

# Call for bids: supporting Women, Peace and Security in Ukraine under the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund Programme 2022-23

World news story

The British Embassy Kyiv (BEK) is now accepting project proposals for the 2022/2023 financial year (April 2022 – March 2023) from not-for-profit organisations.



In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and building on previous work undertaken by the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2018 to 2022, and the Ukraine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2025, the UK is seeking to strengthen its contribution to the WPS agenda and, therefore, support project/s in Ukraine which aim to achieve (one or more of) the following five outcomes. This approach seeks to support and bolster the active contribution women, women's rights organisations and excluded groups are making in their communities and on the frontline of the response during the unfolding crisis.

1. Empower primarily women's rights organisations, as well as wider actors working for gender equality and social inclusion, in Ukraine to advance a localised and inclusive WPS agenda, meeting the urgent identified needs of women, girls and excluded groups in the community they serve, including older women and women with disabilities. This will include supporting interventions for improved social cohesion, community services and coordination with humanitarian and recovery efforts on gender and equality aims. It may include addressing the specific needs of women and children on the move and in host communities inside and displaced outside of Ukraine – where it relates to the WPS agenda.
2. Enable women's rights organisations and wider actors to continue efforts to identify persons with specific needs and referrals to state services and humanitarian assistance and to provide lifesaving sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response services in line with the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards.
3. Working through Ukrainian women leaders, mediators, and women's rights organisations to provide support to deliver on the second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2025 objectives and support women's engagement and meaningful participation in the humanitarian response, in national and international decision-making and policy agendas in response to the unfolding crisis, and in civil society action at the community level [with the flexibility to adapt to the unfolding situation].
4. Provision of rapid gender and inclusion real-time analysis; data disaggregation by sex, age and disability (to enable a gender-sensitive response during the crisis); human rights monitoring, including monitoring of sexual violence, and; enhancing accountability for gender equality, women's empowerment and the rights of excluded groups in Ukraine
5. Collaboration with representative groups including organisations of persons with disabilities to ensure WPS and humanitarian responses address diverse needs and amplify meaningful and inclusive participation.

## **Bidding guidance:**

- projects will be funded initially for 11 months from 10 May 2022 to 31 March 2023
- successful implementers must receive project funding in GBP and open a GBP bank account for the project
- project bids should demonstrate 85% spend by 31 December 2022 and 100% spend by 31 March 2023

- potential implementers are allowed to combine efforts and submit their project proposals in a consortium of several organisations (implementers). Those could be both international and local non-commercial organisations or multilateral organisations, working in the Ukrainian context. If this option is chosen, one entity should be the main Partner, which will coordinate efforts of the joint initiative and will be primarily responsible for the project implementation. Governmental institutions may act as project co-funders or beneficiaries only
- minimum budget limit: [GBP 500,000] (five hundred thousand pounds sterling)
- maximum budget limit: [GBP750,000] (seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling)
- bids where possible should not exceed 30 pages
- bids must be in English

Recommendations and requirements to project budgets are listed on tab 1 of CSSF activity-based budget template (ABB Template). Please note that we are unable to fund academic courses or research, English language tuition; the purchase of land, property, IT or other equipment (clarification is provided below) and finance construction works under this Fund.

## **Assessment:**

Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- alignment with the above mentioned thematic priorities and outcomes
- realistic outcomes which are achievable within the funding period (10 May 2022 – 31 March 2023)
- evidence they have the capability to adapt and flex to the unfolding situation in Ukraine, potential shifts in WPS priorities and the needs of women and girls – including through use of rapid situational analysis
- project design includes clear monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as risk and financial accountability procedures
- evidence of sustainability – demonstrating that project benefits continue after the funding ends
- alignment of the project budget with requirements and recommendations listed in CSSF activity-based budget template and the project proposal
- alignment with the Paris Agreement, demonstrating that a climate and environmental risk and impact evaluation was done and no environmental harm will be done
- the organisations have robust safeguarding policies and implementation plans in place to ensure the protection of beneficiaries and to safeguard against sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). Evidence that the organisations will effectively tackle discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics in line with UK equalities legislation, including International Development (Gender Equality Act) and Public Sector Equality Duty
- the project budget demonstrates a sufficient level of details and overall value for money

