

# YOUNG LIONS HEALTH AWARD



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## **Key insight**

Healthy girls and women are the cornerstone of healthy societies. Provide girls and women access to health throughout their lives and they will deliver a healthier and wealthier world. There are multiple benefits to building health systems that provide a continuum of care for girls and women. First and foremost, it saves lives and, subsequently, money. The moral and economic costs of failing to invest in disease prevention, screenings, vaccinations, and integrated health systems are staggering.

Yet women and girls in developing countries are frequently confronted with a myriad of socio-cultural factors which negatively impinge upon personal safety and access to appropriate health care services. Institutional, economic, and educational barriers affect and lower their standard of living when compared to their male counterparts. While governments bear the greatest responsibility to ensure that girls and women have access to comprehensive healthcare, everyone has a role to play to reduce barriers and promote the health and wellbeing of all.

## **Objective**

**UN Women and UNICEF would like you to:**

- 1) Create an integrated campaign that highlights the barriers women and girls in developing countries face when trying to access healthcare.**
- 2) Galvanise young people (boys and girls) to build a society without gender based discrimination.**

**Please note you can find a local insight from one country or work on a Global campaign to tackle to the issues as a whole. Either option will be judged equally.**

## **Media channels**

All media platforms – you should include traditional, digital and social media. Please bear in mind that we rely primarily on pro-bono media space and there is no budget.

## **Key messages**

- The young people of today are THE generation to identify, highlight, and eliminate harmful gender stereotypes, paving the way for a future free from bias and discrimination.
- In case of gender norms, the values are so deeply entrenched that most of us don't realize that we are gender stereotyping.
- There has never been such great momentum to build a future free from gender bias and discrimination.

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## Target audiences

**Young Influencers** – young boys and girls.

*Rationale:* they shape gender roles and identities that have an impact of violence prevention, access to essential services, such as education and healthcare and employability for young girls.

## Campaign characteristics

The *glocal* campaign strategy should be participatory based, drive mobilization, positive and optimistic.

## Insights

1. **The key issues women/ girls face when gaining access to healthcare, in particular sexual and reproductive care are:**

The barriers that adolescents face to accessing quality sexual and reproductive health information and services differ in each context, but often include a lack of information about pregnancy prevention, or for those already pregnant information about the importance of antenatal care, or where and how to access these contraceptive and maternal health services. While these issues could be addressed through things such as comprehensive sexuality education (at least for those adolescents in school), work must also be done with health care facilities to ensure that adolescents feel comfortable seeking services without stigma and can trust that their confidentiality will be maintained. Compounding these issues in many places are the legal and policy barriers that restrict adolescents access to certain types of care or information, including around contraceptives.

2. **The issue is broad and concerns everyone.**

Gender inequality pervades personal, family and social relationships and institutions, and affects not only women and girls, but also men and boys, and requires the engagement of both sexes to make progress towards justice and equality. Shifts in gender equality require not only awareness and behaviour change, but also changes in the fundamental power dynamics that define gender norms and relationships.

3. **It starts early.**

Many of the gender roles and identities are formed at an early stage in a person's life.

- *Childhood.* Harmful gender roles and stereotypes are learned behaviour that start early on in life. Gender discriminatory practices lead to differences in health outcomes among girls and boys, for example in India, gender discrimination is an underlying cause of malnutrition among girls and women. Children learn expected behaviour by observing the way their caregivers act, and take

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cues from the stories we read, the language we use, and even the toys they play with. Whether it be a mother choosing to dress her daughter in pink, or a teacher telling a student that ‘boys don’t cry’, we know that gender socialization is a complex and ongoing process. Over time, children may learn that boys should be assertive and aggressive, while girls should be demure and passive.

- *Adolescence.* Gender roles and stereotypes solidify during adolescence as gender norms become internalized, they become the basis for several gender related problems later on such as bullying, abuse, harassment and gender based violence. Gender role and norms underlie cultural taboos relating to menstruation, sexual and reproductive health and harmful practices such as child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting
- *Employment.* Gender roles and identities also influence how young girls and boys participate in the economy through the kinds of jobs that they undertake. They may see male figures in leadership roles, as politicians, scientists or businessmen, while they see women take on the role of nurses, preschool teachers, or homemakers, for example. Girls then tend to concentrate in ‘soft’ roles staying away or being excluded from senior leadership roles and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) related fields.

## Examples:

- 1) Malawi has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, and girls are four times more likely to be HIV positive than boys. In addition, girls face high rates of child marriage and teen pregnancy in Malawi. The UN works in Malawi to improve adolescent girls’ access to health information and services, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. In Malawi, less than a quarter of girls finish elementary schools, which means that providing health information at schools only reaches a small percentage of adolescent girls. Therefore, UN health education programs are facilitated through life skills education centers and at youth-friendly health clinics.
- 2) In Indonesia, traditional attitudes towards family and gender-roles prevail, where jobs are scarce, infrastructure and services are weak, and poverty is widespread. Young people are often unwilling to approach adults with questions or concerns about relationships. Yet having a reliable source of support is critical in a community where violence is all too common. According to a report published in 2015, 60 per cent of men in Jayapura reported they had committed physical or sexual violence against an intimate partner. Nearly half of men reported believing that women should tolerate abuse to keep their family together. It is here that a support group is working to bring young people and caregivers together, improve communication skills, and diffuse conflict – part of broader efforts to end violence in the community. The programme aims to tackle the attitudes that fuel violence against women, by helping young people and others in the community talk openly about relationships between the sexes, along with sexual and reproductive health and consent.

