



Ending Sex for Education, Fees, Grades and First Jobs (WP3191)

12 - 14 June 2023

Wilton Park, Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3DZ



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Mon

00:00

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Summary

Young people who lack access to affordable forms of funding for their education, too often face coercion to have sex for education fees, passing grades, jobs and advancement. In its most extreme and common practices, the problem of financial “sponsors” exploiting mostly girls desperate to fund education expenses as well as the rampant abuse of “sex for grades” at education institutions globally is widely known, yet under-researched and under-discussed.

This is an issue in all continents. A 2014 UNESCO report about school-related gender violence across the world found that sextortion — among other types of sexual abuse — is widespread in many regions. The UK Office for National Statistics says full time students are at least three times more likely to experience sexual assault than any other occupation type with 11.6% of female students having reported being victims of sexual assault in the past year. The World Bank reports that approximately 1 in 5 female university students experience some type of sexual assault in North America. Surveys across the African continent indicate that as many as 50% of young women enrolled in higher education in Africa are forced to seek older male “sponsors” to meet their funding gaps, exposing them to sexual abuse, exploitation, and assault. Even more – 90% – surveyed in Girls First Finance focus groups report being affected by “sexually transmitted grades” in which professors require sexual favours for passing marks.

This Wilton Park conference will focus on how to end the sexual exploitation and abuse of girls and young women by authority figures during their education and early work experience journeys. It will gather diverse participants to progress this needed international conversation and foster a network of engaged organisations to cooperate for change.

Context

In 2019, Wilton Park held a conference (WP1696) to discuss violence against youth in tertiary education. This has had an impact. It resulted in a draft safeguarding code of practice and the UK government’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) used learnings from this conference to strengthen its safeguarding measures across FCDO Higher Education and Skills programming. Other steps taken since include the G7 and the UN making commitments to safe learning environments in 2019, 2020 and 2021. And in 2019, governments, employers and trade unions agreed to a global International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention to End Sexual Violence and Harassment in all forms of

work, including interns and apprentices, and the formal and informal economy.

However, these international commitments have not always resulted in change in practice. Safeguarding policies and laws against sexual violence are not universally or even widely enforced. This conference will explore how to challenge and transform these social norms to prevent violence and exploitation from taking place, increase the enforcement of these safeguarding policies and create safer learning environments. It will also address systemic causes and at-scale solutions around education financing and funding, exploring how funders of education and training can use their power to give recommendations more teeth as well as identifying new approaches to provide effective safeguards. To this end, participants will review a draft of a new report co-authored by Girls First Finance and the FCDO's Work and Opportunities for Women Programme on the extent, impact and causes of sex for education fees, grades and first jobs.

The conference will also contribute to a new global campaign – *Rights, Freedom, Potential* – launched by the FCDO under its 2023 International Women and Girls Strategy to drive conversation and action on women's and girls' rights.

Goals and Objectives

- Increase understanding of the prevalence and impact of sex for education fees, grades and jobs and assess existing and potential prevention and safeguarding solutions, including some of the promising approaches that have been trialled in schools.
- Address barriers to safe and scalable forms of affordable loans for students for tuition and living expenses, in both higher- and lower-income contexts.
- Contribute to a new Charter to End Sex for Education Fees, Grades and Jobs as a potential tool for ending sex for fees, grades and jobs.
- Foster a network of engaged organisations to take this agenda forward.
- Gain buy-in from key educational, government and financial stakeholders to a plan of action to advance this agenda at international forums and conferences in 2023/4 to further promote and gain additional support for change, including from political leaders.

00:00 **In association with Girls First Finance and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.**

13:00 Participants arrive and buffet lunch available

14:15 - 15:00

Welcome and introduction

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park, Steyning, United Kingdom

Andrea Christie Pizziconi

Founder and CEO, Girls First Finance Foundation, New York, United States of America

15:00 - 16:15

1. Assessing the issue and its impact

What is the scale of sexual exploitation and abuse affecting young women in tertiary education and during early career apprenticeships, internships or work placements? How widespread is the practice of sex for fees, sex for grades and sex for jobs? Who is most vulnerable to sexual exploitation in education and in transitions to the labour market? Why is this exploitation occurring and why is it so widely accepted by society? What do the key findings from new specially conducted research for this conference tell us? What impact and cost does such sexual exploitation and abuse have, including on women's economic empowerment, as well as the on the personal lives and families of young women affected?

Andrea Christie Pizziconi

Founder and CEO, Girls First Finance Foundation, New York, United States of America

Chloë Fèvre

Violence Prevention Adviser, Independent, Lisbon, Portugal

Antara Ganguli

Director, UNGEI Secretariat at UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), United Nations, New York, United States of America

16:15 - 17:00

Photograph followed by tea/coffee

17:00 - 18:30

2. Assessing systemic failures: lack of financial support

What is behind the prevalence of such sexual exploitation and abuse? Lack of funding or affordable loans for students to cover fees and living expenses during their education makes them more vulnerable to exploitation. Laws and other systemic failures mean

that public funding is insufficient but private capital is disincentivised from filling the gap.

How do the rules and incentives for financial institutions, governments, international development funders and education institutions need to be changed to ensure that funding and loans avoid students being forced into sexual exploitation?

Charles Ringera

Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Higher Education Loans Board, Ministry of Finance, Nairobi, Kenya

Peter Hinton

Associate Fellow, Oxford University, ., United Kingdom

19:00 Reception

19:30 Dinner

Tue
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08:00 - 09:00 Breakfast

09:00 - 10:30 **4. Assessing systemic failures: gender inequality, social norms and insufficient safeguarding**

Social norms combined with stigma both hide and accept the culture of “sponsors” and “sugar-daddies” as a necessary evil. Insufficient safeguarding in training at education institutions fails to prevent this happening.

What evidence-based strategies are currently in place to prevent education and workplace violence? Where are the gaps in current strategies to address this issue? Is it about policies or lack of implementation? Where can funding bodies (national and international) play a bigger role in enforcing safeguarding good practice?

Richa Hingorani

Global Programme Manager, Girl Rising, Delhi, India

Ramneek Ahluwalia

Chief Executive Officer, Higher Health, Pretoria, South Africa

Åsa Eldén

Researcher, Department of Government, Uppsala University,
Uppsala, Sweden

10:30 - 11:00 Tea/coffee

11:00 - 12:30 **5. What change needs to happen?**

What are concrete actions that engaged organisations and strategic partners can take to address the issue of sex for education fees, grades and jobs? What actions can financial institutions, donors and governments, educators and NGOs take to tackle the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse and create a new environment where such behaviour is neither necessary nor tolerated? How can there be accountability for each of the sectors?

Nancy Hendry

Senior Advisor, International Association of Women Judges,
Washington, DC, United States of America

Nicola Jones

Principal Research Fellow and Director of GAGE (Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, United Kingdom

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 14:30 Free time

14:30 - 14:45 **6. Orientation in plenary**

14:45 - 16:00 **7. Breakout groups: Who needs to do what and how?**

How can various stakeholders advance this agenda and bring about real change? For example: what incentives can be offered to investors and pioneers to encouraging taking bold risks on vulnerable women to pilot new ideas? What steps can be taken by donors to maximise the impact of their limited resources and set better examples for others to follow?

What will it take for commercial banks to increase access of products to students? How can banks reconsider the risk profile of student? What incentives do telecoms need to create gateway

products to ensure digital access for vulnerable young women and girls? How can DFIs, donors, and investors play a role enabling innovative partners with solutions to these issues while also holding accountable large stakeholders historically associated with overlooking exploitation under their watch?

- Group 1: Role of financial institutions in advancing this agenda
- Group 2: Role of donors and governments in advancing this agenda
- Group 3: Role of educators in advancing this agenda
- Group 4: Role of advocates and NGOs in advancing this agenda

16:00 - 16:30 Tea and coffee

16:30 - 17:15 **8. Feedback from break out groups**

17:15 - 18:15 **9. Drafting a potential new Charter to End Sex for Education, Fees, Grades and First Jobs**

This draft Charter to End Sex for Education, Fees, Grades and First Jobs will be shared ahead of the meeting. What is missing? What needs to be added or refined?

Andrea Christie Pizziconi

Founder and CEO, Girls First Finance Foundation, New York, United States of America

19:00 Reception

19:30 Dinner

Wed

08:00 - 09:00 Breakfast and checkout

14

09:00 - 09:15 **10. Reflections to date**

Jun

09:15 - 10:15

11. Designing a plan of action

Who needs to do what and when to take this agenda forward? What are the milestones to consider post the G7 commitments of 2019, 2020 and 2021? Could a Charter be an effective tool and if so, how could it be taken to a wider audience? How might it be adopted by key stakeholders and donors that carry influence in society, at large as well as with educational institutions? How might it sit aside other initiatives?

10:15 - 11:15

12. Break out groups: Drawing up an action plan

What are the key elements of an action plan outlining what various actors need to do and when to bring about real change?

11:15 - 11:45

Tea/coffee

11:45 - 13:00

13. Feedback, commitments and conclusion

Feedback from break out groups.

What commitments can participants make to advance this agenda?

13:00

Lunch

14:00

Participants depart