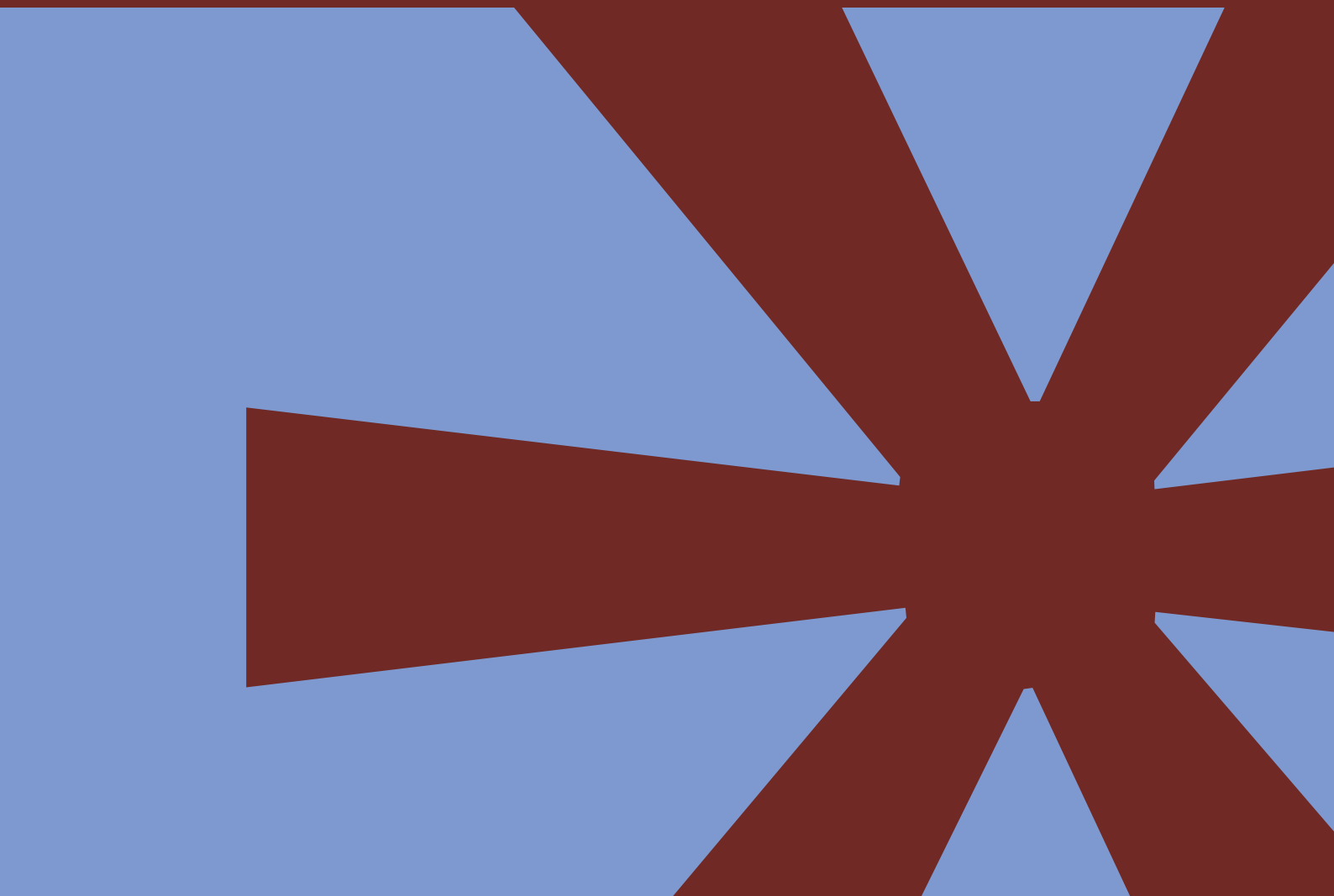


2024 EDITION

CHILDREN IN G20



CHILDREN IN G20


THE NEED FOR MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN IN G20



Children in G20 is a Brazilian articulation group with participation of national and international organizations to build joint advocacy efforts to ensure the child rights agenda is mainstreamed across all G20 processes leading to the Leaders' Summit.

Children, all human beings under 18, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, **are the primary victims of the major challenges and polycrises that the world faces today.** As individuals in developmental stages, their vulnerability is significantly heightened in the contexts of hunger and poverty¹, wars², climate change³, and digital exclusion⁴. The gaps in international governance concerning the recognition of children's rights, best interests, and voices are particularly noticeable for children in the Global South, where approximately 75% of the world's children live⁵.


