

24th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Written statement by Women's Health and Education Center

Agenda item 5: Principles of effective governance for delivery of equitable and sustainable development for all

Strengthening Digital Governance *for* Education and Health Sectors

We recognize that the success of the Education & Health projects requires sound policies and planning as well as efficient implementation arrangements. In view of the scale of today's global challenges and the great potential of promoting coherent policymaking and strengthening digital governance, to deliver responses, global cooperation in good administration, is indispensable to achieve health- and education-for-all. Global partnerships around digital governance are necessary to mobilize financial and knowledge resources from governments, businesses, academia and civil societies and unfold the potential of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both public and private sectors play an essential role in financing research and development. Therefore they are essential to create a balanced strategy that leverages the strengths and weaknesses of both.

Strengthening public institutions in the digital era is essential and of the utmost importance. Current trends indicate that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs, but science-based tools can help change. Advanced digital technologies are set to change the way we work and live. While scientific evidence is key in addressing complex global challenges, science is not a cure-all. Technological advancements can improve living conditions, but they can also often create increased inequalities in certain instances, leading to increased frustration among those left behind. The scientific community needs to communicate their work and the inherent uncertainty of the scientific process more effectively.

Established in 2001, Women's Health and Education Center was granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in 2008. Women's Health and Education Center has been actively working to advance the causes of peace, health and development with the United Nations since its inception. It has a vision to build infrastructure in developing countries and to create meaningful opportunities for girls women and minorities to participate in global philanthropy. The organization embraces the tremendous diversity of people, religions, and cultures around the world. In support of this belief, the organization has established an academic and cultural focus at important institutions around the globe, to nurture common interests and potential. By supporting reproductive health and research, open dialogue and objective analysis, Women's Health and Education Center, has laid the ground work for mutual understanding among countries.

The initiative is providing advocacy, information, and consultation on everyday issues associated with mental health, women's health, child health, violence against women and children and healthcare policies – to name a few areas. e-Health development is holistic, evidence-based and people-centered; it considers how people live within their own environments and responds to stakeholders' needs.

Groups that have more difficult access to education and health

Women, girls, migrants and minorities are one of these groups. About 40% of countries have not achieved gender parity in primary education. This disadvantages in education also translate into lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labor market for young women, minorities and migrants. 79 low-and middle-income countries still face an average annual financial gap of \$79 billion. Without additional measures, only one in six countries will achieve the universal secondary school completion target by 2030, an estimated 84 million children and young people will still be out of school, and approximately 300 million students will lack the basic numeracy and literacy skills necessary for success in life. (Source: The SDG Report 2023)

Inequalities will also worsen unless the digital divide – the gap between under-connected and highly digitalized countries – is not addressed. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenges in providing schools with basic resources. The situation is extreme at the primary and lower secondary levels, where less than one-half of schools in sub-Saharan Africa have access to drinking water, electricity, computers and the Internet.

Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) Chair Program *for* Research and Educational Organizations / Networks, was launched in 2022, in collaboration with the UNESCO and Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), to improve sustainability literacy for all, with special focus on women, girls, minorities and migrants. It is fostering collaborative research partnerships / networks in both developed and developing countries.

Knowledge generation and dissemination

In view of the scale of today's global challenges and the great potential of digital governance to deliver responses, global cooperation in education and health is indispensable to achieve health- and education-for-all. Global partnerships around education and health are necessary to mobilize financial and knowledge resources from governments, businesses, academia and civil societies and unfold the potential of all SDGs. Both public and private sectors play an essential role in financing research and development, and therefore both are essential to create a balanced strategy, that leverages the strengths and weaknesses of both. Capacity building is essential to ensure equal participation. Partnerships are key to creating an open, fair and trusting environment, and ensuring equitable worldwide development of digital infrastructure, multisectoral approaches, including citizen science and indigenous knowledge.

Robust digital infrastructure, including interoperable systems, is essential for bridging the digital divide and enabling interconnectivity for inclusive global participation, coherent policymaking and digital governance. International support and public-private partnerships for infrastructure development are key to enhancing access to stable and affordable electricity, mobile networks and the Internet. Sexual and reproductive health is critical to health and wellbeing across the life course, and therefore has to be embedded and integrated with universal health care and universal access to all. [Science and Knowledge Translation](#) in reproductive health research and dissemination, exchange and [clinical application of scientific knowledge](#) with the healthcare providers worldwide and communities, is the purpose of [WHEC's LINK Access Project](#) .

Women's Health and Education Center's Response Framework

Social justice requires healthcare, education, food, water, housing, employment, social protection, and digital technologies that no one is left behind. Women's Health and Education Center's initiatives with UN, WHO and UNESCO aim to address the underlying causes of

poverty and inequality, in a world where it is estimated that more than 600 million people still live in extreme poverty. Women's Health and Education Center, focuses on the importance of supporting those countries and communities that host large number of refugees, promoting the inclusion of refugees in host communities, ensuring the involvement of development actors from an early stage, and developing a 'whole-of-society' approach to refugee responses. Its four key objectives are to:

1. Ease the pressures on host countries and communities;
2. Enhance refugee self-reliance;
3. Expand third-country solutions; and
4. Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Women's Health and Education Center with its partners and UN System, has been actively involved and initiated, for more than two decades, the practical application of the Sustainable Development Goals Framework, in many countries. We must implement comprehensive and inclusive policies, change our way of thinking, and prioritize efforts to eliminate poverty and bridge the digital divide. It is crucial for governments to integrate social, economic, and environmental policies to promote social justice.

To strengthen coherent policymaking and strengthening trust in Education & Health Partnerships, for SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 16 and 17, Women's Health and Education Center encourages:

1. Developing countries should formulate strategic plan for coherent policymaking and digital governance with clear, specific and measurable goals to seize the opportunities brought by technological advancement. The planning should reflect country's strengths and weaknesses in science, technology and innovation and highlight the connections (and missing links) between the national needs and objectives and the UN 2030 Agenda – Building inclusive STI global agenda.

<https://hlpf.un.org/2022/programme/improving-global-partnerships-for-education-and-health>

2. Governments should create the conditions for accessible, affordable and high-quality digital infrastructure that supports coherent policymaking to enhance development.
3. Developed and developing countries should develop collaborative mechanisms to incentivize technology and knowledge transfer among universities, research institutions, and the private sector. International partnerships should aim to closing gaps in knowledge capabilities that hamper effective technology transfer.
4. Expanding UNESCO Chair Program. Promoting global collaboration. Fostering social justice is a collective responsibility.

Building Sustainable Partnerships, through **Women's Health and Education Center's e-Learning, e-Health, and e-Government Initiatives** will offer a way forward. While obligations to promote the rights of women, children and marginalized people are protected by international conventions, difficulties in moral obligation into practice still abound. When we work together – across national borders, groups, disciplines and stakeholder – we as international community, can harness science and technology to the benefits for all.

We need to look and appreciate the benefits of long-term commitment to fundamental research and open science, and we also need to look ahead and anticipate challenges and possibilities. What is urgently needed is to enhance international solidarity and cooperation, revitalize global trust and partnerships in research and development.

Simply expressed, we **cannot** let anyone down.