Centre for Civil Society's G20 Engagements:

Idea Wins, Features and Events on Gender, Equity, and STEM

The Centre for Civil Society (CCS) has been actively engaged in promoting gender equity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). The Science & Technology (S&T) vertical at CCS—through policy dialogues, research, stakeholder engagement and outreach—continually strives to make STEM fields more inclusive.

This report highlights CCS's notable contributions in the context of India's G20 presidency: our participation in various G20-related events, as well as our recommendations that have received recognition in G20 reports, whitepapers and in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration 2023.

A. Recommendations Featured in Gender-Equity Report and Leaders' Declaration

CCS's insights and recommendations on Women in STEM have been featured in a whitepaper prepared by the Gender Equality and Disability (GED) Working Group for Civil 20, an official Engagement Group of India's G20 Presidency. These recommendations were listed in the Civil20 India Policy Pack and also contributed to the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration 2023.

The recommendations put forth by CCS touched upon themes such as the need for gender-disaggregated data collection and periodic reporting, enhancing the representation of women in decision-making bodies and leadership roles, women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion (particularly in areas such as the blue economy) to enable the advancement of women in STEM fields. The ideas centred on bridging the gender gap in STEM education and careers.

Need for Women's Participation in Decision Making Bodies and Key Political Leadership Positions

Challenge: In 2021, the percentage of women in parliament worldwide averaged at a mere 25%. There is an evident need for the inclusion of women in political leadership positions and strategic decision-making bodies, particularly in traditionally male-dominated areas such as science & technology ministries.

CCS' Policy Recommendation: A range of policy tools must be explored by the G20 countries to improve this situation—including (i) prioritizing women's representation in leadership; (ii) committing to a common goal for a certain percent increase in women in strategic policymaking positions; (iii) supporting existing civil society efforts that work towards increasing women's representation in decision-making processes. Policymakers must also ensure gender-disaggregated data is collected and reported periodically, to ensure the use of appropriate incentives and policy tools for bridging the gender gap.

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1. [Civil 20 India Policy Pack 2023](#) (which summarizes key recommendations from its working groups) featured several recommendations akin to those suggested by CCS. In its "Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment" section, it listed the following:

- *"Improving gender-disaggregated data collection to inform decision making…"*

- *"Mandating their representation in decision-making bodies, conducting gender and vulnerability assessments, providing gender-responsive training, and collaborating with local organisations are essential."*

- *"Promoting women's economic empowerment and enhancing financial inclusion and equal financing opportunities (25% in green and blue economies and priority procurement for women entrepreneurs) through collaboration between relevant institutions and organisations."*

2. Several working group reports (containing numerous recommendations) culminated in the [New Delhi Leaders' Declaration 2023](#). The G20 leaders unanimously consented and adopted this declaration. Notably, the declaration featured statements akin to CCS' recommendations on gender, equity and inclusion in STEM. The Preamble of the document itself contains a commitment that CCS highlighted in all of its G20 engagements:

> **Preamble**
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> *"5. As Leaders of G20, the premier global forum for international economic cooperation, we resolve to act in concrete ways through partnerships. We commit to:*
>
>> *k. Close gender gaps and promote the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women in the economy as decision-makers."*

Furthermore, the **"Enhancing Economic and Social Empowerment"** section of the Declaration put forth the commitment to encourage women's active participation in the economy through ensuring their inclusion in STEM fields—a key cause championed by CCS and presented as a recommendation during our Civil20 working group engagements. The text from the Declaration is provided below:

> *64. We encourage women-led development and remain committed to enhancing women's full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation as decision makers for addressing global challenges inclusively and in contributing as active participants in all spheres of society, across all sectors and at all levels of the economy, which is not only crucial for achieving gender equality but also for contributing to global GDP growth. To this end, we:*
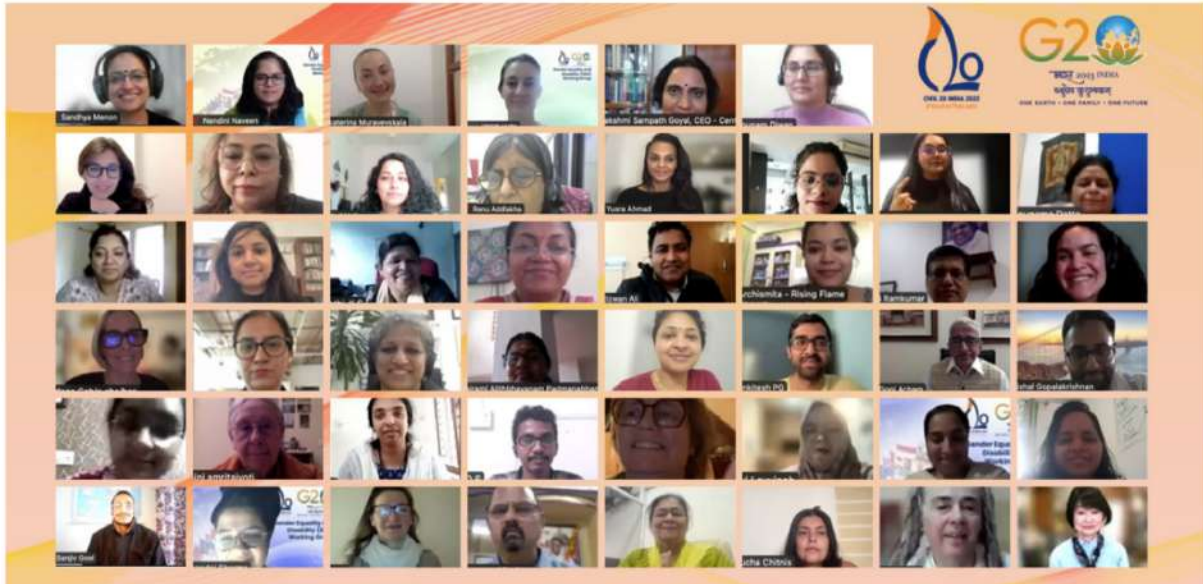
ii. Ensure equal access to affordable, inclusive, equitable, safe and quality education from early childhood through higher education to lifelong learning and support the greater enrolment, participation and leadership of all women and girls, including those with disabilities, in STEM fields and in emerging digital technologies.