Acknowledging children as agents of change and ensuring proper care and investments, individual, social, and economic positive outcomes are unparalleled. Prioritizing and investing in children, including implementation of rights, and best interests, taking into consideration mental health⁶, is not just a necessity but an opportunity to enhance human capital, economic efficiency, and productivity, fostering a more resilient and prosperous global society.



More than half of the world's children live in G20 countries⁷.

However, despite occasional mentions of children in leaders' declarations and initiatives (such as the G20 Toolkit on Cyber Education and Cyber Awareness of Children and Youth⁸, and the G20 Initiative for Early Childhood Development⁹), this population is not assuredly included in the agenda. For instance, there is no specific Working Group, and none of the 13 existing Engagement Groups in the Brazilian G20 presidency focus on children.

In 2023, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General published the Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming¹⁰, mandating the mobilization of the UN system to collectively strengthen and elevate a shared UN child rights agenda.



Inspired by this initiative, the G20 in 2024 could follow suit by prioritizing children, their rights, and best interests in the G20 Leaders' Declaration.

Child rights mainstreaming can be understood as a strategy for including children's rights and participation as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of G20 policies.

The Brazilian G20 Presidency's motto "**Building a fair world and a sustainable planet**" and its three announced main priorities: **1) Fostering social inclusion and fighting hunger and poverty; 2) Promoting energy transitions and sustainable development in its three dimensions (social, economic, and environmental); 3) Advancing the reform of global governance institutions**, we present specific recommendations to ensure that one-third of the world's population is not left behind in G20 agendas and we call on its members to work together towards the implementation of the following recommendations.

¹ According to UNICEF, 333 million children around the world live in poverty. They currently make up half of the global poor population. Impoverished children are twice as likely to die in childhood than their wealthier peers. Globally, 1 billion children lack nutritional food and basic necessities. According to the World Bank, 15.9% of children around the world are living in extreme poverty. Available at: <https://children-incorporated.org/understanding-child-poverty-facts-and-statistics/>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

² At least 100,000 babies die every year because of conflict. At least 550,000 babies are thought to have died as a result of armed conflict between 2013-2017 in the 10 worst-affected countries. Almost 1 in 5 children live in areas affected by armed conflict and war, more than at any time in more than 20 years. Available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/stop-war-children-protecting-children-21st-century-conflict/>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

³ Over 99 per cent of children globally are currently exposed to at least one of the climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses such as water scarcity, various types of flooding, disease vector exposure and air pollution. These cumulative shocks also exacerbate inequalities, pushing poorer children further into poverty. Available at: [Unicef, The climate crisis is a child rights crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index](https://www.unicef.org/news/stories/unicef-the-climate-crisis-is-a-child-rights-crisis-introducing-the-childrens-climate-risk-index). Accessed on: September 19, 2024

⁴ The digital divide equates to 2.2 billion children and youth who don't have access to the internet in their homes, which means they are being left behind, unable to access education or news and information that can help protect their health, safety and rights. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2023/03/hc-digital-divide-leaving-young-people-behind>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

⁵ Children from African countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Iran, Indonesia and the Philippines together represent 3/4 of the total number of children in the world, according to Unicef. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/how-many/how-many-children-are-in-the-world/>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

⁶ It is estimated that more than 13% of adolescents live with a diagnosed mental disorder. An estimated 45,800 adolescents die from suicide each year, or more than 1 person every 11 minutes. Currently suicide is the fifth most prevalent cause of death for adolescents. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021/>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

⁷ Data available at: <https://data.unicef.org/how-many/how-many-children-are-in-the-world/>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

⁸ Toolkit available at: https://g20.in/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/Toolkit_Cyber_Edu_and_Cyber_Awareness.pdf. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

⁹ Available at: <https://dwgg20.org/app/uploads/2021/10/G20-Initiative-for-Early-Childhood-Development.pdf>. Accessed on: September 19, 2024

¹⁰ Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Guidance-Note-Secretary-General-Child-Rights-Mainstreaming-July-2023.pdf> Accessed on: September 19, 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hunger and poverty

Fair and Inclusive Economy

Climate Justice and Just Energy Transition

Health and Mental Health

Education and Culture

Digitalization and Technology

Girls and Gender Equality





Hunger and Poverty

G20 Member Should:

In alignment with the G20 Initiative for Early Childhood Development, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, SDG 4.2, and the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, prioritize investments in programs aimed at addressing poverty and inequalities, focusing on children in early childhood and their families.

