

## **The United States and Japan – Collaborating to Advance Girls Education Around the World**

About 62 million girls around the world – half of whom are adolescent – are not in school. These girls have diminished economic opportunities and are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, early and forced marriage, and other forms of violence.

Yet when a girl receives a quality education, she is more likely to earn a decent living, raise a healthy, educated family, and improve the quality of life for herself, her family, and her community. In addition, girls' attendance in secondary school is correlated with later marriage, later childbearing, lower maternal and infant mortality rates, lower birth rates, and lower rates of HIV/AIDS. A World Bank study found that every year of secondary school education is correlated with an 18 percent increase in a girl's future earning power.

Earlier this month, the United States, under the leadership of the President and First Lady, announced that it is expanding its efforts to help adolescent girls worldwide access school and complete their education through an initiative called *Let Girls Learn*. This new effort will build on investments that the international community, including the United States, has made and successes that have been achieved in global primary school education, and expand them to help adolescent girls complete their education and fulfill their potential.

Japan is also a global leader in international education. Through its "School for All" concept, Japan seeks to advance education through improving educational facilities, teaching practices, community participation, administration, and health and nutrition. Japan understands that the international community further shares this concept, and believes that a comprehensive approach by other donors including the United States, international organizations, NGO, governments of developing countries and local communities is the key to ensuring the sustainability of girls' education.

Today we are pleased to announce that the United States and Japan will partner in this critical area, elevating the issue of girls' education on their shared development agenda. Japan and the United States, through this initiative, will cooperate in improving the learning environment for girls by collaborating with schools, communities and educational administration.

As two of the largest economies in the world, our combined efforts can make a difference. The President's FY 2016 Budget request includes \$250 million in new and reallocated funds in support of the Let Girls Learn Initiative. Japan will commit Official Development Assistance (ODA) in excess of 42 billion yen over three years starting from in 2015 for girls' empowerment and gender-sensitive education.

Under this partnership:

- 1.) Peace Corps and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which directs Japan's Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), will formalize cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies.
  - This strategic partnership between Peace Corps and JOCV will be broad and encompass a variety of activities, and will focus in particular on advancing girls' education through cooperation on the ground in countries around the world, including Cambodia. JOCV will enhance cooperation with the Peace Corps to facilitate girls' participation in the field of primary and secondary education, sports and physical education.
- 2.) With counterpart governments around the world, the United States and Japan will increase focus on girls' education in our respective bilateral assistance programs.
  - Building on current funding and programs at USAID, the State Department, the Peace Corps, and across the US government, the United States will work to improve access to quality education and healthcare, help address violence and other barriers to education that adolescent girls face around the world.
  - Japan will prioritize girls' education in its new international education cooperation policy starting from 2016. In addition, in Southeast Asia, Japan will further provide assistance for constructing and expanding elementary, middle, and high school buildings, which is expected to benefit 20,000 adolescent girls with a good educational environment.
- 3.) The United States and Japan support girls' education through strong commitments to international organizations and non-governmental organizations focused on these issues.
  - For example, the President's FY 2016 Budget request includes an increase for the U.S. contribution to the Global Partnership for Education by 40% over current funding levels, to \$70 million. Japan will double its contribution this year to United Nations Women, to \$20 million.