLOMACY**

ECA launched the U.S. Department of State's Empowering Women and Girls through Sports Initiative to increase the number of women and girls involved in sports around the world, using the global lessons of Title IX as a founding theme. Through sports visitor, envoy, and mentorship programs, these exchanges have accelerated sports opportunities for girls and have also been tailored to address GBV, HIV/AIDS, and CEFM.

### **EXCHANGES**

ECA's TechGirls program provides three weeks of intensive training and hands-on skills development in technology-based fields to girls from the Middle East and North Africa, making them more competitive in their pursuit of STEM careers. ECA's high-school exchange programs bring youth from around the world to the U.S. for an academic year; upon return, alumni initiate projects to tutor young girls, improve health education, and facilitate access to clean water. Exchanges for international secondary school teachers, like the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program and the International Leaders in Education Program, train teachers to better serve adolescent girls in their classrooms and communities, including developing strategies to prevent early marriage and pregnancy and increase parental support for girls' education. Other exchanges, such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), introduce emerging leaders and influencers to U.S. approaches to addressing domestic and gender-based violence, trafficking, and economic and political empowerment. In FY 2015, ECA brought approximately 557 IVLP participants to the United States on 69 different programs related to women and girls.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**

English language is a gateway to economic and educational opportunity in many countries. The Department's English language programs include direct in-country English teaching, exchange programs for U.S. teachers and experts, and online and

### GOAL 3. ENHANCE AND EXPAND PROGRAMMING TO EMPOWER ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The Department of State implements a range of programs that benefit adolescent girls, including programs that educate communities about the harmful effects of GBV, prevent the transmission of HIV to adolescent girls, provide assistance to girls impacted by conflict and crisis, promote STEM education for girls, and use sports to build girls' confidence.

Pursuant to this strategy, the Department will prioritize programming that supports adolescent girls and addresses barriers to their full participation in societies. This could include initiating new programming as well as ensuring that programs already being implemented consider the needs and opportunities of adolescent girls. The Department of State will also continue to work with the Millennium Challenge Corporation through its compacts, as well as USAID and other agencies disbursing foreign aid, to advocate for programs addressing issues facing adolescent girls, including the passage, improvement, and implementation of laws that protect and promote their rights, health, education and safety.

Programs should draw on the existing evidence base to determine what approaches have been most successful and sustainable, and should incorporate a strong focus on monitoring and evaluation, using sex- and age-disaggregated data. Programs should draw on the expertise of local civil society experts whenever possible.

#### Priority Countries

Evidence suggests that programs that combine a range of interventions targeting the myriad challenges faced by adolescent girls are among the most effective means of empowering girls and allowing them to achieve their potential. Wherever possible, potential programmatic activities implemented under the strategy should be delivered as a holistic, integrated package in order to maximize impact. However, such programs can be resource intensive and must be thoughtfully designed with careful attention to the local context. By implementing the programmatic aspects of this strategy in a specific set of pilot countries where adolescent girls face disadvantages relative to boys, we can ensure our investments are targeted and effective, and concurrently establish a model for success that could be scaled up for broader implementation.

In July of 2015, President Obama announced that Tanzania and Malawi are the first two countries to be eligible for funding under the Let Girls Learn Challenge Fund, led by USAID and the Department of State. The Challenge Fund will encourage and support innovative and community-led solutions to ensure adolescent girls receive a quality education. The Challenge Fund—to be managed by USAID—will use a unique approach that allows external partners and the U.S. government to co-create comprehensive and integrated solutions. Ultimately, this will bring together external stakeholders from the private sector, academia, and civil society to help design and implement innovative programs to ensure that girls are able to remain in school. Challenge Fund interventions will be shaped to meet the specific needs of each priority country. To help determine country-specific approaches, consultations will be held with

host country government officials, civil society representatives, mission and embassy staff, Peace Corps volunteers where applicable, and Washington-based officials, among others. Any potential programming will include robust planning for monitoring and evaluation.

### Department of State Grants

Engaging with civil society organizations is vital to the work of empowering adolescent girls and addressing harmful social norms. Various bureaus and offices in the Department of State, including S/GWI, provide grants directly to local, grassroots civil society organizations that are uniquely attuned to the precise set of issues facing their communities, including those which hinder gender equality for girls and women. Supporting such organizations to address the context-specific variables that drive poor outcomes for girls is one of the most effective means to catalyze shifts in attitudes at the local level.