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3) Around the world, according to the 2017 Global Early Adolescent Study — which looked at girls and boys between 10-14 years old in 15 countries with varying income levels — many gender-based stereotypes are universal, and they become entrenched before 10 years old. It found that one of the biggest myths perpetuated about gender, is that once girls hit puberty, they are vulnerable and in need of protection to preserve their sexual and reproductive health, while boys are seen as strong and independent. It's this myth that changes how the world sees both sexes during adolescence, and how it continues to treat them throughout their lives. Among consequences that the study noted when girls conform to gender stereotypes:

- Depression
- Child marriage
- Leaving school early
- Exposure to violence

And consequences when boys conform to gender stereotypes:

- Engaging in physical violence to a much greater extent than girls
- Dying more frequently from unintentional injuries
- Being more prone to substance abuse and suicide
- Having a shorter life expectancy than women

One of the major takeaways from the study is that it's important to challenge gender stereotypes when children are young.

## Partners

1. **The Unstereotype Alliance** has the purpose of challenging gender stereotypes in media and marketing, and to promote progressive portrayals of people, both men and women. This is about tackling all stereotypes from gender to the intersectionality with race, age, ethnicity. It joins together:
  - **UN Women.** It is the UN organization with the core mandate of promoting gender equity globally, championing women and girls. UN Women works to challenge harmful gender-based stereotypes that hold back progress for all, and to empower women. It is present in 90 countries around the world, and works across multiple sectors with a wide range of partners at multiple levels to affect positive change. Under the Alliance, UN Women brings together a wide range of partners from multi-national corporations to advertisers, ad agencies, and others working to eliminate

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stereotypes from advertising and communications. This initiative is in line with this objective and the overall mandate of UN Women to drive the achievement of gender equality globally.

- **UNICEF.** It is the only UN organization with children at the heart of its mandate. UNICEF works in over 150 countries, providing scope and scale to ‘tip the balance’ on gender socialization for better outcomes for future generations. UNICEF through its many programmes in communities, schools and families can shape entrenched gender roles, working with both caregivers, service providers and children directly, from early childhood onwards. UNICEF supports communities to transform social narratives and promote behaviour change. Every day, UNICEF works closely with governments and communities but also with multi-national and national companies and small- to medium-sized businesses **to identify**, design and implement alliances that leverage the strengths of the corporate sector on behalf of the world’s children.
- 2. **HeForShe movement**, led by UN Women, calls upon men and boys to join as partners in solidarity for the achievement of gender equality. Under this umbrella, over 1.3 million people across the globe have registered actions to create a more gender equal world.

As gender socialization is a process that affects the youth in multiple different settings, UN Women and UNICEF are in a unique position to promote positive gender socialization in different spheres. Thanks to their multi-disciplinary mandate, UNICEF and UN Women can work across sectors to ensure positive gender socialization in schools, homes, health centres, and communities at large, tackling the multiple dimensions of gender socialization from childhood through adolescence.

## Expected impact

1. Elimination of stereotypes that prevent women and girls from exercising their potential and accessing the care and services they need and to enjoy equal freedom, opportunities and access to education and healthcare in the future.
2. Elimination of gender-based stereotypes among men and boys to encourage more equitable participation in the provision of paid and unpaid care, taking responsibility for family planning, and reduction in gender-based violence.
3. Men and boys’ participation in caregiving professions and in unpaid care work to eliminate gender stereotypes for the next generation.

## Success examples

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- In Nepal, UNICEF worked at the community level to engage men and boys to tackle Gender Based Violence. This was rolled out across 35 districts (out of total 75 districts) with 908 community level

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events raising awareness in collaboration with local Gender Based Violence watch groups. The Gender Based Violence Information management system is now operational and has documented

2509 cases across the 35 districts. Does it work? YES. Community report that engagement of fathers and brothers has been very effective in positive gender transformation and as an example of positive gender transformation.

- UN Women led HeforShe movement has created a mass movement and generated awareness on positive role that men and boys can play in addressing traditional gender regressive roles, that are harmful to girls and limit their life opportunities.
- The #MeToo movement is also one example of highlighting the ways that gender norms and stereotypes are harmful to society. The widespread acceptance of men's sexually aggressive behavior, coupled with women's lack of recourse in abusive situations, have contributed to normalizing an unacceptable dynamic. However, with so many women breaking the silence on this issue, we have the opportunity to transform gender dynamics in the long term.

## **Brand Guidelines**

All ideas and executions, online and offline, need to adhere to UNICEF's and UN Women's global brand guidelines provided by the two organizations. Tone should be upbeat and hopeful. It is important to highlight successes of efforts for breaking down gender stereotypes and the impact that can be achieved if these benefits are extended to young girls and boys through positive images and messaging.

## **Timeline:**

2 years

**Inequalities are stopping women and girls from exercising their potential and accessing the care and services they need. Together we can shine a light on gender inequalities to ensure that all women and girls enjoy equal freedom, opportunities and access to education and healthcare in the future.**