- we aim to ensure that the total amount of project management team costs, project operation support costs and office support costs would ideally not exceed the 10% ceiling of the overall project costs. In case your organisation has a central agreement with the FCDO to include head office overhead costs into the CSSF project budgets (e.g. international multilateral agencies), those can be added to the project budget in line with the central agreement and are not counted into the 10% ceiling mentioned above

## **Essential skills and competencies of the implementer**

The implementer will have:

- strong operational experience of working in Ukraine or in similar environments in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECAD) region
- strong working knowledge on the women peace and security agenda, preferably on women's meaningful participation in peace and decision-making processes
- good gender and conflict analysis skills
- strong knowledge of Ukraine's informal and formal political structures and local and national-level conflict dynamics, and the ability to work closely with Ukrainian counterparts in all regions of the country
- the ability to source appropriate expertise to support the mapping, capacity building and advocacy components, both in-country and if necessary, from outside
- experience and familiarity of gender programming
- project and budget management skills, experience, capabilities and capacity
- experience of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning processes, including but not limited to outcome harvesting
- robust approaches to risk management, conflict sensitivity, disability inclusion, safeguarding

## **Funding exceptions**

Funding cannot be used to finance the following:

- procurement of medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), vaccines, diagnostic tests/materials and COVID-19 related medicines
- procurement of land or property
- construction works
- purchase or maintenance of IT and capital equipment (if the equipment is essential for achieving the project outputs and impact, please complete a separate "Equipment Purchase Supporting Letter" and submit it with the project proposal and budget)
- fundraising efforts of the organisation

The digital spend – digital development costs in excess of £10,000 for “any external-facing service provided through the internet to citizens, businesses, civil society or non-government organisations” – has to be

depicted separately in the Digital Spend Proposal form and be approved by FCDO.

## Process

1. The deadline to submit project proposals is 11.55 pm (GMT) Tuesday 29 March 2022. Late proposals will not be considered.
2. When submitting, please indicate "Supporting Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in Ukraine" and the name of the bidder in the subject line of your e-mail.
3. Proposals must be submitted using the CSSF attached forms only (see below under Additional information and documentation).
4. Bidders must submit documents in standard Microsoft Office formats (Word, Excel).
5. Proposals must be submitted to [CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk)
6. Project proposals selected for further consideration will be notified on 11 April 2022.
7. The selected bidder/s will be asked to complete a Due Diligence Assessment (form will be sent to them).
8. The British Embassy seeks to finalise grant agreements with successful project implementers by 3 May 2022.

- CSSF Programme Team – [CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk).
- CSSF Programme team will publish answers to all Frequently Asked Questions on the BE in Ukraine official website on Monday 14 March 2022.

## Additional information and documentation

All implementers will be expected to sign a standard FCDO grant agreement with the Embassy. The terms of the contract or agreement are not negotiable.

As all projects are expected to have achieved 85% spend by 31 December 2022, Activity Based Budgets must reflect this requirement.

Published 8 March 2022

---

## [British High Commission Singapore renews commitment to its #GenderPledge](#)

On this International Women's Day 2022, the British High Commission (BHC) Singapore is renewing its commitment to gender equality across the

organisation, from our culture and values, to hiring policies, partnerships and collaborations, and communications.

BHC Singapore has updated its #GenderPledge – first taken in 2019 – to further integrate gender equality and inclusion objectives into business planning, and commits the BHC’s management board to regularly review the pledge.

The #GenderPledge will continue to set out for the BHC and its staff key actions, measures and best practices – such as ensuring events have a balanced gender representation; avoiding gender stereotyping in public communications; and supporting employees with flexible work arrangements; among others measures.

The #GenderPledge campaign was initiated by the High Commission of Canada in Singapore in 2019.

