



The Elles du Sahel

Girls' education and sexual and reproductive health and rights play a central role in building a more secure and thriving Sahel. The time to prioritize them is now!

A judge, a rapper, a parliamentarian, a climate activist, a feminist, a peace-builder, a health-care provider, a researcher, a human rights activist, a youth counsellor, an education specialist, a sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advocate, and a writer have joined forces, supported by thousands, to pursue increased and more just financing that reflects the leading role women and girls play in building a thriving Sahel. The shared purpose of the Elles du Sahel is that:

"WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS, GIRLS AND WOMEN WILL THRIVE, CONTRIBUTING TO THE STABILITY OF THE SAHEL REGION AND ENABLING IT TO FLOURISH."

The climate crisis and rapid population growth jointly exacerbate suffering in the Sahel.

Poverty, food insecurity, drought, violent extremism, and forced displacement are wreaking havoc in the Sahel and causing unimaginable human suffering. This situation is increasingly aggravated by the climate crisis and by rapid population growth, which in the Sahel is the highest in the world.

With millions of children out of school, a high unmet need for family planning, and most girls married off when they are still children, the Sahel is ground zero for the campaign for girls' education, access to SRHR, and freedom from gender-based violence.

The people of the Sahel, especially women and girls, need to be reprioritized.

Despite the urgency, the Sahel is deprioritized as other crises take centre stage at the global level, and development funding continues to decrease. At the same time, an ever-increasing proportion of national and international development funding continues to go to military-related spending and ineffective interventions.

The Elles du Sahel work closely together to change this paradigm. Shifting the focus to the people of the Sahel, particularly to women and girls, and advocating for increased investment in human capital.

Undo the gridlock with rights-based approaches.

The Elles du Sahel see each girl and woman as a whole person, with unique and intersecting needs and talents and work closely with them so that they can express their needs and rights, and have them addressed.

The Elles du Sahel fight for women's and girls' human rights, emphasizing their right to a good education, to make their own decisions concerning their health, body and sexual life, and to live their lives free from violence.

These three human rights-based approaches promote women's full engagement in society and will lead to a more equitable and prosperous future for the Sahel by making communities healthier, safer, more resilient, better resourced, and more stable.

Regional investment focused on the Sahel is needed now.

The holistic approach of the Elles du Sahel - focused on long-term investments in women and girls' autonomy - will enable the Sahel to break through the current impasse, reduce human suffering in the region, and catalyze a demographic shift that will yield enormous benefits for women, their communities and the region.

Fighting inequality is within our reach.

The evidence clearly shows, and people know intrinsically, that investing in the education, health and well-being of women and girls will not only build the resilience of individuals and families but will also result in a more stable and resilient region.

The Elles du Sahel call on donors, governments, and regional and international initiatives to take urgent action. 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. The Elles du Sahel call for more coherence between commitments, evidence and action so that

funds are swiftly allocated, spent in areas of greatest need, and scaled up as interventions are shown to be effective. The Sahel must be supported as a region because what happens in one country automatically affects all the others.

Who we are?



The **Elles du Sahel** is a multi-sectoral network of sixteen women activists from the Sahel, the European Union and the United States, drawing on their passion, expertise and extensive professional networks. Together, the Elles du Sahel connect the dots between sub-national, national, regional and international levels. They aim to recalibrate funding towards education, health and gender equity, based on the current evidence and actual needs of girls and women living in the Sahel.

The Elles du Sahel fight to recalibrate funding for women and girls based on evidence, and the actual needs and demands of people living in the Sahel.

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