In alignment with SDGs 1.1 and 1.2, prioritize the eradication of extreme poverty and the reduction of poverty across all its dimensions with a focus on children, especially those in early childhood, and their families, recognizing the early years as a crucial stage for full and healthy development and as a foundation for high-return investments tackling inequalities. It's imperative to acknowledge the diverse childhood experiences and structural, territorial, ethnic, racial and gender inequalities that impact the provision of fair opportunities that enable the realization of the rights of children, especially during early childhood.

Integrate mental health support and human rights protections into strategies to combat hunger and poverty. The aim is to enhance significantly the resilience and well-being of children and communities, ensuring a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Develop mental health national policies and strategies to reduce child poverty and inequality, with clear targets and indicators. Expand social protection programs to reduce the economic stressors contributing to food insecurity and poor mental health. Allocate funding, encourage multi-sectoral collaboration to develop and implement comprehensive policies and integrated approaches to food security and mental health. Partner with international organizations, NGOs,

and the private sector for additional resources. Establish systems to track progress and impact, conducting regular assessments to inform policy adjustments.

Expand the School Feeding Program to increase the participation of children. Developed countries should support developing countries in implementing this program, inspired by the Brazilian experience.



Fair and Inclusive Economy

G20 Member Should:

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL AND OF HIGHER QUALITY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CHILDREN

Prioritize spending on children and strengthening sectors for children, including health and nutrition, social protection, education, and protection from violence.

Underinvestment in preschool policies particularly in low- and middle-income countries presents innumerable costs to children, parents and their communities, undermining human and social development efforts. Spend one-half of all new spending on children's preschool years.

The G20 members should establish a Universal Child Benefit (UCB). UCBs are the foundational child policy – they provide a scalable and simple solution to beginning to meet the material needs of all children and families. In addition to UCBs, countries should add a provision to support new parents with expenses, paid parental leave policies, and early childhood education within an inclusive and gender-responsive framework.

Prioritize and fund programs that support emotionally responsive relationships during early childhood, particularly before age 3.

Design, implement, measure, evaluate and fund efforts to create positive environments for parent-child relationships, including expand access to parent support programs and implement policies that support parents as caregivers at home in the earliest years, such as paid parental leave, child benefits, family services, and paren-

tal empowerment, assuring future parents with access to mental health services and counseling. In addition conduct Childhood Impact Assessments on policies and programs across all sectors.

ADJUST THE GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR GOVERNING SOVEREIGN DEBT FIT-FOR-PURPOSE

Address the failures of the G20 Common Framework by expanding eligibility beyond Debt Service Suspension Initiative including, improvement of transparency of the debt relief process, ensure that debtor governments assume loans with full accountability to their citizens, and strengthen policies to facilitate comparable participation by private creditors;

STRENGTHEN TAX SYSTEMS AND TAX POLICIES THAT ADDRESS INCOME INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

Support progress towards a UN Tax Convention and the creation of an inclusive intergovernmental tax body under the auspices of the UN;

Take measures to ensure benefits for lower-income countries and non sanctions by the OECD-G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS);

Ensure that tax policies are designed to disincentivize environmentally harmful businesses and consumer practices, supported by measures to incentivize green business and consumption.



Climate Justice and Just Energy Transition

G20 Member Should:

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Adopt climate justice policies focused on the protection of children, especially those who are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as during early childhood and Indigenous children.

Ensure children's rights and equity, based on children's views and recommendations during climate negotiations, formulation of policies, and financing at all levels with a particular focus on populations who experience intersecting and compounding forms of inequality and discrimination, including but not limited to, children in early childhood, girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities, children of African descent and displaced children.

Recognize all children as key agents of change while addressing the climate crisis including protection of children's rights to expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and establishing safe and meaningful child-friendly mechanisms for their formal engagement in climate policy making at all levels.

Integrate and ensure that national climate policies, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), explicitly addresses vulnerabilities and needs of children, especially during early childhood.

Integrate and ensure that national biodiversity policies, including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) consider the specificities of ecosystems and biomes, especially native species, to maintain ecosystem services related to water, air and soil quality, food security, research and production of medicines, and the stability of the microclimate and macroclimate, especially for children and indigenous communities. Indigenous groups are responsible for protecting 80% of the planet's biodiversity based on ancestral knowledge and practices, essential to halt the loss of biodiversity and tackle the climate crisis. Protection of indigenous groups implies in protecting cultures intrinsically connected with nature.

JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

Take ambitious and urgent actions now to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5°C, i.e., above pre-industrial levels, including increase the ambition of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), facilitate the rapid phase out of the use and subsidy of fossil fuels, and redouble efforts to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement towards the best interests of children.

Implement policies that ensure a just and inclusive energy transition. It is vital to promote education and training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), with an emphasis on renewable energy and sustainability. It is important that children during early childhood, as well as girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities, children of African descent and displaced children have priority access to renewable energies and resilient technologies, to ensure safe infrastructures in schools and health centers.

ADAPTATION

Implement more robust climate adaptation policies, support local communities in developing and implementing adaptation plans that enhance resilience to climate change. In addition, recognize the adversities faced by children due to their socioeconomic and political positions. It is crucial that these policies promote redistribution of resources and knowledge to strengthen the most vulnerable communities, ensuring equitable access to education, health, and economic opportunities.

Implement a child-centered approach to climate adaptation focusing on the specific risks faced by children considering that their needs, rights, and capacities are central to adapt, plan and implement policies and initiatives to promote resilience and increase agency of children in processes of decision-making.

Ensure that climate adaptation infrastructures are safe and accessible, including specific protocols for protection during climate emergencies. It should include also design of shelters and specific solutions that prioritize the safety of children in early childhood, girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities, children of African descent and displaced children, thus minimizing additional risks of sexual violence.

Invest in school infrastructures that contributes to climate adaptation and urban resilience favoring students' contact with nature, from readaptation and naturalization of buildings to the creation of sustainable educational spaces, and climate adaptation and mitigation actions based on NbS. In addition, focus on climate adaptation and mitigation policy solutions for schools, including risk reduction action plans and disaster responses, especially for children and schools at risk. Among the suggestions for reducing socio-environmental and climate vulnerability, and strengthening protection includes, social, environmental and healthy security systems, humanitarian assistance, access to water, basic sanitation, and public services and spaces.

Create and fund mental health and psychosocial support programs in humanitarian and crisis settings, tailored to address challenges faced by children in these particular situations¹². Integrate mental health considerations into emergency and response plans to mitigate the impact of crisis on children's mental health. Recognize psychological resilience as a critical component of climate adaptation strategies, considering that psychological assistance foster adaptive behaviors and collective action.

CLIMATE FINANCE

Ensure that inclusion of children's voices and implementation of their rights and needs are at the center of climate finance decision-making and spending. Measures includes investment in child-centered adaptation actions and shock-responsive social protection to ensure uninterrupted access to health, nutrition, education, and protection.

Meaningfully engage children in the design, monitoring, and implementation of the Loss and Damage Fund, with an explicit focus on human and child rights considering their intersecting vulnerabilities.

G20 members must urgently close the adaptation finance gap and provide funding for losses and damages through the provision of new and additional climate finance to Official Development Assistance initiatives based on principles of predictability, transparency, and embedding the Principles for Locally-led Adaptation, placing children and child-critical social services.

Invest in education and green literacy skills for children, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, to prepare them for becoming an integral part of sustainable and climate resilient economy actions, aiming for a just transition.

Provide incentives to ensure that children, their families, and communities affected by inequality and discrimination are supported to access new economic opportunities driven by the green economy, including policies, programs

and budgets enabling up-skilling and re-skilling via Green Skills and Green Jobs. This also entails encouraging businesses to support green entrepreneurship and provide decent greener jobs for adolescents and youth, their families and communities.

Commit to a significant increase in investments in projects and programs that not only mitigate the impacts of climate change but also strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable communities, with special attention to children in early childhood, girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities, children of African descent and displaced children. We propose specific actions to educate and empower children in vulnerable areas, equipping them with the required tools to face climate challenges.

Develop resilient infrastructures that ensure the safety and well-being of children, including the construction of safe schools, the provision of accessible health services, and the availability of adequate housing capable of withstanding extreme climate events.

¹² Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support before, during and after armed conflicts, natural and human-caused disasters and health and other emergencies. Available at: apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA77/A77_ACONF11-en.pdf Accessed on: October 23, 2024.



Health and Mental Health

G20 members should:

Invest in local and regional production of medicines, vaccines, and strategic health supplies to combat diseases that mostly affect vulnerable populations (dengue, malaria, tuberculosis, Chagas disease, and leprosy) and prevent, prepare for and respond to global health emergencies.