Now in its second iteration, it seeks to raise awareness and demonstrate how organisations, businesses and individuals can incorporate – or have incorporated – measures to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment into daily operations, policies and practices.

Along with renewing their commitments to the #GenderPledge for 2022, both High Commissions are also encouraging other foreign embassies, companies and organisations to initiate their own pledges or to re-affirm an existing one.

The BHC’s #GenderPledge aligns with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office’s ‘3 Es’ framework – to educate girls, empower women, and end violence. This will comprise a new strategy for Women and Girls this year that sets out the UK’s ambition, combining diplomacy and development levers.

Through the #GenderPledge, the BHC seeks to promote women’s leadership and agency to ensure their voices are heard at all levels, and ensuring women can participate fully and fairly in the economy.

The UK has a strong global reputation in standing up for the rights of women and girls around the world. Our work is transforming lives and helping to build longer term prosperity, stability, and a fairer and freer world that will benefit everyone.

We hope that you will join the campaign by making your own #GenderPledge or renewing an existing one!

Your pledge can be anything you want it to be, and include as many items as you’d like.

Be sure to use the #GenderPledge hashtag in your post, and any additional hashtags that you like to use relating to the empowerment of women and girls.

## **Our Gender Pledge:**

### **Workplace Culture and Hiring Practices**

- The British High Commission (BHC) is mindful of gender balance within divisions/departments, sections, and job grades. Where a serious imbalance exists, the BHC will ensure that in recruitment, applicants from the underrepresented sex are encouraged to apply.
- In job specifications, we will avoid language that might indicate gender stereotyping.
- We will raise awareness and take firm action to prevent and address sexual abuse and harassment. Employees are encouraged to report sexual harassment and are provided with a confidential mechanism to do so. We are committed to ensuring no staff member experiences bullying, harassment or discrimination in the workplace.
- We support staff who require flexible work arrangements.
- We support short-term resourcing gaps with 'returnships', which help to re-integrate back into the BHC those who have taken a career break (e.g. parents who have taken a few years out to raise their children).
- We are a family-friendly workplace and have a relaxation/breastfeeding room.
- We have an active Respect Committee with a Diversity Charter in place that fosters and promotes the best practices of accepting, respecting, and valuing differences, including gender, among staff.
- We will seek training opportunities to equip staff with the tools needed to integrate gender equality into their work.
- Gender equality and inclusion objectives will be mainstreamed within our country business plan.
- A Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis will be completed for all Overseas Development Assistance Projects.

### **Events management and VIP visits**

- We will ensure all public events organised by the BHC have balanced

gender representation.

- We will challenge event organisers to strive for balanced gender representation and decline to participate on speaker panels where good faith efforts have not been made to that end.
- We will aim to ensure equitable allocation of speaking time and roles between men and women.
- The BHC advocates for all official UK delegations to Singapore to have balanced gender representation.
- Where the BHC is organising and funding a delegation's travel to Singapore, it will strive for balanced gender representation on those delegations.

### **Partnerships and business collaborations**

- We will regularly engage institutions, partners, and businesses to promote gender equality in their workplaces.
- We will support events that promote gender equality.
- We will organise or support at least two events per year focused solely on gender equality awareness.

### **Communications**

- We will highlight the UK's commitment to gender equality in communication materials.
- We will ensure visuals and photos in communication materials have appropriate gender balance.
- We will avoid unnecessary gendered terminology in our communications and avoid stereotyping.
- We will communicate gender equality milestones on social media platforms as and when appropriate.

## Gender equality champions

- A gender equality champion will be responsible for providing guidance on enhancing gender equality at the Mission and tracking progress on the implementation of the gender pledge.
- The British High Commission Management Board will regularly review our Gender Pledge Commitments in consultation with our Core Values Committee and BHC staff.