B. CCS Featured in Civil20 Working Group Report

1.   CCS's presence and contributions to the G20 initiatives focusing on gender equity and STEM education were mentioned in a Civil 20 working group report titled, "[Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment, Civil20 Working Group India 2023](...)" (*see section: Appendix: List of COS and organisations associated with the GED/GEWE WG*).

2. CCS former CEO Lakshmi Sampath Goyal's attendance at the **G20 Joint Engagement Groups Roundtable on Women-Led Development** in Goa was also featured in this report (*see below*).

3. CCS former CEO Lakshmi Sampath Goyal's attendance at the virtual **Inaugural Event of Civil20 Gender Equality and Disabilities Working Group** was also featured in the report *(see below).*

C. Events Organized in Collaboration with G20

CCS actively collaborated with the G20 on several events, all aimed at advancing gender equity and STEM education, listed below:

(1) Women in STEM Caravan: Multi-city Events

A muti-city 'Women in STEM Caravan' held in collaboration with P&G Shiksha – the flagship CSR program of P&G India, spanned across four locations in India: New Delhi, Mumbai, Telangana, and

Himachal Pradesh. This event not only garnered substantial public visibility but also engaged policymakers, industry leaders, and academicians in meaningful discussions.

The caravan commenced on February 11th, International Day for Women and Girls in Science, and began with a high-powered roundtable conference titled *'Women in STEM: Policy, Practice & Interventions'*. This roundtable addressed crucial aspects such as policy provisions, ground realities, the role of corporations, and direct interventions to enhance women's representation in STEM opportunities.

The caravan then moved on to ITIs and Engineering institutions in Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra where P&G Shiksha Betiyan Scholarships were awarded to girls pursuing STEM courses across different institutes. The caravan events were officially recognized as a part of the G20 events, showcasing CCS's commitment to driving change in the STEM landscape.

(2) Gender, Education, and Technology Policy Dialogues

CCS collaborated with C20 Gender Equality (GE) and Education & Digital Transformation (EDT) Working Groups, along with the Azim Premji Foundation Gender Equality (GE) and Education & Digital Transformation (EDT) Working Groups, along with the Azim Premji Foundation, to host policy dialogues in Bangalore.

150 participants attended both in-person and online, representing 20 countries — India, Indonesia, Malaysia, France, Cabo Verde, Timor-Leste, Nigeria, Ghana, British Indian Ocean Territory, Pakistan, United States, Nepal, Costa Rica, Japan, Andorra, Russia, Gambia, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Turkey.

Indian Co-Coordinator of the C20 Working Group on Gender Equality and Disability, Dr Bhavani Rao, Ms Lakshmi Sampath Goyal, CEO, Centre for Civil Society, and Mr Sudheesh Venkatesh of the Azim Premji Foundation, presided over the event.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India.

A Special Address was delivered by Shri Ritesh Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Government of Karnataka.

The Distinguished Address: Ms. Justine Sass, Chief, Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO. Special Remarks were delivered by Smt. Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka.

Following the inaugural session, two breakout thematic discussions took place along two themes.

The discussion on the theme of, "Ensuring Inclusive and Equitable Access to STEM Education and Skill Development," was moderated by Ms. Shamin Mehrotra, Visiting Faculty at Azim Premji University and Director, Ummeed Training Centre, Mumbai.

The discussion on the theme of "Leveraging Technologies for Capacity Building and the Future of Work," was moderated by Ms. Bhavya Mehta, Consultant, Science & Technology Policy, Centre for Civil Society, New Delhi.

Dr Akila Radhakrishnan, Social Policy Specialist, Education and Skills for Social Mobility, UNICEF, Mr Akash D Sethi, Chief Executive Officer, Quest Alliance, and Dr Medha Somaiya, Director, MAD's Solutions and Services for Social Initiatives contributed key perspectives to the discussion on Leveraging Technologies for Capacity Building and the Future of Work.

Ms. Janaka Pushpanathan, Director – South India, British Council, India; Ms. Maya Menon, Founder Director – The Teacher Foundation and Smt. Manju Shree Srivastava, Trustee and Vice President, Ekal Foundation participated in the panel on Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive Access to STEM Education and Skill Development.

Their interventions were followed by viewpoints and suggestions from other CSO representatives, government officials and experts, present online and offline in respective breakout rooms. The concluding session highlighted the summarization of discussions in both rooms by respective moderators.

D. Other Contributions to the Civil20 Working Group

CCS had the privilege of participating in the Gender Equality & Disability Working Group Summit in Bhubaneswar, showcasing our focus on promoting gender equity and inclusivity.

In Goa, CCS represented the C20 working group at the G20 Joint Working Group Meeting on 'women-led development.' This event brought together four engagement groups, namely Think20, G20 Empower, Women20, and Civil20, demonstrating CCS's role as a key contributor to discussions on women's empowerment and development.

Acknowledgements

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