Allocate sufficient resources across sectors such as health, education, and social protection to support comprehensive mental health services, including prevention, promotion, early intervention, and treatment. Expand access and quality of mental health with an investment allocation of at least 5% of Health Budgets to Mental Health in LMIC. DAC members should allocate at least 0.5% of their overall health development financing to mental health. Prioritize investment in mental health for children and youth. Ensure transparency and accountability for child-related policy commitments, including allocation of resources, prioritizing promotion and prevention. Identify and implement cost-effective strategies to deliver services and evidence-based interventions. Enhance the flow and use of budgeted resources for effective service delivery, especially at subnational levels.

Allocate enough resources to fund the development of patient-centered stepped-care clinical practice guidelines to support evidence-based mental health care for children. Hold governments accountable for providing adequate resources for children and youth engagement, focusing on children and youth inclusive and non-stigmatizing community approaches to mental health. It requires young people to have access to support in primary care,

mental health, and psychosocial services (including but not limited to employment and housing assistance) all in one location.

Establish clear, actionable goals for mental health at the G20 level and monitor progress towards these goals through regular reports and evaluation. Develop robust systems for data collection, indicators and routine monitoring of mental health indicators among children, informing policy decisions and resource allocation. Invest in research to better understand the prevalence, causes, and best practices for addressing mental health issues in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. Include psychological well-being metrics in the evaluation of social resilience programs (hope, social trust, and community solidarity).

Strengthen and prioritize the development of supportive early childhood environments that foster secure and resilient relationships considering that addressing adversities early in life can prevent the development of mental health issues, chronic diseases, and destructive coping behaviors. Implement comprehensive programs that support families, improve caregiver skills, and promote healthy relationships builds a solid foundation for lifelong well-being.


Strengthen child-centered, climate-resilient global health architecture and health systems with a PHC approach that allows countries to continue delivering essential services amidst the climate crisis, contributing to better climate adaptation and preparedness of communities facing the climate crisis, global health, or humanitarian emergencies.

Encourage public awareness campaigns to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, promoting the understanding that mental health is as important as physical health, as well as fostering environments where children and their caregivers can speak openly about their mental health experiences without fear of judgment or discrimination.

Invest in training and supporting professionals working with children to recognize and referral children with mental

health issues. Facilitate training for community members in basic mental health support skills. Establish networks that enable children to support each other. Strengthen community-based mental health services and networks to provide accessible support for children, integrating mental health services into primary health care and social services. Foster culturally sensitive mental health care, leveraging existing community structures and resources. Promote the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge in mental health practices.

Ensure policies that prioritize girls' mental health, including investments in diagnosis, treatment, and specific care, such as menstrual health, issues like endometriosis, and the distribution of sanitary products.



Education and Culture

G20 members should:

Prioritize investments in early childhood education programs to ensure access to quality learning experiences for children from birth to age six, as outlined in SDG 4.2.

Recognize the right to early childhood education as essential for human development and a crucial long-term strategy to address inequalities. View it as a structured pathway toward a more equitable society, focusing not only on children's rights but also on creating opportunities that address structural barriers and inequalities, ensuring no one is left behind.

Promote Nature-based Education, NbS, defined as the convergence of climate adaptation and mitigation actions, restoration of the biodiversity, reduction of pollution and education strategies that foster access and connection to nature in the school environment and its surroundings. Nature-based Education comprises an inclusive and integrating ecosystem between environmental education, anti-racist education, education for sustainability, climate education, integral education and outdoor education.

Promote actions, projects and programs in the pedagogical curricular dimensions that consider learning outdoors/with nature; adaptation and resilience related to school infrastructure; requalification of the school environment to expand natural areas; and inclusion of schools as priority institutions in receiving climate adaptation and mitigation policy solutions, action plans for risk reduction, disaster response and other urban policies, for example.

Embrace whole education for life, experiential learning and

community engagement in rural and urban areas, champion indigenous, traditional, and popular cultures and knowledge, and address character and holistic well-being by adequate financing of education in all levels and through investments in the mental health of children and young people as a strategy for strengthening resilience to face humanitarian, climate and environmental disasters.

Guarantee access to inclusive, anti-racist, and democratic education with quality and equity by providing a curriculum that promotes social justice, diverse pedagogical practices, and adequate infrastructure for nature-based education.

Promote inclusive educational practices, which means that all children, with and without disabilities, can learn together in the same classroom and have equal opportunities.

Recognize children's cultures as fundamental rights of children for full integral development, and promote the right to participation of children in public policies.