---

## Government launches pay transparency pilot to break down barriers for women

- Minister for Women, Baroness Stedman-Scott, launches initiatives to level up employment opportunities for women
- Participating employers will run pilots aimed at closing salary gaps by publishing salaries on all job adverts
- New 'returners' programme to support women into STEM roles after taking time out to care for loved ones

Minister for Women, Baroness Stedman-Scott, is today (8 March) launching two new initiatives to level up employment opportunities for women as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Announced on International Women's Day, a new initiative will seek to improve pay transparency in the job application process and help businesses who want to go even further in attracting women to their positions. Evidence shows listing a salary range on a job advert and not asking applicants to disclose salary history provides a firm footing for women to negotiate pay on a fairer basis. This could have a significant impact in closing salary gaps and tackling pay inequality.

The government is therefore leading the way with a pilot scheme, where participating employers list salary details on job adverts and stop asking about salary history during recruitment.

Alongside this, the Government will launch a new returners programme to help women back into STEM (science, technology, engineering & maths) careers. Research and employee feedback shows that returning to STEM roles after taking time out to care for loved ones can present significant challenges. This new programme will help organisations to recruit and retain talented staff who are often overlooked because of a gap on their CV, by providing training, development and employment support to those who have taken time out for caring.

**Minister for Women, Baroness Stedman-Scott, said:**

“The UK can only grasp its full potential by championing its brightest and best, and ensuring everyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to succeed.

“We believe that increased pay transparency will build on positive evidence of the role information can play when it comes to empowering women in the workplace. It is essential that we keep women at the forefront of the levelling up agenda as we recover from the pandemic and rebuild together.

“Our second announcement, supporting skilled women to return to STEM careers after care leave, will keep talented minds in STEM and improve the representation of women and marginalised communities in those incredibly important roles.”

International data also shows that job seekers place a strong emphasis on salary when looking for their next career move. In a Glassdoor survey 68% of people say that a salary was the most important factor of a job advert, showing that, where possible, it makes good business sense to share salary details at the very beginning of the application process.

Additionally, a study from the Fawcett Society shows that a requirement to provide salary history makes everyone less confident when negotiating their pay. It has a particularly negative impact on women’s confidence, with 58% of women saying that they felt they had received a lower salary offer than they would have if the question had not been asked during the application process.

However, the Government recognises that many employers do not have agreed pay scales, and that ambiguous pay policies and historic pay decisions may make it challenging for them to include pay information on job adverts. That is why the forthcoming pilot will see the Government work with employers to develop and pilot a methodology which others can adopt, so that all organisations can provide pay information at the recruitment stage and remove their reliance on questions about pay history if they choose.

**Jemima Olchawski, Fawcett Society, Chief Executive:**

“We are pleased that the government is encouraging employers to remove embedded bias from recruitment practices and supporting our call to End Salary History. Asking salary history questions keeps women on lower salaries and contributes to the UK’s gender pay gap – and can mean that past pay discrimination follows women and other groups throughout their career.

“Evidence from US states which have banned asking about past salary shows that is a simple, evidence-led way to improve pay equality for women, people of colour and disabled people. This is an important first step. We hope more employers will answer this call, and sign Fawcett’s pledge, as part of other actions to tackle their pay gaps.”

The Government has already run 25 returner programmes across the private and public sector and will use learning from these initiatives to design the new

STEM programme.

Unpaid care work, including childcare and informal adult care, is disproportionately performed by women. This can have a big impact on pay and progression, with research showing that returners with degrees are, on average, paid 70% of the hourly wage of an equivalent colleague who has not taken time away from work.

By launching the new returners programme, the government is hoping to support those who are looking to step back into work, particularly in STEM sectors. The 2021 STEM Returners index survey revealed that 61% of returners found the process of returning to the industry difficult or very difficult. Those who did return commented on being overqualified for their role and had entered at levels below where they were prior to their break.

In line with the Government's commitment to level up opportunities, the new programme will support returners across the UK – giving them the opportunity to refresh and grow their skills in sectors where their talents are most needed. It will run for a minimum of two years, and the evidence gathered will enable and provide a base for organisations to provide their own returner programmes.

---

## [Pioneering approach in family courts to support domestic abuse victims better](#)

- pilot launched at family courts in North Wales and Dorset to better support victims of domestic abuse
- sets out to improve information sharing so that victims avoid retelling traumatic experiences
- part of government's decisive action to tackle domestic violence and improve victim support

The new pilot launched at family courts in North Wales and Dorset aims to improve information sharing between agencies such as the police, local authorities and the courts. This could include local domestic abuse professionals sharing risk assessments with the court to spare victims and parties in the case the trauma of having to unnecessarily repeat their experiences.

Crucially, it will also boost the voice of children at every stage of the process, ensuring they are listened to and their views are taken into account when decisions are made about their futures. It will see children given more opportunity to explain how they feel and, following a court order, to say

whether it is working for them.

The pilots work by allowing judges to review gathered information and request more documentation before a case gets to court. It avoids the circumstances of the case being debated in the courtroom, which can often exacerbate conflict between parents. The pilot will also encourage proceedings to be less adversarial so that more emphasis can be put into investigating and addressing allegations of domestic abuse and other harmful behaviours – rather than allowing confrontation in the courtroom to take place.

Between three months and a year after a ruling is made, in most cases the courts and the agencies involved will carry out a review to ensure decisions made are working well. This includes assessing whether court orders are being followed and whether additional support is needed.

Justice Minister Lord Wolfson QC said:

This government is doing everything we can to protect victims, make them feel safer, and give them greater confidence in the justice system.

These pilots will help ensure victims of domestic abuse aren't further traumatised by the court process and that better decisions are made about their and their children's lives.

This, alongside our landmark Domestic Abuse Act, will ensure that victims are loudly heard and fully supported.

The pilot follows from a [review of Family Courts](#) which found that an adversarial process often worsened conflict between parents and could have a damaging impact on victims and their children.

Today's (8 March 2022) announcement forms part of the government's sweeping reforms to transform the way family courts operate, contained in the Domestic Abuse Act. These include a ban on perpetrators cross-examining their victims as well as measures to prevent them from repeatedly bringing their ex-partners back to court – which can be used as a form of continuing domestic abuse.

Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales

Every day I hear from domestic abuse survivors about their experiences in the family courts. Many victims and their children feel re-traumatised by the process which is why seeing improvements in the family courts is one of my top priorities as Commissioner

I am delighted to see the Harm Panel's recommendation to test a more investigative approach to domestic abuse cases now being piloted.

Crucial to the success of these pilots will be ensuring that domestic abuse – particularly coercive control and the impact it has on adult and child victims – is fully understood and the risk it poses to survivors and children is taken into account throughout the proceedings.

Rhianon Argent, Senior Practitioner, Bournemouth Women's Refuge & BCP Outreach Team, said:

BCHA are pleased to be involved in this important pilot project that will provide essential support for domestic abuse survivors going through the family court. This project has enabled us to recently recruit a specialist support worker, as part of our domestic abuse team, who will be dedicated to the family court.

They will focus on the safety of victims at risk of harm from partners, ex-partners or family members providing support before, during and after the court process.

In addition they will provide training and support for court personnel in understanding domestic abuse and coercive control.

This is a much-needed new initiative, so that we can raise awareness of the trauma caused by domestic abuse and help to achieve best evidence at court with victims and survivors in Bournemouth and the surrounding areas.

Rhian Lewis, Head of Operations / Deputy CEO, Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) North Wales

DASU are very excited to be actively involved in the pathfinder's pilot in North Wales.

Many of the families that we support have felt let down by the Family Courts system stating that they felt that no one was listening to their experiences of domestic abuse and that perpetrators were able to continue to control and abuse them through this process. Survivors of domestic abuse have suffered enough.

The Pathfinder pilot is a real opportunity to change the way that we support families that experience domestic abuse by recognising the risk, addressing safeguarding issues, reducing re-traumatisation and putting children and their non-abusive parent at the heart of the process. This system will improve their quality of life and put a stop to perpetrators being able to use the Family Courts as a means of exercising their control.

