



Through **HER** Eyes:

Girls' take on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in the Arab Region, 25 years later

This is an adolescent friendly booklet about the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). It includes a summary of what is included in the Declaration and what this means for the Arab Region. Chapter IV of the Declaration talks about the girl child and this booklet provides an overview of what promises are made there and the progress towards these promises in the Arab Region in 2019 – 25 years since the Declaration was signed.

This booklet has been designed in collaboration with girls living in Jordan from Syria, Palestine and Jordan. The illustrations you see have been inspired by their inputs, thoughts, and artwork on the key areas covered by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as they relate to the girl child. Their words, poems, artwork, and recommendations for the future have also been directly incorporated into the booklet design.



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



This booklet has been designed by The Orenda Tribe who led art workshops with Save the Children programmes on the Beijing Declaration through story-telling on child marriage. 23 girls living in Jordan from Syria, Palestine and Jordan took part in the workshops and the illustrations are inspired by their artwork. This booklet is the product of a collaboration with Save the Children, UN ESCWA, UN Women, UNICEF and the Orenda Tribe.

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What is happening to the world?

Every day I wish that I was a great ruler
And stop prevent ways of marriage, Please I don't
want any photographs, An old man is taking a young
Jasmine, Do you really like what's happening out
there?, You took away her childhood you
took away her life. Enough ignorance,
We only want someone to understand.

That a child can never raise a child!



What is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

In 1995, governments from around the world came together in Beijing, China, to make promises to improve the situation for girls and women globally. These promises can be found in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, also called the 'Beijing Declaration' for short.

The Declaration lists the steps governments and organisations must take to give equal rights to women and girls. People from all over the world attended this event to make sure that all women and girls are able to live happily and enjoy healthy lives, just like men and boys. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action states that equality between women and men, girls and boys is a human right. It maintains that when girls and women have equal rights with men and boys, everyone will have better lives.

This painting shows how happy the girl is for receiving encouragement from her parents, and her goal to make her dream come true. The colours used reflect girls' determination and efforts to make their dreams come true.

Women and poverty

Special promises for the girl child
(for example: ending discrimination,
child labour, child participation, and
more)





Each of the **12 key areas** includes:

- An overview of the problems and current situation for women and girls.
- A set of goals and objectives to solve the problems.
- A set of actions to be taken.

Note: The main focus of the first 11 key areas is on women but also include some information and promises related to girls.

Now **What?**


It has been 25 years since governments and non-governmental organisations made the promises found in the Beijing Declaration.

Now, governments are looking at the progress that has been made so far (or, in other words, what promises they have fulfilled). They are also starting to explore what they need to do next to keep improving the situation for girls and women globally.

This booklet explains:

- The promises that governments made in 1995 for girls.
- What has changed in the Arab region*.
- The key challenges that governments need to work on to improve girls' lives in the future.

*Arab region: As per UN ESCWA, this includes 18 Arab countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen



Why do we keep
quiet though we
can be a message
to the world

What does the Beijing Declaration say about **girls?**

As mentioned above, the promises made to girls can be found in Chapter IV, Section L with the heading "The girl child", of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.





Everyday we hear
about dreams ending
because of early
marriage 😞!



This painting reflects the feelings of joy, happiness, and hope, as well as parents' encouragement.

Don't Destroy
our dreams

Don't Destroy
our dreams

Don't Destroy
our dreams

Don't Destroy
our dreams

Don't Destroy
our dreams

Don't Destroy
our dreams

Goal #1:
End all forms of
Discrimination
against girls

This includes: ending child marriage, creating laws to guarantee equality and protect girls; ensuring birth registration for girls; and taking actions to ensure equal opportunities for all girls.