Some U.S. embassies have foreign assistance funding that could support the health, safety, education, and rights of adolescent girls globally. Embassies could provide grants to civil society organizations—particularly those that are women- or girl-led—that have demonstrated success in identifying and addressing the main challenges faced by girls in a given country or region, or in reaching the girls with the greatest need. For programs focused on youth such as the English Access Microscholarship Program, EducationUSA, high school and undergraduate exchanges, or Ambassador’s Youth Councils, embassies should work to ensure that these programs are gender-balanced and gender sensitive. Embassies can also encourage program participants, particularly those who are female, to mentor adolescent girls and conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of adolescent girls’ empowerment.

## **Examples of Programs to Empower Adolescent Girls**

### **ADDRESSING FGM/C IN GUINEA**

In Guinea, the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues helped to protect vulnerable girls against the prejudicial practices of FGM/C through a \$1.5 million project from the Secretary's Full Participation Fund. This project established a national multimedia awareness campaign to promote behavior change against FGM/C in Guinea with key partners, including the Government of Guinea, UNICEF, and male religious and tribal leaders, health, media and civil society networks. The project collected data on the practice via community surveys and provided capacity building and specialized training for those directly involved in cutting such as health workers, traditional excision practitioners, religious leaders, and community associations.

### **NO LOST GENERATION INITIATIVE**

Education is a key component of PRM's protection work in humanitarian response. The U.S. government's humanitarian assistance has supported the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative, which since its launch in 2013 has mobilized the international community around the impact of the Syria crisis on children, youth, and adolescents, including adolescent girls. The initiative establishes a 3-5 year framework that remains flexible to respond to changing dynamics in affected countries to expand the delivery and access while increasing focus on the quality of education, child protection, social protection, and adolescent and youth engagement services inside Syria and in neighboring refugee host countries. In 2015, NLG partners supported 1.2 million children with community-based child protection interventions, including psychosocial care and support services, and 535,000 adolescents and youth were trained to provide leadership at the local level including for social cohesion and community engagement. Inside Syria 3.2 million children were enrolled in education, and in the refugee host countries 700,000 Syrian refugee children accessed formal and non-formal education opportunities.

## **GOAL 4. STRENGTHEN COORDINATION WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT, INTERNATIONAL, AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS**

While the efforts of the global community have realized important gains in reducing inequality for girls and women, the barriers that remain are complex, and resistant to change. As also outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, overcoming these significant remaining barriers to development will demand deliberate and sustained coordination among all of the stakeholders whose work has an impact on the lives of adolescent girls globally to make the best use of our resources and maximize the impact of our investments. In implementing this strategy, the Department will prioritize collaboration with the legislative branch, given its leadership on, and long-term commitment to, these issues. The Department will also seek to strengthen its

coordination with bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector, and civil society to harmonize interventions, avoid duplication of efforts, and exchange best practices.

A key component of the Department's implementation of this strategy is coordination with its interagency partners, especially USAID, Peace Corps, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Persistent poor educational and health outcomes for adolescent girls, as well as their subjection to harmful practices, impact the efforts of many U.S. government priorities, including Feed the Future, PEPFAR, Children in Adversity, the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and the work of many offices across the Department of State, USAID, and other relevant agencies. Efforts to empower adolescent girls directly support the objectives of other United States strategies, including the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally; and the National Action Plan on Children in Adversity.

## **GOAL 5. INTEGRATE A FOCUS ON ADOLESCENT GIRLS THROUGHOUT THE DEPARTMENT'S OPERATING STRUCTURE**

Pursuant to the Secretary's Policy Guidance on Gender Equality, the Department of State will continue to strengthen management and oversight, build human capital, and emphasize training around gender equality, with a particular emphasis on the importance of addressing issues facing adolescent girls. To implement the U.S. Adolescent Girls Strategy, the Department will:

- Encourage diplomatic and development programs to address adolescent girls in strategic and budget planning and monitoring and evaluation of results.
- Seek to identify strategy leads at each embassy to facilitate communication and create a network of Department staff working across sectors to address the needs of adolescent girls and ensure the implementation of the strategy serves broader diplomatic and development priorities.
- Offer training to employees on issues faced by adolescent girls. Such training should elucidate how challenges such as CEFM, FGM/C, and girls' poor educational attainment and health outcomes impact their work and should feature best practices for working with communities, families, and girls themselves to shift social norms and increase girls' access information, skills, services, and support. All staff whose work responsibilities are related to empowering adolescent girls will be encouraged to complete classroom or distance learning gender equality training available through the Foreign Service Institute.
- Assemble existing tools and resources online to help country staff and staff across the Department highlight and address the challenges facing adolescent girls. This may include toolkits to plan girl-focused events or campaigns, statistics and fact-sheets to inform op-eds and remarks, and resources to inform program design and data collection or facilitate youth participation in programs. Where tools or resources do not currently exist, the Secretary's Office of Global Women's issues will work with associated bureaus to develop these. An online portal could also serve as a platform to exchange lessons, share ideas, and build communities of practice.