The investigative pilot will be tested initially in Bournemouth and Weymouth in Dorset, and Caernarfon, Mold, Prestatyn and Wrexham in North Wales for up to two years before a full evaluation.

The pilot was designed in consultation with a wide range of family justice experts including judges, charities and academics and is comprised of three stages. Agencies will first gather information and assess whether there are any concerns for a child or person involved in the case about substance misuse, domestic abuse, or other welfare issues. There will then be a hearing to decide what interventions or decisions are required, for example whether it could be suitable for mediation out of court. It would also look at whether programmes such as Separated Parent programmes on how to put children first when a relationship breaks down are needed before an order is made. The new process aims to take the confrontational elements out of the family court system, with a focus more on investigating and solving problems to reduce potential harm to those involved.

The pilot will also, when appropriate and safe, help direct families towards accessing out of court options such as mediation. This could see them avoid the family courts altogether, resolving disputes without the stress of often lengthy and costly courtroom battles.

The government has invested more than £3.3 million into a landmark mediation voucher scheme helping thousands of families find amicable solutions outside the courts. Since its launch in March 2021, over 5,800 vouchers have already been used under the scheme with 77 percent of cases reaching full or partial agreements away from the family courts.

## Notes to editors

- The pilot was drawn up by the Private Law Advisory and Pilots Group made up of individual members of the judiciary, Cafcass, HMCTS, and the Ministry of Justice. It also worked closely with stakeholders such as the Family Justice Young People's Board, academics, police, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and charities such as Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, SafeLives, Respect, JUSTICE, Centre of Justice Innovation, and the Nuffield Foundation.
- The types of cases being involved in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Courts are:
  - Child arrangement orders – an order that decides the arrangements of whom a child is to live with, spend time with, or has contact with.
  - Specific issue order – to resolve a particular issue around parental responsibility. For example, this could be around medical treatment, name change, relocation or education.
  - Prohibited steps order – to prevent a parent from carrying out a particular action as part of their parental responsibility. For example, removing and relocating the child to outside England and Wales or changing a child's surname.
- In January 2022, the Government announced £1.3 million in funding for a [Family Mediation voucher scheme](#), bringing the total amount to nearly £3.1 with thousands of families benefiting from free out of court

mediation.

- In August 2021, the Government announced a [call for evidence on dispute resolution](#), seeking views on the best ways to settle family, business and other civil disputes away from the court room. A response will be published in due course.
- In November 2020, a [review of the Presumption of Parental Contact](#) was launched. This work is still ongoing.
- In December 2021, the Government launched a [consultation on a new Victims' Law](#) which would help provide greater support to victims and ensure they have a voice in the justice system. This consultation closed in February and will be responded to in due course.

---

## [UK government and global businesses in new £20 million partnership to educate girls in developing countries](#)

- to mark International Women's Day [8 March], Prime Minister Boris Johnson will launch a new global partnership with 11 businesses to improve girls' access to education and employment in developing countries
- the UK government is contributing an initial £9 million, with businesses providing £11 million in total
- the programme aims to provide high quality skills training to around 1 million girls around the world
- improving girls' access to education is a key part of the UK's foreign policy, to ensure we build back better from the pandemic and prevent a lost generation. Investing in education helps lift communities out of poverty and protects girls from early marriage, forced labour and gender-based violence

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is launching a new £20 million business partnership as the UK continues to lead global efforts to improve girls' access to education in developing countries.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of children did not have any access to school – and girls from disadvantaged families are particularly vulnerable to missing out on education, whether through poverty or prejudice. The pandemic has created even more barriers to education, with a peak of 1.6 billion children around the world having faced school closures.

In the UK's first education partnership of its kind, the UK government is joining forces with the private sector to boost girls' access to education in developing countries. Partners include Unilever, Pearson, PwC, Microsoft, Accenture, Standard Chartered, United Bank for Africa, Coursera, Vodafone, BP and Cognizant. The UK Government will be working in partnership with UNICEF's

Generation Unlimited (GenU) to help deliver the programme, with key partners funding GenU being Accenture, Standard Chartered, Unilever, Microsoft, and United Bank for Africa.

