Investing in Women and Girls

In the book of Genesis, we read that God created both male and female in God’s image. In many ways, the creation story provides us a basis from which we frame our vision for equality between men and women. In his letter to the church in Galatia, Paul refers to this theme of equality when he mentions that we are all one in Christ Jesus. However, we have long struggled to practice these essential values both as a community of faith and as global citizens.

Studies show that when women and girls are meaningfully included in all aspects of decision-making, countries are more likely to be peaceful and prosper economically. Nevertheless, women and girls continue to suffer greater harm from lack of economic, political, and social opportunities, as well as gender-based violence. Our conviction to improve the status of women and girls around the world must be met with steadfast commitment to ensure that policies and programs that address existing disparities are adequately funded and effectively implemented.

The U.S. government has historically been a leader in funding programs that address the needs of women and girls globally, yet there are indications that such initiatives are in danger of being significantly reduced or eliminated. This would hurt communities that depend on the support of our government to improve the lives of women and girls—and their countries’ economic and security outcomes. We urge Congress to include the following investments in the FY19 budget:

**Gender-based Violence** - Allocate no less than $200,000,000 to implement a multi-year strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

**Adolescent Girls’ Empowerment** - Appropriate no less than $250,000,000 for the coordination and implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls Globally. The first-ever strategy of its kind, it outlines a comprehensive U.S. government approach to educate and empower adolescent girls, as well as mechanisms for inter and intra-agency coordination to harness the full power of the U.S. government and avoid duplication of efforts.

**Child, Early and Forced Marriage** - Dedicate no less than $25,000,000 of the $250,000,000 for adolescent girls for the implementation of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to end child marriage and meet the needs of married girls, in fulfillment of the mandated child marriage strategy provision of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013.

**Women’s Leadership** - Appropriate no less than $50,000,000 to increase leadership opportunities for women in countries where women and girls suffer discrimination due to law, policy, or practice.

**Women’s Economic Empowerment** – Robustly fund all activities that foster women’s economic empowerment. Investment in programs that strengthen women’s access to employment opportunities, support entrepreneurship, create market linkages, and break down legal and regulatory barriers to their participation in the economy.

**Women, Peace, and Security** – Allocate sufficient funds to fully support a multi-year strategy to expand and improve coordination of U.S. government efforts to empower women as equal partners in conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, and relief and reconstruction efforts, including equitable provision of relief and recovery assistance to women and girls.

**Gender Empowerment/Inclusion in Addressing Environmental Deterioration** – Dedicate no less than $1.3 billion for the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) for international climate assistance for inclusion of women who are disproportionately impacted by and vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The GCCI is funded through programs by USAID and the Treasury and State Departments for adaptation, clean energy, and sustainable landscape assistance. The GCF supports programming in all three areas and has implemented a policy for gender inclusion during all phases of its projects. The GEF works to systematically include gender parity in its projects, creating effective synergies between environmental management and gender equality. The continuation of these programs is essential.

1. [The Global Gender Gap Report 2017](#)
2. [Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security](#)

---

OFFICE of GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

110 Maryland Avenue, NE Suite 309 = Washington DC 20002 = 800.228.0515 P 202.547.7300 = advocacy.episcopalchurch.org