- Make efforts to disseminate the strategy broadly, including by translating it into several languages, making it easily accessible online, and sharing through cables, as well as elevating it at global, regional, and country-level meetings with embassy and mission staff.

## **Examples of Coordination to Empower Adolescent Girls**

### **WISCI GIRLS STEAM CAMP**

The Department of State's Women in Science (WiSci) Girls STEAM camp, held at Gashora Girls Academy in Rwanda in July to August 2015, brought nearly 120 female secondary and high school students from eight African countries and the U.S. together for three weeks of cultural exchange and hands-on learning in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art and design, and mathematics (STEAM). In-kind and financial contributions from all partners—including AOL Charitable Foundation, Intel Foundation, Microsoft, the United Nations Foundation's Girl Up Campaign, Rwanda Girls Initiative, Rwandan Ministry of Education, African Leadership Academy, and the Meridian International Center—brought nearly \$1.4 million in value to the girls' camp. Organizing partners crafted a curriculum that combined exercises in coding and robotics, mentoring sessions, project-based learning, and team exercises. The WiSci camp has inspired the participants to bring STEAM and Girl Up clubs to their home schools, continue working on group projects, and serve as mentors for younger girls in their communities.

### **CHARGE**

At the Clinton Global Initiative in 2014, the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution and the No Ceilings Initiative at the Clinton Foundation convened a global collective to address and advance "second generation" issues in girls' education. This collective of more than 40 organizations—including USAID, the Department of State, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation—is known as CHARGE (Collaborative Harnessing Ambition and Resources for Girls' Education). Through CHARGE, each partner organization makes a commitment to address one of five CHARGE priorities: (1) Access, (2) Safety, (3) Quality Learning, (4) Transitions, and (5) Leadership. Currently, CHARGE brings together more than \$800 million in commitments.

## **Measuring Results**

The Department of State continues to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure the effectiveness of its foreign assistance investments and that bureaus and embassies are integrating sex-disaggregated data into reporting mechanisms. The United States was also a strong advocate for the incorporation of sex-disaggregated data throughout the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As noted above, priority thematic areas of focus are addressing harmful practices, in particular CEFM and FGM/C, and promoting legal and policy frameworks that empower girls and advance their rights. While quantifying the impact of the Department's efforts in these areas is not always straightforward, illustrative indicators are suggested below for bureaus and embassies to demonstrate and track their efforts to implement this strategy.

- Increase Diplomatic Engagement on Issues Affecting Adolescent Girls
  - Number of resolutions supported at the United Nations on issues affecting adolescent girls
  - Number of laws drafted, proposed, or adopted with USG assistance designed to protect girls' rights, prevent or respond to GBV, or expand girls' access to education, health, and services
- Engage Adolescent Girls and their Communities through Public Diplomacy and Outreach
  - Number of events held at embassies focused on the rights and empowerment of adolescent girls
  - Number of events held at embassies that directly engage adolescent girls
  - Number of adolescent girls included in existing programs focused on education, health, and other areas that have a particular impact on adolescent girls
  - Number of girl activists/advocates engaged by embassies to inform country initiatives and promote their work
- Enhance and Expand Programming to Empower Adolescent Girls
  - Number of new programs created or supported focused on adolescent girls as a target population
  - Number of programs created or supported that advance the Department's priority thematic of focus (i.e., policy and legal frameworks that empower girls, addressing CEFM, ending FGM/C)
- Strengthen Coordination with U.S. Government, International, and Private Sector Partners
  - Number of bilateral partnerships formed around adolescent girls' rights and empowerment
  - Number of public-private partnerships formed around adolescent girls' rights and empowerment
- Integrate a Focus on Adolescent Girls throughout the Department's Operating Structure
  - Number of trainings held integrating content on the issues faced by adolescent girls

Department staff are also encouraged to consult with civil society experts and advocates to develop and establish indicators for programs and policies. As mentioned above, staff are also encouraged to specify whether activities target adolescent girls 10-14, 15-19, or both.

All efforts under this strategy will be guided by the Department of State's evaluation policy, which provides a framework to implement evaluations of programs, projects, and activities that are carried out and funded by the Department. The Department will make

a deliberate effort to link policies and programs to the goals elaborated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular efforts will be linked to the achievement of targets under Goal 4 on education and Goal 5 on gender, especially target 5.3 to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation."