

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL, 2026

UN Headquarters-New York



GIRLS SPEAK OUT

If you had the UN microphone for 60 seconds, what would you tell world leaders about ending child marriage and investing in girls?



Society of the Sacred Heart at the UN

The International Day of the Girl (IDG), held on October 9 at the UN headquarters in New York, provided an opportunity for girls to advocate for their rights through poems, artwork, statements, and presentations on different issues. The main theme was "Advancing Equality, Accelerating Action; Building a World Where Girls Thrive." The Sacred Heart family was represented by 33 delegates, including 26 students, 1 parent, 4 teachers, an intern, and the UN-NGO representative.

11 Days of Action

Girls' Rights in the Context of the Climate Crisis



CLIMATE JUSTICE & ENVIRONMENT

Protecting our planet means protecting girls' futures.

Today, we ask: What would a climate-just world look like for girls in our communities?

Girls still face barriers to participating in sports, from lack of safe spaces and equipment to stereotypes about what girls should or should not do.

Promote girls' participation in recreation and sports



Let girls run. Let girls play.
Let girls compete. Let girls lead.



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NEW YORK

ERADICATE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD

Every girl has the right to feel safe. Everywhere.



Every girl has the right to grow up safe, heard and free from violence — at home, at school, in her community and online.

Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training

Education is more than being inside a classroom. It is having access to knowledge, skills, mentors, technology and opportunities that allow girls to participate fully in society.



Yet discrimination, poverty, gender stereotypes, unpaid care work, unsafe schools and other barriers continue to affect girls' opportunities.

Wired to be free.



The previously stubborn barbed wires have succumbed to her power. She now stands resilient and empowered, ready to unleash her potential into society.

By: Yagna Proful Umaramania

Promote girls' access to comprehensive healthcare, education and mental wellbeing

By: Tanvi K



I AM NOT FREE
WHILE ANY WOMAN IS UNFREE
EVEN WHEN HER SHACKLES
ARE VERY DIFFERENT
FROM MY OWN
- AUDRE LORDE

These words remind me of the various barriers girls face in society today. We live in a world that celebrates unprecedented advancement yet too often ignores inequalities hiding in plain sight. From the moment a girl is born, she has to face everything the world throws at her. Female foeticide is proof that inequality begins in our shattered society at birth. Shaming the mother and then killing her innocent baby simply because of her sex shows us real equality ends there.

Girls learn to make themselves feel strong enough while battling violence, harassment and fear when these issues should have ceased to exist with an increasingly informed society.



The perception of a woman from society's lens becomes crueler when she begins menstruation, a natural part of life that becomes a source of shame. Women face countless challenges undermining their fundamental right to menstrual hygiene.

Until every girl is free to live with dignity, safety and equal opportunity, none of us can truly call ourselves equal.



Eradiate all forms of violence against the girl-child

The Scarf Unveiled

The sun collides with the world,
Thousands scurry out of their homes.
The streets awaken equally,
Yet this equality fails to greet us.

Some daughters never inherit this sunlight.
Hundreds of breaths are silenced
Before they even embrace this warmth,
Before their tiny hands
even learn to hold love.

Those promised with life
Now tread the same path,
Measuring every step they take,
Often abandoning
bits of dignity along the way.

The shivering hearts and trembling knees,

The faces covered by the versatile scarf-
These are not signs of cowardice;

They acknowledge danger's existence.

Yet despite that vigilance,
We stand beneath the same sun.
Our eyes glisten with the same hope,
The longing to simply be free - to feel free.

Let fear follow us like a knell,

Yet never suppress our stride.
Beneath the same everlasting sun,
Let us ascend together
towards freedom.

And we must not stand victorious,

For victory is choked with hate -
A hate so sharp,
It shatters our hearts.

We must stand resolute,
kind and strong.

It was never a battle to win.
It was never a battle at all
It was the quiet realisation
That the same sun
was always meant to bless us all.

By: Yagna U



Laws can protect girls from discrimination, violence, exploitation and harmful practices. But having a law on paper does not automatically mean that every girl experiences equality.

Girls need access to information, justice, protection mechanisms and institutions that listen to them and respond when their rights are violated.



Girls are not only leaders of tomorrow. Girls are leaders today.