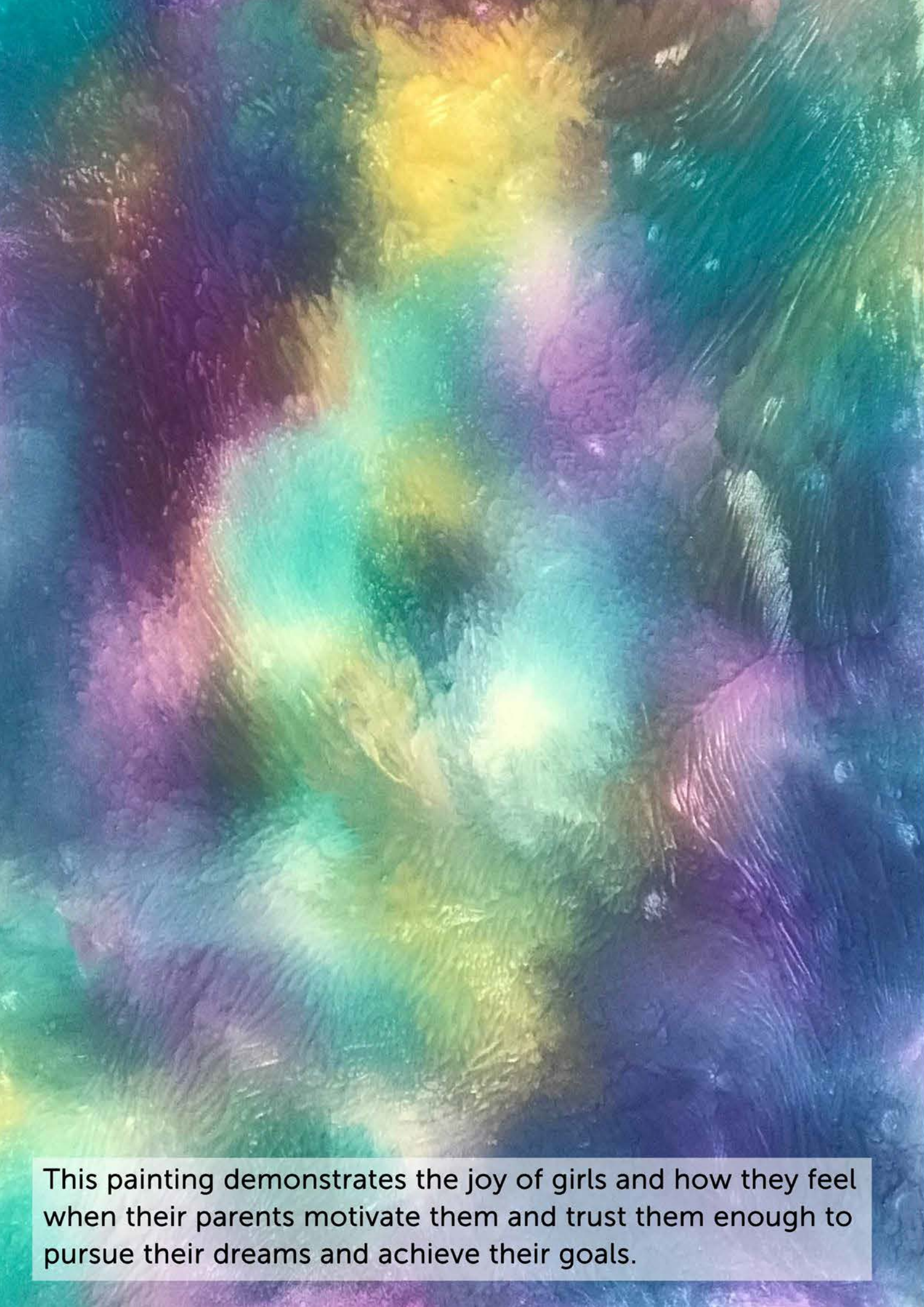


The mixed colours stand for girls' rights in general and the hope that all girls can wait to be married.

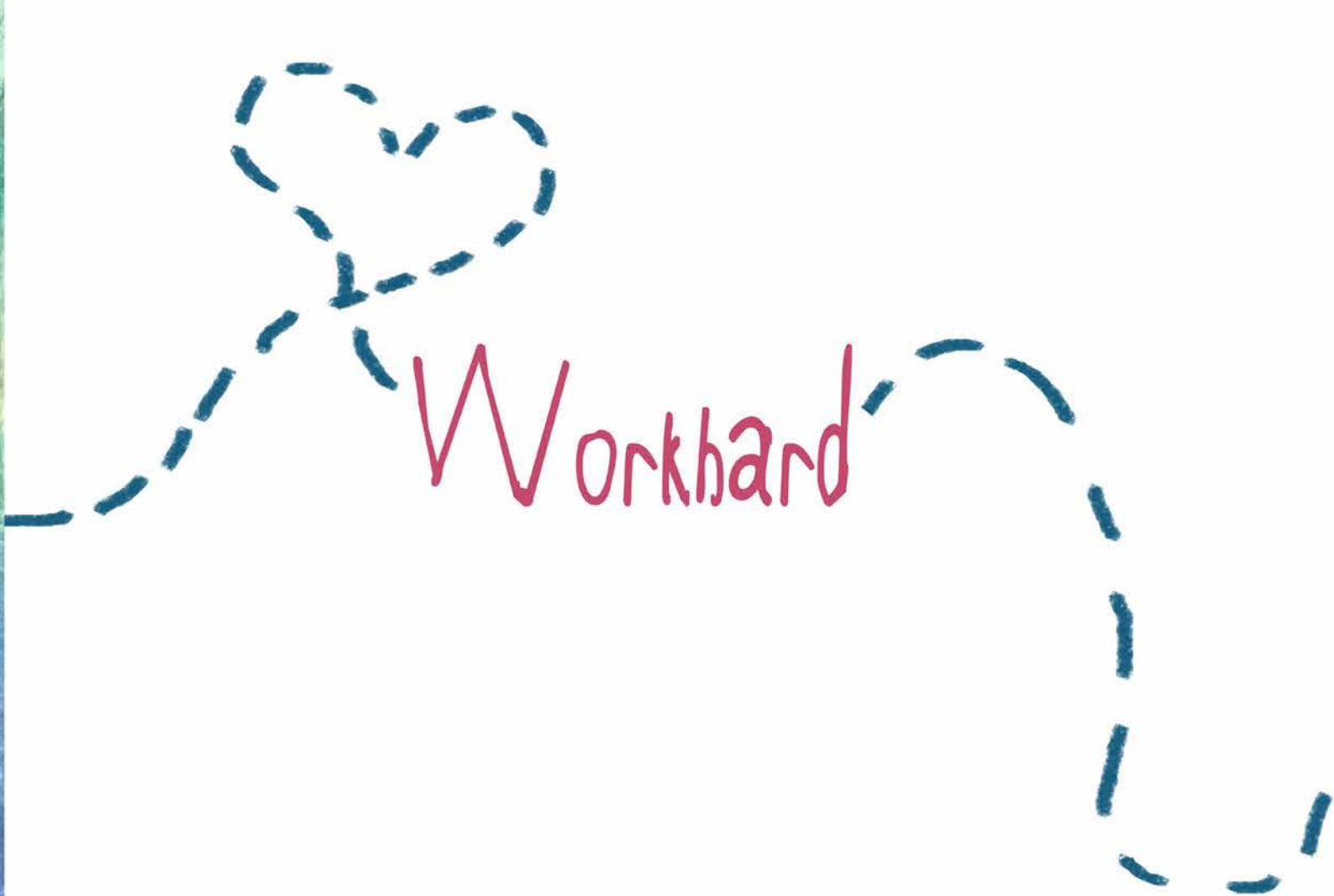
Goal 2: End all negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls



This includes: taking actions to change the negative ways some people see girls, ensuring religious and traditional beliefs and practices do not harm girls; providing young mothers/pregnant girls with educational opportunities, encouraging girls to have success in school and explore any career choice; and ending female infanticide.



This painting demonstrates the joy of girls and how they feel when their parents motivate them and trust them enough to pursue their dreams and achieve their goals.



Goal 3: Protect the girl child and raise awareness of her needs, rights, and potential

This includes: informing governments, households, communities, and others about the lives of girls; ensuring girls are aware of their potential and their rights, including under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; teaching women, men, and boys about girls' rights and encouraging them to work towards equality; and guaranteeing equal access of girls to services.

This includes: ensuring all children complete their primary education and have equal access to education; developing writing, reading, and maths programmes for out-of-school girls, including human rights education; providing the money needed for girls to have education; and supporting teachers by training them on gender-sensitive education and ensuring female teachers and professors have the same opportunities as male teachers and professors.

Work hard

Passion

Support her

Support

Let's

Nothing is impossible

dream

Hold your

Future

Follow your passion

certificate

Dreams



Goal 4:

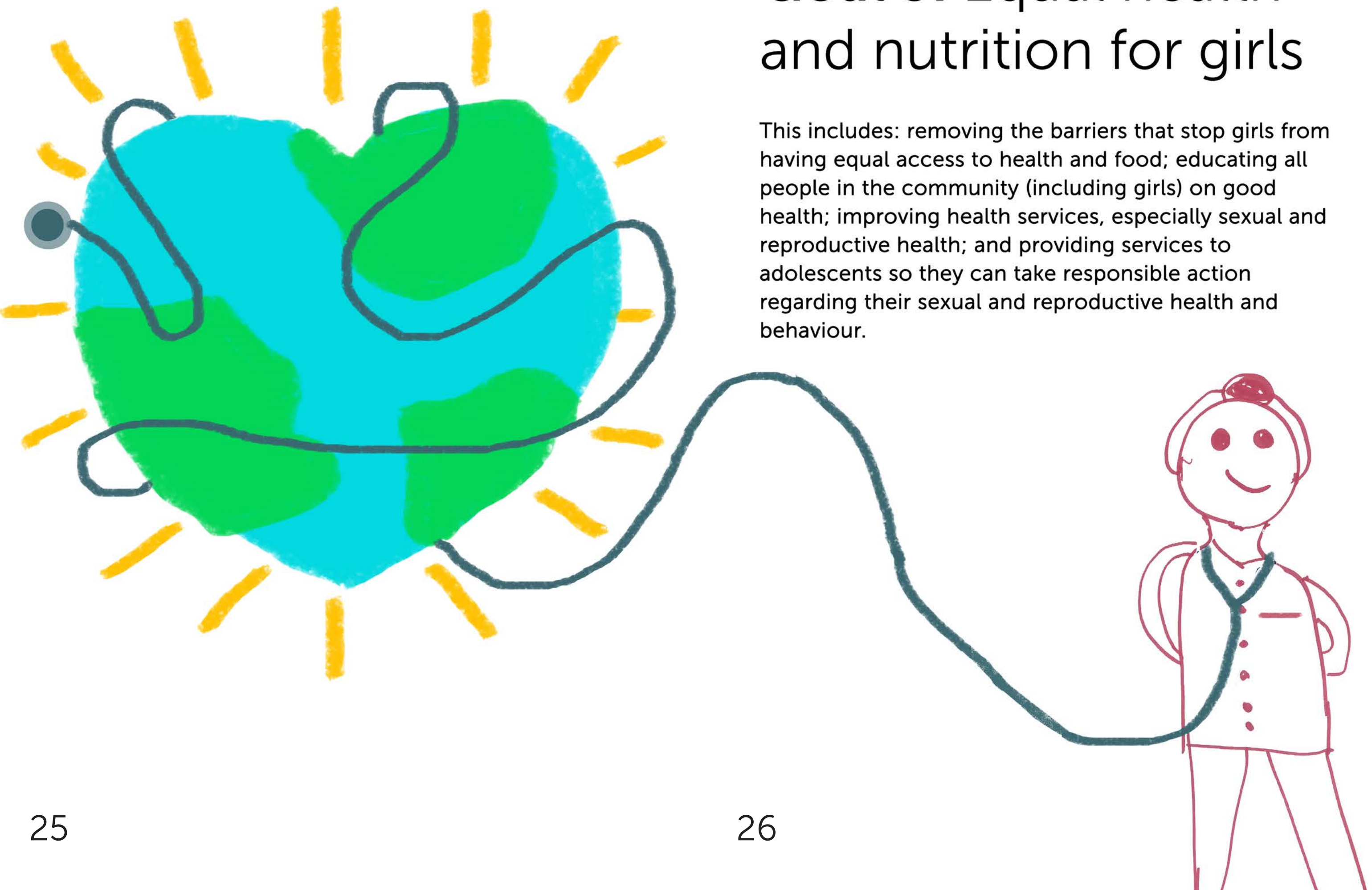
Equal education and training for girls



The colours in this painting speak about fairness in life, love for life, parents' encouragement, and hopes.

Goal 5: Equal health and nutrition for girls

This includes: removing the barriers that stop girls from having equal access to health and food; educating all people in the community (including girls) on good health; improving health services, especially sexual and reproductive health; and providing services to adolescents so they can take responsible action regarding their sexual and reproductive health and behaviour.





No more Child Labour

Goal 6: Stop child labour

This includes: protecting children from harmful work; setting a minimum age for children to work that ensures their rights; protecting girls in the workplace by ensuring good working conditions; improving laws and implementation of laws where relevant; and utilising existing international laws, including from the International Labour Organization, to guide national laws on child labour.



Injustice exists
Thank you world:)



No more violence!

Goal 7: End violence against girls

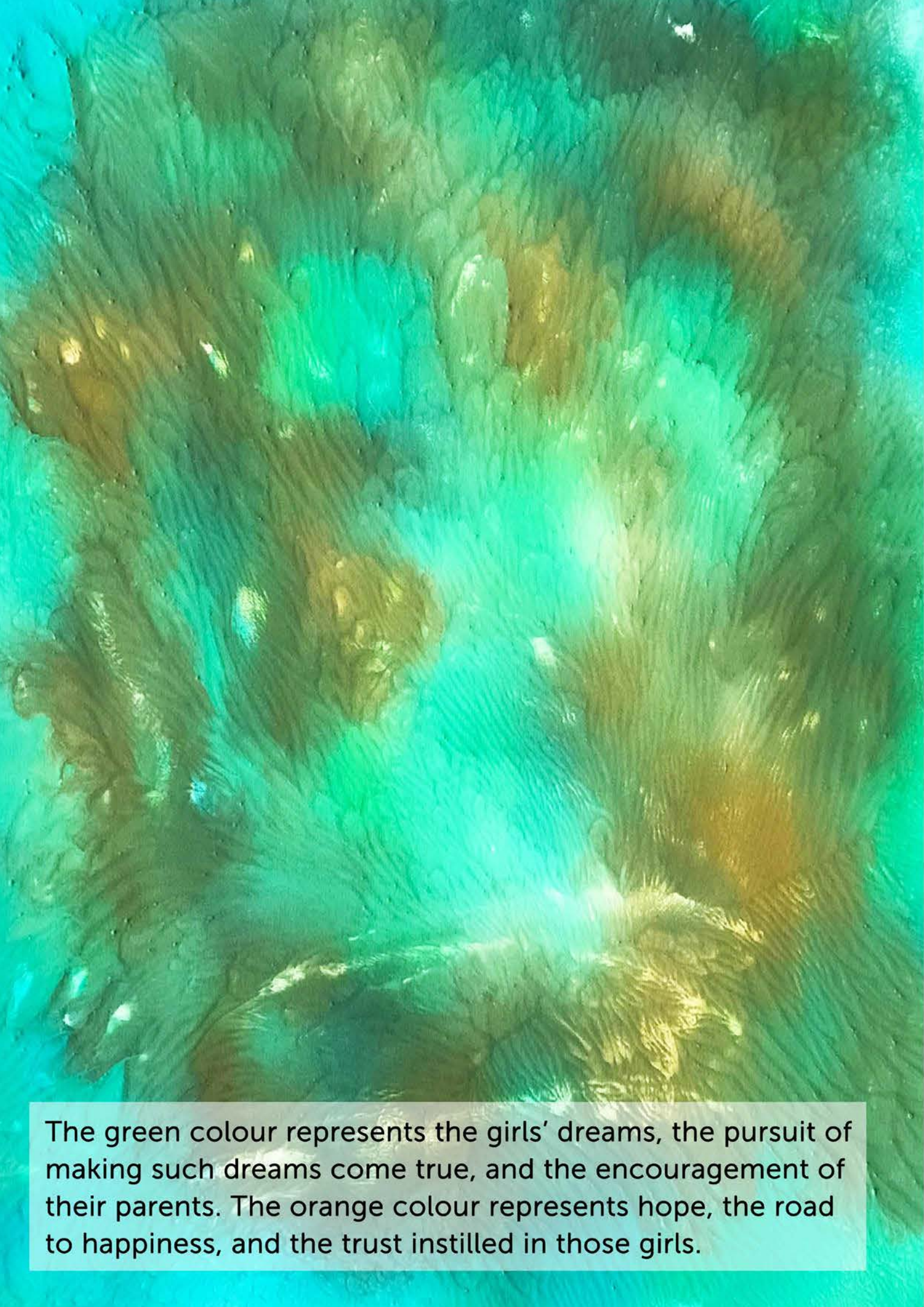
This includes: passing laws to protect girls from harassment and other forms of violence; changing the law to protect them at school and at home; including gender-sensitive training for people working on support for girls who have experienced violence; and ending female genital mutilation.

Goal 8: Promote the girl child's awareness and participation in social, economic and political life



My hand's with yours
we will build a new world

This includes: providing access for girls to have information and a space for them to express their views in public life; and supporting non-governmental organisations, especially youth-led organisations, to promote the participation of girls in society.



The green colour represents the girls' dreams, the pursuit of making such dreams come true, and the encouragement of their parents. The orange colour represents hope, the road to happiness, and the trust instilled in those girls.

Goal 9: Work with families to support girls to succeed and have equal opportunities

This includes: designing ways to support families to remove barriers to girls' development and education; and encouraging parents and caregivers to treat boys and girls equally, including sharing household responsibilities.

Note: please see the Girl Child chapter of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the full description of each goal.