Last night [7 March], a reception was held in No.10 Downing Street to mark the announcement and International Women's Day, which was attended by partners, including: Jill Huntley, Global Managing Director, Corporate Citizenship at Accenture; Dr Betty Vandenbosch, Chief Content Officer at Coursera and Marissa Thomas, Chief Operating Officer at PwC.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The United Kingdom has long been a proud and mighty champion of this fundamental cause and today we take one leap further through our first Global Partnership of its kind – opening the opportunity for one million girls across the developing world to have access to high quality skills training.

Ensuring every girl and young woman across the globe receives 12 years of quality education is the greatest tool in our armoury to end the world's great injustices.

Delivering on this mission will be one of the best defences against ignorance, ensure the greatest protection from prejudice and put a rocket booster behind our hopes and dreams for global development in the years to come.

Businesses, charities, schools and colleges will shortly be able to bid for funds from the programme. The partnership wants to support projects that will improve access to education for girls, with a focus on providing the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills needed to find work in key sectors such as technology and manufacturing. This could include funding new skills training programmes, improving teaching or redesigning training to make it more relevant to business needs. Initially bids will be encouraged for projects in Nigeria and Bangladesh, two countries where significant barriers to girls' education remain.

Funding from the programme will also help expand GenU's 'Passport to Earning' (P2E) platform. This digital skills platform will provide girls with free, certified education and skills training which they can then use to support future employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. UNICEF's precursor to P2E was listed among Time Magazine's 100 Best Inventions of 2021.

Some of the businesses involved will be contributing a range of resources including books, computers and other technology, mentors, advice and access to their networks, skills and training programmes. The private sector involvement will help ensure that education and learning opportunities provide girls with the skills for the future that employers need.

The UK is playing a leading global role to improve girls' education in developing countries. During the UK's G7 Presidency last year it secured

agreement to help get an additional 40 million girls into school by 2026; and secondly to help 20 million girls to learn to read by the age of 10 by 2026. In 2021, the UK hosted a successful Global Education Summit, which raised \$4 billion in pledges from world leaders to support schools through the Global Partnership for Education. Between 2015 and 2020, the UK supported at least 15.6 million children in developing countries to gain a decent education, including 8.1 million girls.

We have already seen considerable success with similar skills programmes such as the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) in Bangladesh. This involved training up marginalised young girls with the skills they needed to be able to secure jobs within demand sectors, which gave these young girls more economic, social and personal freedom. As a result, the programme saw a 62% reduction in child marriage among the girls and families involved.

Similarly, the 'Educate!' programme across Uganda and Rwanda has provided industry-specific (agriculture and tourism) sessions for girls, as well as sessions to boost their literacy skills. This programme saw a 120% increase in income among the female participants.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Supporting women and girls is at the heart of UK foreign policy. We want women to have agency over their own lives and to be free to succeed.

Investing in girls' education is vital for a more sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future. That's why we are partnering with the private sector to help girls in developing countries access education and job opportunities.

Helen Grant, Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Girls' Education said:

Every girl everywhere deserves to have an education.

From school right the way through to the workplace, our partnership will help give women and girls the skills they need to reach their full potential.

Kevin Frey, Chief Executive Officer of Generation Unlimited said:

The Girls' Education Skills Partnership exemplifies the commitment of the UK government and the private sector in addressing the critical gap in skilling girls for 21st Century opportunities.

P2E is an innovative skills platform designed with partners to reach the girls everywhere, every time, preparing them with in-demand market relevant skills.

- the programme is called the Girls' Education Skills Partnership
- the £11 million provided by businesses is a mixture of funding and resources
- GenU (housed within UNICEF) will manage the funding that will be open for bids
- the companies providing funding to GenU are Accenture, Standard Chartered, Unilever, Microsoft, and United Bank for Africa
- seven countries have been identified for the Passport to Earning (P2E) platform: Brazil, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Niger, Egypt and India