Girls are organising their communities, starting initiatives, speaking about issues that affect them, creating movements and demanding change.



unicef
for every child

But leadership is not the same experience for every girl. Age, disability, poverty, location, discrimination and other barriers can determine whose voice gets heard.

Listen to girls. Trust girls.
Share power with girls.

Promote and protect girls' leadership, in all their diversity

DON'T SHRINK, TAKE SPACE



By: Ananya R

Plucked Flower

Don't know how to feel
Cause it's surreal.
A world full of opportunities
Still I lay low,
With all the pain I had
It just became the reason
For me to grow.



You might think being a girl is easy
But finding a purpose to live, is not.
"Oh! But life goes on by oh! So breezy",
But it isn't like growing a flower in a pot.

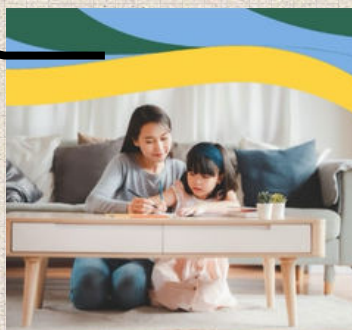
Funny thing some people ask,
"Who would protect you if there were no men?"
We just laugh script it in ink,
"Protect us from whom?"
Leaving the men in shock
as we walk on by, talking our own talk.

No one to support me
In anything I do, tried to
Just force me, to do things
I knew, I never could.

So much more to say
But we are being stilled
A drag path for a life
For which we're being killed.

All these voices in my head
And I just couldn't comprehend
Never found innisfree
Just like the way
Did the honeybee.

Poem written by
Niharika M



Sometimes the first place where equality begins is home

Families influence how girls see themselves, what they believe they can become and the opportunities they are encouraged to pursue.



Supporting girls means listening to them, sharing responsibilities fairly, investing in their education, respecting their choices and protecting them from violence and harmful practices.

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Girls Speak Out:

Voices from the Event

REAL VOICES. REAL EXPERIENCES.
STRONGER TOGETHER.



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at the UN



From Danielle:

To me, I thought that the IDG event was so inspiring and thought-provoking in terms of girls' rights and advocacy. I loved being able to grasp a better understanding of what different girls' experiences look like and how I could play a larger role in advocating for girls' rights and bridging the gap within gender equality. All of the speakers adequately brought to light various of the fundamental issues preventing full gender equality and the women-centered tour illuminated the many strategies that the UN has put in place to further women's' rights.

From Kayla :

The International day of the girl was an inspiring experience for me because it allowed me to see just how expansive the fight for girls rights is.



From Mia:

To me, the Girls Speak Out conference meant using our opportunities to advocate for those who face barriers to being heard, while working toward a future where they can speak freely for themselves.



From Abigail:

The speakers discussed the importance of education in ensuring that women are not just beneficiaries of laws, but active participants in shaping them. The conversation also focused on the difference between having written rights and experiencing them, stressing the need for more spaces that amplify diverse female voices.

HEAR US. BELIEVE US. INVEST IN US.



From Jael:

Seeing girls' voices take center stage at the UN conference changed my perspective on important issues, like child marriage. The various speakers inspired me to use my own voice to advocate for girls who can't always be in the room.



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HAPPY

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

October 9th girls took the mic at Girls Speak Out at the UN headquarters in New York. Today, on the International Day of the Girl, we carry their voices forward.

This year's focus on ending child marriage and investing in girls' rights is a reminder that no girl should have her childhood, education, choices or future decided for her.

At the Working Group on Girls, our work is about creating space for girls to speak for themselves, pushing for policies and systems that protect their rights, and ensuring their experiences shape the decisions that affect them.

Ending child marriage will take more than promises. It will take investment, accountability, education, protection, and the courage to act with girls – not simply for them.

WATCH THE EVENT VIDEO

CLICK HERE!



[Girls Speak at the UN- video-link](#)

“

Her childhood matters.

Her rights matter.



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at the UN

Her future is hers to choose.

”

October 9th we listened. Today, we recommit.



#InternationalDayOfTheGirl #GirlsSpeakOut
#EndChildMarriage #InvestInGirls #ActWithGirls



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