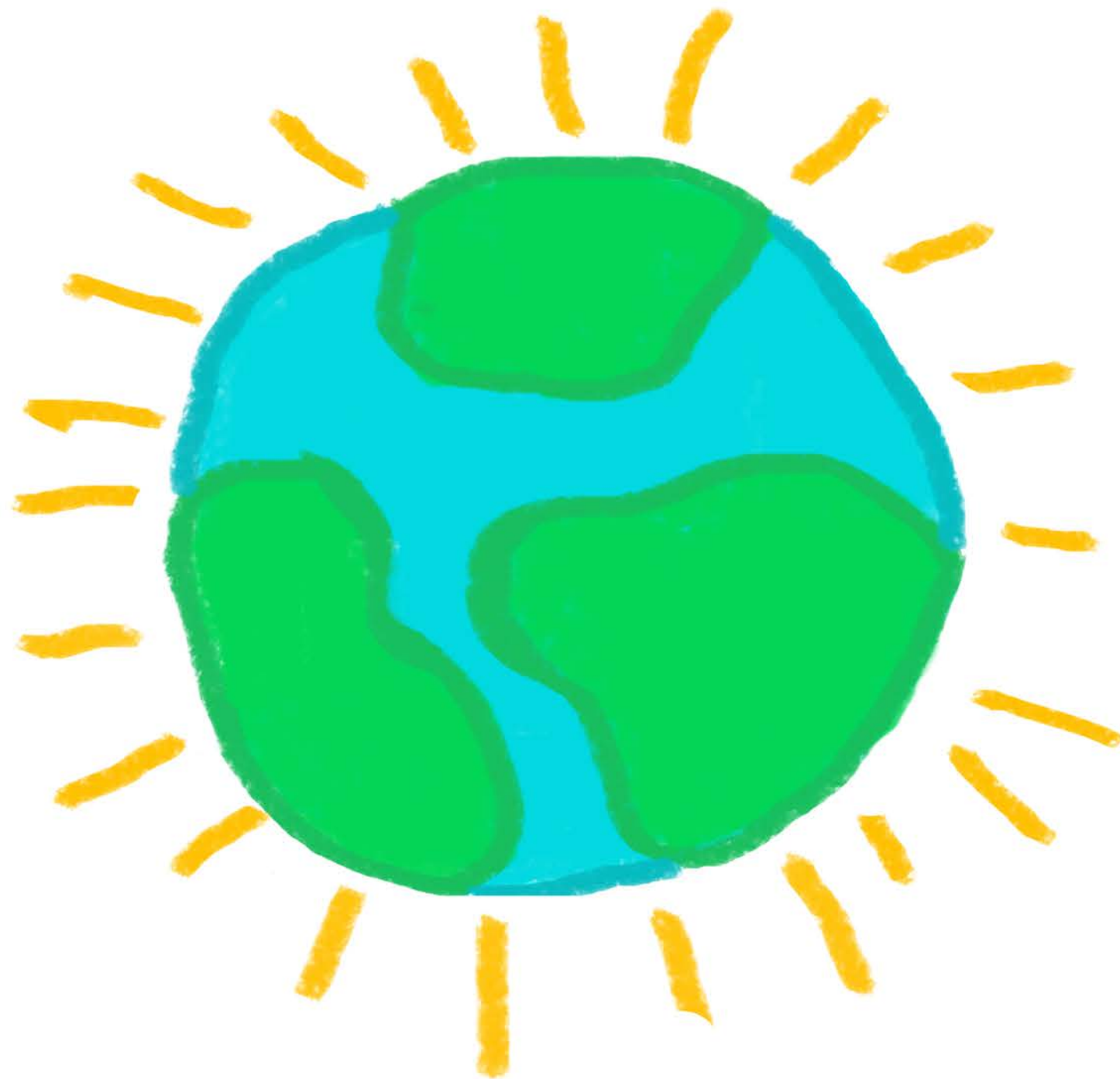


Let's put
our hands
together

What does this mean in the **Arab Region**?

All Arab countries have agreed to follow the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to work on improving the lives of women and girls. In order to show what is being done, every five years, they create country reports on the progress that has occurred. These reports are then used to create one big report for the whole Arab region. The report for the Arab region shows the positive and negative actions taken by countries, and also points out the different trends impacting women and girls. The report is then sent to the United Nations in New York with reports from other regions of the world, where they will be discussed at the Commission on the Status of Women by world leaders, governments, non-governmental organisations, and activists.

