Educative Plus Initiative Recommendations on Youth Declaration

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region most lagging behind in girls’ secondary education due to factors like child early and forced marriage, child-bearing and pervasive gender-based and sexual violence. Before COVID, nearly 34 million girls were not in secondary school. Even millions more are now out of school since COVID. Many girls in Africa have never even stepped into a classroom. All of these are threats to their health and well-being and increase their risks of acquiring HIV.

Education Plus is a political advocacy drive to accelerate actions and investments for the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women and to achieve gender equality in sub-Saharan Africa by addressing the alarming numbers of adolescent girls and young women acquiring HIV and dying from AIDS in Africa, and how this threatens their education, well-being and survival.

Recommendations:

1. The need for governments and decision-makers to prioritize investment in a holistic approach that empowers adolescent girls and young women and addresses unequal gender power dynamics and harmful gender norms that stand in the way of girls’ education.

2. Make policy and legislative reforms to ensure the fundamental rights of young people including adolescents and young women are protected

3. Ensure meaningful participation and leadership of adolescent girls and young women in decision-making platforms.

4. Adopt youth-centred approaches that are inclusive, diverse, feminist informed and participatory in the education sector reforms.

5. Guarantee access to comprehensive sexuality education for adolescent girls and young women in Africa to protect them from HIV and other STIs.

6. Invest in preventing gender-based violence and creating safer school environments for adolescent girls and young women. Young people’s participation is necessary for formulating policies to address school-related violence and bullying.