Digitalization and Technology

G20 members should:

Publicly commit against commercial exploitation of children in the digital environment, issuing a joint cross-sectional declaration with the support of all Digital Economy Working Group, stating that all technological advancements and governance must explicitly prohibit any form of commercial exploitation of children, in alignment with the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child and its General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, while also directing resources towards detecting, preventing, and raising awareness about the commercial exploitation of children online.

Develop an initiative to identify legislation, best practices, and guidelines to address the issue of child labor in the digital environment, including artistic child labor. This initiative should ensure respect for copyright and creative rights of children, establishing safeguards and cooperation mechanisms among countries for the proper monitoring of activities that constitute child labor in the digital space.

Guarantee that all States commit to laws and governance structures aimed to ensure that technology companies have due diligence, transparency and accountability procedures to guarantee child's best interest when providing digital products or services, ensuring the right to priority remedy and proper reparations measures in case of violations.

Encourage States to adopt measures to ensure that large technology companies are adequately represented institutionally in all jurisdictions in which they operate to ef-

fectively engage with local authorities, understand the cultural and socioeconomic particularities that impact the experiences of multiple childhoods.

Strengthen the G20 High-Level Principles for Children Protection and Empowerment in the Digital Environment (G20 2021), launching updated commitments against child online commercial exploitation, including zero tolerance against online sexual exploitation and abuse, and against child behavioral profiling for advertising purposes, publicly celebrating the commitment.

Establish a Commission or Observatory to monitor, report and develop action plans on the adherence to and effectiveness of child protection principles within the G20 High-Level Principles. The Commission could also be entitled to research, gather existing initiatives and share age-appropriate health and safety standards for platform design amongst G20 countries.

Prioritize children's access to public infrastructures, ensure their rights are integrated by design, including digital public infrastructures (DPIs) to ensure high levels of meaningful access, privacy, data protection, and prohibiting any commercial exploitation on their interaction with public platforms. Support low-income and developing countries in enhancing their digital infrastructures to create social participation platforms using emerging technologies, while also carefully avoiding amplifying inequalities of access to public services for those who are digitally excluded.


Commit and guarantee increased funding for initiatives exploring the impacts of digital technologies on children, as well as monitoring global fund investment distribution and allocation of specific funds to low and middle income countries.

Develop digital mental health strategies in the development, application and management of digital Technologies considering specifically children's and youth needs.

Develop policies and inclusive practices on integrating young people's insights and expertise into the develop-

ment of digital mental health contents and programs. Young people are extremely knowledgeable about aspects of mental health, particularly those with lived experience. Utilizing their knowledge and wisdom to shape content that is relevant to them and their peers is critical if we aim to provide accessible, evidence informed and reliable information. By including children and youth and fostering a sense of engagement, ownership and commitment resulting in more innovative, relevant and effective interventions for increasing mental literacy and building more resilient and informed future generations, are key elements to lead the change for a more sustainable planet and productive society.

Ensure public deliberation, transparency accountability, enforcement over development and use of technology for decision-making and the digital public infrastructure bridging access gaps, promoting community-owned data, AI and platforms models, and guaranteeing privacy and data protection and robust safeguards for children.



Girls and Gender Equality

G20 members should:

VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST GIRLS

Incorporate safety and security into all aspects of life, with special attention to institutional approaches, online abuse and exploitation, and to domestic violence.

Address gender-based violence (GBV) against children as a structural phenomenon considering all contexts and manifestations. Increase sustainable financing for programs aimed at ending GBV against children, and its distinct manifestations, particularly for girls.

Involve girls' social and political participation in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of national plans duly funded and support their activities and programs.

Create special national action plans and care pathway to support girls victims of traumas including violence and sexual abuse, and elaborate multisectoral care systems to facilitate equitable access to health care, especially mental health support throughout their lives.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

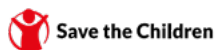
G20 members must give girls the tools and knowledge they need to make their own choices; provide financial help and benefits to both girls and their families; educate and mobilize parents and communities to change ingrained beliefs and practices; and ensure girls have access to quality education, access quality menstrual products that meet their needs.

G20 members should prioritize the protection and realization of girls' rights, promoting comprehensive sexuality education and access to sexual and reproductive health services to empower girls to avoid early and unintended pregnancies and child, early and forced marriage and unions. Also, G20 members should support girls who do become pregnant or married, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to return to school and achieve their full potential.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Promote gender equity through education. Governments must prioritize funding of 4-6% of GDP and/or at least 15-20% of public expenditure for 12 years of quality education for all girls; increase the availability of scholarships and support programs specifically targeting girls and young women, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

INITIATIVE CARRIED OUT BY





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