If you compare the previous reports for the Arab region, you can see that there have been many positive improvements in the lives of women and girls since 1995. This includes better health for girls, more girls attending school, fewer girls that are married, and more laws to protect girls. Despite these positive improvements, Arab countries must do more to make sure that all women and girls lead a happy and healthy life and have the same opportunities as men and boys.



What does the Arab Region report say about the life of **the girl child** in **2019**?

According to the report from the Arab region on the Beijing Declaration, there are some key findings that show improvements in girls' lives. Arab countries have worked on three main issues affecting girls in the region, namely education and skills training; child marriage; and health.

Health

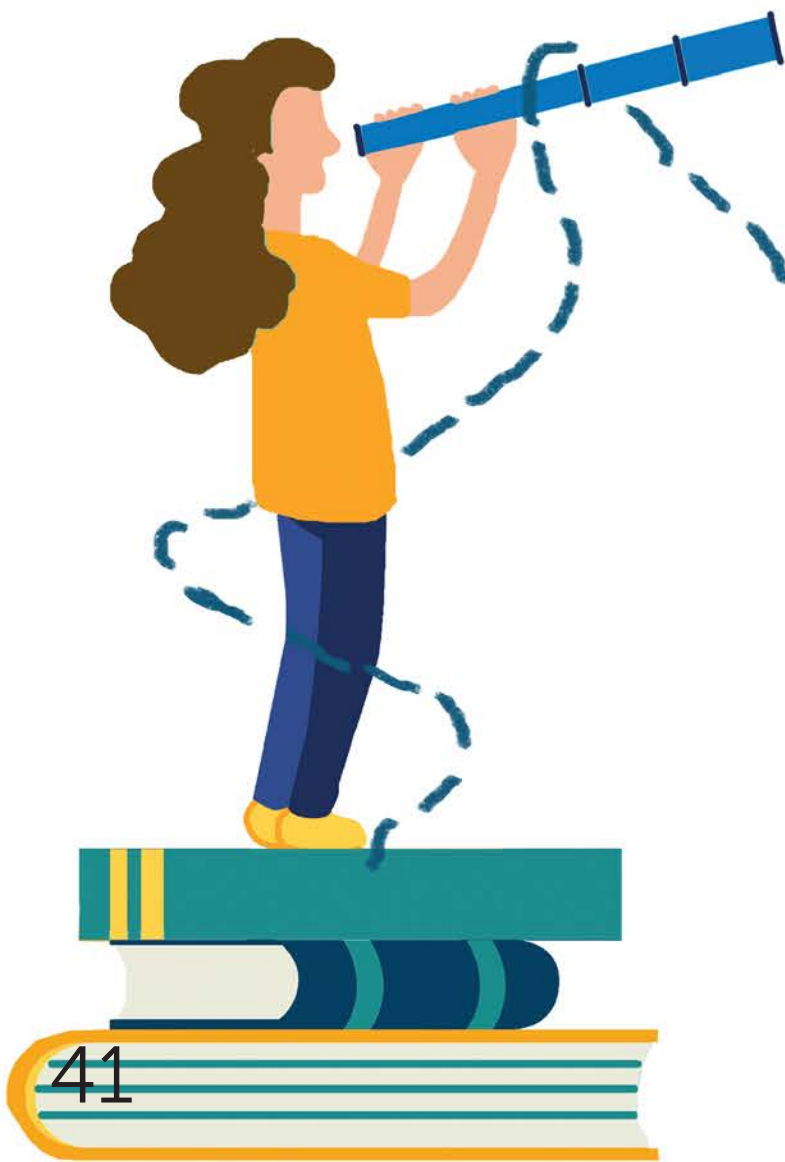
- The health of girls in the Arab region is improving.
- This is particularly true when girls are born, because their mothers are more able to give birth safely.
- This means girls are growing up better, to live longer, and enjoy healthier lives.

Child Marriage

- Since 1995, child marriage rates have reduced in Arab countries.
- 1 in 5 girls in the Arab region get married before the age of 18, compared to 1 in 3, 25 years ago.¹
- The number remains high in the Arab region partly because there is more child marriage in rural areas and in areas where there is war, or children are affected by war.

Education

- More girls are going to primary and secondary school in the Arab region since 1995.
- Arab countries are working on programmes to guarantee girls' rights, including creating more opportunities for girls to go to school.
- Girls are being supported in many parts of the Arab world to make sure they have the training and education they need to get good employment later in life.
- Many countries are also working to make sure that girls are able to study a wide-range of topics, such as science, technology, engineering, and maths (this is called STEM).



