



## The Elles du Sahel

*Improving access to quality education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender justice will enable girls and women to thrive and the Sahel to flourish.*

A judge, a rapper, a parliamentarian, a climate activist, a feminist, a peace-builder, a healthcare provider, a researcher, a human rights activist, a youth counsellor, an education specialist, some sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advocates, and a writer, have joined forces, united by the conviction that women and girls are the drivers of peace and prosperity in the Sahel.

The **Elles du Sahel** is a multi-sectoral global network of sixteen female leaders from the Sahel, the European Union, and the United States, strengthened by their extensive networks in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. They advocate for women's right to a good education, to make decisions about their own bodies, and to live free of violence so that they can improve their health, futures, and lives.

### Backdrop

The complex interaction between poverty, environmental degradation, food insecurity, political instability, and violent extremism have wreaked havoc in the Sahel. The situation is aggravated by the climate crisis and by population growth rates that are higher than anywhere else in the world. While everybody is gravely affected, women and girls bear the brunt of economic deprivation and insecurity.

### Tackling the Root Causes of Instability

The complexity and gravity of the situation in the Sahel call for solutions that tackle the root causes of instability, transcend traditional silos and unequivocally support the rights of women and girls. Women's rights are cornerstones of social change, climate resilience, gender equity, economic development, and regional stability. By safeguarding women's and girls' rights, they become the drivers of positive change.

## Focal Areas

Long-term investments in women's and girls' autonomy are urgently needed in the Sahel. **Girls' education, SRHR, and gender justice** are powerful drivers of resilience, development, and regional security. Investments in these areas will enable the region to break the current impasse, with millions of children out of school and at risk of child marriage, a high unmet need for family planning, and a rise in violence against women fueled by conflict and displacement. The Elles du Sahel are determined to change this paradigm.

At the policy level, external donors and governments within the Sahel have made numerous commitments to girls' education, SRHR, and ending gender-based violence. However, these commitments are not well aligned or holistic, directly affecting how these vital issues are prioritized and funded. **The Elles du Sahel aims to increase coherence between commitments, strategies, and funding streams and ensure that women's and girls' fundamental rights are at the forefront of positive change.**

## Unique positioning

The Elles du Sahel is a unique network that works across countries, movements, and sectors. Its members are committed female leaders and human rights champions from across the francophone Sahel. They have a deep understanding of the realities on the ground and a profound connection to their respective governments, civil society organizations, and, most importantly, the women and girls they serve.

Supported by their extensive professional networks, the Elles du Sahel are the connective link between the needs of women and girls of the Sahel and the national, regional, and global platforms where decisions are made that affect their communities, families, and them.

Join us [#ellesdusahel](#)

For more information, contact  
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<https://oasissahel.org/ellesdusahel>

## Advocacy Action

Drawing on their holistic perspective and vast multi-sectoral expertise, and far-reaching networks, the Elles du Sahel:

- conduct high-level evidence-based advocacy to elevate girls' education, SRHR and gender justice in key strategies, policies and budgets
- call attention to the urgent need to work holistically across sectors and the region.
- identify and address gaps in evidence needed to shape policy
- provide advocacy training, mentorship and flexible support to women leaders
- connect and align civil society allies for greater impact
- demystify regional funding bodies for civil society actors to enable direct engagement

## Expected Outcomes

Expanded investments in education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender justice are the only way to safeguard women's rights and their full engagement in society, leading to a more just and peaceful future for the Sahel. Evidence-based investments in these areas will reduce human suffering and catalyze a demographic transition with long-reaching benefits to communities, nations, and the Sahel region.

## Call to Action

The Elles du Sahel call on donors, governments, and the international community to put women and girls at the centre of their strategies and invest in their education, health, and well-being. This includes the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Initiative (SWEDD), the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF), and platforms such as the Sahel Alliance and the G5 Sahel.

