



Participants from the 2022 West Africa Adolescent Girls Summit

2024 West Africa Adolescent Girls Summit

Monrovia, Liberia
March 26-29, 2024

The Adolescent Girls Summit (AGS) is a pioneering initiative that provides a platform for adolescent girls to connect, share experiences, voice their concerns and advocate for their rights to create a more inclusive future. Unlike many conferences where young people are relegated to the periphery, the AGS places adolescent girls at the center of the conversation. The summit is entirely planned, organized, and facilitated by adolescent girls and boys with operational guidance from [Global Fund for Children](#) and its community based partners. Their voices and perspectives are integral to the discussions, allowing them to directly influence the agenda and outcomes. The summit also recognizes the importance of engaging boys as allies in the pursuit of gender equity. It promotes respectful relationships, shared responsibilities in households, and the dismantling of harmful gender norms.



Why Adolescents?

Adolescence is a critical phase of development where young individuals undergo significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this period, they become more aware of their rights, identities, and roles in society.

Work with children and youth, particularly in the international development sector is often focused either on education in the early years (0-11) or engagement with young adults (19-25). This can lead to a lack of intentional spaces where adolescents (13-19) are able to come together, build relationships, develop their networks, and have their voices heard. The AGS aims to fill this gap, by developing a safe space for both adolescent girls and boys.

Building on the 2022 Adolescent Girls Summit

In April 2022, 100 adolescent girls and boys from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ethiopia spent three days in Monrovia for the first Adolescent Girls Summit. During the Summit, adolescents connected, learned, engaged with adults as equals, and developed a call to action on gender equality, the rights of girls, and eliminating female genital cutting/mutilation. Notably, the adolescent delegates presented their calls to action to the Vice President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Jewel Howard Taylor.

[Learn more:](#)

[The first West Africa Adolescent Girls Summit: Advocating for Equality](#)
[2022 Adolescent Girls Summit video](#)

The Transformative impact of the 2022 Adolescent Girls Summit

10 months later, the participants reported to Global Fund for Children that the Summit had ongoing positive effects on their lives, including:

- **Increased self-confidence:** Many girls shared that prior to participating in the summit, they were shy and unable to express themselves in public. The Summit empowered them to be self-confident and to voice their issues.
- **New aspirations to leadership positions:** Girls are no longer afraid to apply for leadership positions in their schools which they initially viewed as boys' privilege.
- **Boldness to challenge harmful traditional practices that negatively affect their health and well-being.** Many girls came from communities that practice female genital cutting/mutilation and early marriage. The Summit was the first time they learned the negative consequences of these practices from experts which motivated the girls to educate their families and communities at home.
- **Increased commitment by the boys to raise awareness among their counterparts for gender equality:** Boys are increasingly challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and violence against girls. They understand that breaking free from these norms benefits not only girls but also boys themselves by allowing them to express their emotions, interests, and talents freely.
- **Action taken by the Vice President of Liberia:** In response to one of the calls to action of the adolescent girls, the Vice President of Liberia, Madam Jewel Howard-Taylor, in collaboration with UNFPA and Plan Liberia, initiated the Sanitary Pad Bank Project in the South East region of Liberia to ensure that no adolescent girl had to miss school due to the unavailability of sanitary pads.
- **Changes in the way local partners interact with adolescents:** the transformative impact of the Adolescent Girls Summit extends to local partners working with adolescents as they became more open, receptive, and interactive in their interactions with adolescents, resulting in a more inclusive and effective approach to addressing the needs and aspirations of young people.

“Previously, I was that shy girl that hardly talked or participated in any discussion about the issues girls are facing, but since the Summit, I have built my confidence and focus on my goals as a girl. In my community, I started engaging girls and young women about female genital cutting, the harmful effects of it, and teach them the importance of menstrual hygiene.”

Tity Memunatu Samatha Sannoh, 17, Sierra Leone (2022 AGS participant)

2024 West Africa Adolescent Girls Summit

The 2024 West Africa AGS is expected to gather **150 adolescents aged 13-19 years, 50 young people aged between 20-25 years across West Africa, as well as representatives from relevant government institutions, parents, religious/community leaders, civil society organizations, issue-area experts, funders and the private sector.** It will be an inclusive space representing adolescents from urban and rural areas, school-going and out-of-school, including adolescents with disabilities and adolescent mothers. These adolescents are primarily participants in local organizations' program activities. The ratio of girls to boys will be 70:30. The space will foster dialogue, encourage leadership, and promote gender equality by addressing issues affecting adolescent girls and amplifying their voices.

Participants and Countries

The participants will primarily be from French and English-speaking countries in West Africa, including but not limited to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, The Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Ghana and Nigeria. A limited number of participants from Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa will also be invited to learn, share experiences with the perspective of replicating the initiative in their respective regions with the long-term objective of convening an Africa wide AGS in the future.

Objectives for the 2024 Adolescent Girls Summit

The primary objective of the Adolescent Girls Summit is to create a space for adolescent girls to express themselves on matters that impact their lives and strengthen movement building amongst their peers. The Summit will encourage active participation and engagement, allowing girls to share their stories, challenges, and aspirations. Additionally, the Summit will focus on:

- Empowering adolescent girls with knowledge, skills, and confidence to take control of their lives and make informed decisions.
- Fostering a sense of agency and encourage girls to advocate for their rights, including access to education, healthcare, and protection from violence.
- Promoting gender equality and challenge societal norms that perpetuate discrimination and inequality.
- Facilitating networking opportunities for adolescent girls to connect with peers, mentors, duty bearers, other strategic stakeholders and funders.

