

Prime Minister appoints new Envoy on Girls' Education: 16 January 2020

- PM appoints Helen Grant MP as the UK's Special Envoy on Girls' Education
- She will lead efforts to improve learning and get 40 million more girls into school around the world by 2025
- Boosting girls' education globally is a key priority for the UK as we take on the G7 presidency

The Prime Minister has appointed Helen Grant MP as his new Special Envoy on Girls' Education, leading the UK's efforts internationally to ensure all girls get 12 years of quality education.

Mrs Grant is the Member of Parliament for Maidstone and the Weald and is a passionate advocate for the rights of women and girls. Before entering Parliament, Helen was a solicitor for 23 years, specialising in protecting women and children from domestic abuse. Since becoming an MP in 2010 she has been a champion of gender equality in Parliament, and has previously served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice and Women and Equality.

As Special Envoy, she will champion the UK's global expertise on education and secure backing for ambitious initiatives to get 40 million more girls in primary and secondary school in developing countries by 2025 and improve learning levels, so girls can achieve their full potential.

Empowering women and girls through education is a long-standing priority for the Prime Minister, and will be a key focus for the UK's G7 presidency in 2021.

We will also co-host the Global Partnership for Education summit with Kenya in the UK later this year, bringing governments, business and civil society together to channel investment and action into getting children around the world into school and learning.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

It is my fervent belief that educating girls is the simplest and most transformative thing we can do to lift communities out of poverty, end the scourge of gender-based violence and build back better from the pandemic. It can change the fortunes of not just individual women and girls, but communities and nations.

That's why I am delighted to appoint Helen Grant as my Special Envoy on Girls' Education today to drive forward the UK's vital work in this area.

Coronavirus has made the work of the Special Envoy more important than ever, with 1.6 billion children and young people out of education around the world

at the peak of school closures. Unless vulnerable children are supported to continue learning during the pandemic and to return to school once restrictions are lifted, we will set back decades of progress.

The benefits of educating girls are enormous – a child whose mother can read is 50 per cent more likely to live past the age of five and twice as likely to attend school themselves. With just one additional school year, a woman's earnings can increase by up to a fifth.

Special Envoy for Girls' Education, Helen Grant said:

It is an honour to be appointed as the Prime Minister's Envoy on Girls' Education and to have the opportunity to lead the UK's important international outreach on this issue.

Ensuring all girls get 12 years of quality education is rightly a priority for the Government. High quality female education empowers women, reduces poverty and unleashes economic growth.

I will be making it my mission to encourage a more ambitious approach to girls' education from the international community as we seek to build back better from the Covid crisis.

The UK has been playing a leading role in championing every girls' right to 12 years of quality education. Since 2015, we have supported 15.6 million children, including over 8 million girls, to get a decent education.

In Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania, for example, the UK's Girls Education Challenge has helped over 260,000 girls from poor communities to stay in secondary school with learning, mentoring and skills training and financial support to buy uniforms and stationary.

Helen Grant will start in her new role as Girls' Education Envoy with immediate effect. She will continue in her existing role as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Nigeria.