1. UNICEF, A Profile of Child Marriage in the Middle East and North Africa, (New York: UNICEF, 2019).

Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future
Better Future

What are **Arab Countries** focusing on for the future?

In the report from the Arab region on the Beijing Declaration, Arab countries have made promises to make girls' lives healthier and safer. In order to do this, they have committed to two priority areas which they will focus on for the next 5 years:

- Ending child marriage.
- Ending female genital mutilation.

Countries in the Arab region have committed to end child marriage by making sure all girls go to school; they will pass laws to make child marriage illegal; and they will make sure that girls can participate in public activities just like boys.

To end female genital mutilation, countries in the Arab region have committed to passing laws that will make it illegal and develop national plans to help girls stay safe and healthy.

Recommendations

1. Enact legislation that protects girls from early marriage.
2. Encourage parents to support girls and strengthen their role in developing their skills.
3. Raise awareness among girls and ensure they understand their rights, for example the right to education, equality, and health care.
4. Focus on the significance of girls' education and the importance of getting a university degree.
5. Emphasize that girls should support each other to overcome obstacles.
6. Encourage girls not to remain silent, and to express their opinions and defend their rights.



Word Bank

Activists: Activists are people who work to change the social or political world. They can run their own organisations, be a member of organisations, and/or work to make change with other networks and people.

Birth registration: When a child is born they are registered – their name and birth are recorded by the Government – to support them to access services, for example: health services, protection services etc.

Child labour: When children are working inside or outside of the home, sometimes for someone else or a business. There is an international agreement called the International Labour Organisation Convention 182, which says that some forms of child labour are illegal when someone is under the age of 18. These include:

- Work which harms children's health,
- Prostitution (sex for money or other payments),
- Illegal work (for example selling drugs),
- Forcing children to be part of armies.

Child marriage: When children are married before reaching the age of 18 years old. Sometimes a girl is forced to marry someone when she doesn't want to.

Child participation: The right to express your view in matters that affect you and being taken seriously.

Commission on the Status of Women: The Commission on the Status of Women is part of the United Nations system and works on supporting the equal treatment and opportunities of women and girls across the world. The Commission is in charge of reviewing the progress made across the world on the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. The Commission meets once a year for 2-weeks in New York.

Convention on the Rights of the Child: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has been in place since 1990 and tells us about the rights that children are entitled to. These include, the right to birth registration, protection, education, and more. 192 countries are part of this convention.

Discrimination: When a person is treated badly or unfairly, because of who they are, what they look like or where they come from. If a girl experiences this because she is a girl, this is called 'gender discrimination'.

Economy: Economy is the system which countries have for creating wealth (money), including producing (farming, creating items to sell) and how they buy and sell these within the country and with other countries. People can be part of the economy by having jobs, being involved in decision-making around money, and more.

Environment: The natural surroundings in which a person lives, including plants, animals, and pollution.

Equality: The right of different groups to have access to the same rights and to be treated equally. For example, girls and boys should have equal rights to access education.

Female genital mutilation: When a girl or woman's external sexual organs are removed or injured for non-medical reasons. This can also be called 'female circumcision'.

Female infanticide: When baby girls are killed because they are girls. This happens in some places where girls are not seen as equal to boys.

Gender-sensitive: This is when services, communication, or actions are under-taken with an understanding of the different challenges that girls and boys face.

Human rights and child rights: Rights belonging to everyone, because they are human beings, including rights to basic freedoms, and to have what they need to survive, develop, and participate in society. Adults have rights and so do children.

International Labour Organization: The International Labour Organization is part of the United Nations and includes 187 countries, employers and workers, who have committed to a set of minimum standards for labour.

Mechanisms: They are a set of processes and steps to make something happen.

Media: This includes the news (national and international) on television, newspapers, and online; it also includes other forms of communication like the radio and magazines.

Negative cultural attitudes and practices: A set of beliefs, values, and actions that a particular group uphold that have a negative (non-beneficial) effect on some parts of the community in that group.

Policies: A set of ideas or a plan on a particular issue, agreed by decision makers – in this case government. For example, a policy on children's education might include: that all children should receive the same education, and that this will happen by ensuring that girls and boys are able to attend school.

United Nations: The United Nations (UN) addresses many issues across the world and has many different offices that focus on different issues. These include human rights, the environment, health, crime, and labour. The United Nations is a way for countries across the world to discuss these different areas and address problems they have.

Further Information

لمزيد من المعلومات

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