Key issues of interest to adolescents

- **Gender justice:** Ensuring equal rights for boys and girls
- **Comprehensive sexuality education:** Equipping girls and boys to make informed decisions about their bodies and relationships.
- **Education for All** – Removing the barriers to girls' education.
- **Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence:** finding long term solutions to sexual harassment and rape.
- **Protection of girls from harmful traditional practices:** equipping girls and boys with knowledge and skills to educate their friends and family members on the harmful effects of female genital cutting and early marriage.
- **Healthy masculinity:** empower boys to challenge traditional, toxic stereotypes of masculinity and recognize their role as allies in the fight for gender equity.

Key Activities during the Summit

The summit will feature a blend of interactive sessions, workshops, panel discussions, intergenerational dialogue, and creative activities to achieve its objectives:

1. **Capacity building:** workshops and training sessions that will enlighten adolescents on current and emerging issues affecting girls and equip them to live fulfilling lives and become change agents in their communities. This can among others include training in leadership, entrepreneurship and digital literacy.
2. **Storytelling and expressive arts:** Opportunities for girls to share their stories through art, poetry, and other creative forms of expression.
3. **Panel discussions:** spaces for experts and role models to provide insights and share experiences with adolescents in order to build their self-confidence and advocacy skills.
4. **Engagements with parents, community/religious leaders, state institutions and funders:** Create a space for intergenerational dialogue between adolescents and parents, community/religious, state institutions as well as funders. The engagement will help the above-mentioned stakeholders and funders better understand the realities and injustices girls face at home, schools and in their communities.
5. **Networking and amplifying their voices through the media:** Spaces for adolescents to connect with duty bearers, other stakeholders and funders, establish partnerships, and engage with local media to raise awareness of their calls to action.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Empowered Girls:** Adolescent girls will feel more confident and motivated to take on leadership roles and advocate for their rights.
- **Increased Awareness:** The public will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by adolescent girls in West Africa and the solutions identified by the adolescents.
- **Policy Recommendations:** Summit findings will be used to advocate for policy changes and initiatives that prioritize adolescent girls' rights.
- **Collective Action:** The Summit will foster a sense of unity and collective action among participants, encouraging ongoing collaboration and support.
- **Inspiring Change:** The event will serve as a catalyst for inspiring positive change in communities, promoting gender equality and girls' rights.

Support the Adolescent Girls movement building

The AGS serves as a platform for concerted efforts to empower and uplift adolescent girls, offering a unique opportunity for development partners and funders to create meaningful and lasting change. You can support the AGS in a variety of meaningful ways, each contributing to the success and impact of the event. Here are different ways in which you can get involved:

- **Sponsor adolescent girls to attend the event:** your support will enable many girls from urban and rural areas from different countries to meet, connect and build a strong adolescent movement. They can be adolescent girls participating in your partners' programs or rural adolescent girls who have never had

the opportunity to connect with peers from other countries. The sponsorship package includes travel, accommodation, meals, workshops materials. Through the sponsorship, you will be guaranteeing adolescent girls and boys in West Africa unique leadership and personal growth opportunities.

- **Cover event costs:** you can cover event costs, including venue rental, logistics, materials and equipment and translation (language and sign). This will ensure a smooth and effective summit experience.
- **Facilitate capacity building workshops:** Organizations with expertise in relevant fields can facilitate workshops during the summit. These workshops could focus on leadership skills, communication techniques, comprehensive sexuality education, harmful traditional practices particularly female genital cutting and early marriage, gender equality, healthy masculinity, climate change or other relevant topics. This will provide valuable insights and knowledge to the participants while highlighting the funder's commitment to the cause.
- **Promotion and publicity:** you can leverage your networks and resources to promote the summit and increase its reach. This could involve using their platforms for advertising, social media promotion, and media coverage.
- **Sponsor the participation of government officials, parents, religious and traditional leaders:** The summit seeks to provide the platform for Adolescent girls to engage duty-bearers including parents, government officials particularly representatives of the ministry of education, community and religious leaders on issues affecting them and call them to action. Funders can sponsor the participation of key stakeholders that adolescent girls would like to invite by covering their travel, honoraria, and accommodation expenses.
- **Technology and infrastructure support:** Provide technological resources such as audiovisual equipment, livestreaming services, or virtual conferencing platforms to ensure the summit is accessible to a wider audience.
- **In-kind donations:** Donate resources such as sanitary pads, books, educational materials, braille or technology devices that can be distributed to participants or used during the summit.
- **Long-term engagement:** Commit to long-term engagement with the summit organizers to ensure sustained impact. This could involve multi-year funding commitments or ongoing collaboration on specific projects, scholarships or grants for marginalized adolescent girls who wish to pursue further education, vocational training, or entrepreneurial ventures to help girls achieve their aspirations beyond the summit or seed funding for projects or initiatives that emerge from the summit. This ensures that the ideas and solutions generated during the event translate into real-world actions.

Please contact:

Amé Atsu David (she/her), Regional Capacity Development Specialist in West Africa:

adavid@globalfundforchildren.org

or

Kieran Lewis (he/his), Senior Partnerships Manager in UK: klewis@globalfundforchildren.org to discuss joining the 2024 Adolescent Girls Summit as a sponsoring organization.