Consistent with section 7019(e) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2023 (Div. K, P.L. 117-328) and House Report 117-401, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), submits a report on the actions taken in the previous 12 months to implement the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls. This report includes diplomatic actions and programs to: reduce the incidence of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) and address the needs of already married girls; encourage the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and address the needs of those who have already undergone these procedures; and train U.S. government and
partner staff on the specific opportunities and barriers associated with the empowerment of adolescent girls.

The Department of State, USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and Peace Corps share the mission of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of girls and young women globally through the objectives of the U.S. Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls.

Objective 1: Enhance girls’ access to quality education in safe environments.

Public, Bilateral, and Multilateral Diplomatic Efforts

- Despite odious actions by the Taliban, the State Department continues to support Afghan girls’ access to secondary and higher education. On the International Day of the Girl (October 11, 2022), the Secretary of State announced restrictions of visas under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, to restrict the issuance of visas for individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, repressing women and girls in Afghanistan through restrictive policies and violence, particularly by those instrumental in continuing to restrict girls’ access to education.

- USAID elevated girls’ education as part of the Agency’s Implementation Plan for the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. Specifically, by Fiscal Year 2025, USAID publicly
committed to reaching 15 million girls and young women across the education continuum with strengthened support for improved access to education and improved learning outcomes. This goal represents an increase of 3.4 million, or 23 percent, from those reached in FY 2020. To accomplish this goal, USAID will continue to strengthen context-responsive interventions to support girls’ return to learning during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This goal was announced by the First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden, at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit.

- Through its support and role in their governing bodies, USAID elevated girls’ education in Education Cannot Wait’s (ECW) new strategy and through the Global Partnership for Education’s (GPE) work in their new Girls Education Accelerator funding mechanism.

- As part of MCC’s country selection process and ongoing monitoring of current partner eligibility for MCC assistance, the agency produces annual country scorecards that assess a country’s commitment to ruling justly, investing in its people, and supporting economic freedom. The Girls’ Education indicator incentivizes countries to ensure that girls stay in school longer, through primary school and into secondary school.
Programmatic Highlights – Select Examples

- In 2022, the U.S. government was a significant donor to Afghan adolescent girls’ education, both through bilateral programs that support international and private schools and the provision of funds to pooled multilateral mechanisms, such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, GPE, ECW, and UNICEF. When the Taliban banned girls from attending secondary schools, some of these programs pivoted to distance learning. USAID, for example, supported the printing and distribution of Kankor university entrance exam preparatory materials to students in Grades 10-12 and developed a suite of online learning materials in math and sciences to provide supplemental Kankor preparation for Grades 10, 11, and 12. USAID has assessed that these apps have been downloaded more than 4,500 times and reached over two million students.

- In Mali, USAID’s Girls’ Leadership and Empowerment through Education activity increased adolescent girls’ retention and transition rates by paying school fees, providing uniforms, and constructing female-friendly latrines. In FY21, 5,500 out-of-school adolescent girls enrolled and over 5,200 successfully transitioned to formal secondary schools. Community sensitization sessions helped 2,427 girls return to learning. Hundreds of facilitators, grandmothers, aunts, teachers, educational advisors, parent teacher associations, and health workers
helped girls learn about reproductive health, gender equality, overcoming barriers to education, and negative impacts of sexual violence and early marriage.

- The Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supports the Private Sector Exchange Visitor Program (BridgeUSA), which includes 13 categories of educational and cultural exchange such as educational, research, and professional development programs. These programs empower exchange visitors with the knowledge, tools, and networks needed to thrive as leaders and to create lasting impact both locally and globally. In 2022, female participation increased to 57 percent (147,685 females of total 261,476) of which 14 percent (20,170) were adolescent girls.

- In Côte d’Ivoire, MCC’s *Skills for Employability and Productivity* project supported the capacity of the Directorate of Gender Equity and Equality in the Ministry of Education and to roll out a National Gender Policy for Education. In two provinces, the project is currently implementing activities designed to increase community engagement in girls’ education, reduce violence in schools, promote girls’ engagement in the STEM fields, and help the national and regional education offices to create partnerships to sustain this work.

- The Secondary Education Activity of MCC’s Morocco Employment and Land Compact is piloting a sustainable and scalable model (Lycée
Attahadi) to improve the quality of education in public secondary schools. The activity emphasizes gender equality and equity, particularly combatting gender-based stereotypes. During the reporting period, teachers and administrators participated in a five-day Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) training. They can also now access a newly developed GSI guide for the Attahadi Model, which the Government of Morocco plans to institutionalize for all secondary schools.

**Objective 2: Provide economic opportunities and incentives for girls and their families**

**Public, Bilateral, and Multilateral Diplomatic Efforts**

- The Department of State’s S/GWI worked collaboratively across 12 U.S. government departments and agencies and held consultations with over 200 civil society actors and external stakeholders from more than 30 countries to inform the U.S. Strategy on Global Women’s Economic Security. The strategy envisions a world in which women and girls, in all their diversity, are able to fully, meaningfully, and equally contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth and global prosperity.

- In September 2022, the Secretary of State announced the Alliance for Afghan Women’s Economic Resilience (AWER), a public-private partnership between the State Department and Boston University.
AWER seeks to collaborate with companies, philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, and foreign governments, mobilizing financial or in-kind commitments in support of umbrella initiatives that advance Afghan women and girls’ education, entrepreneurship, and workforce participation, including providing adolescent girls with opportunities for distance-learning and support for transitioning into the workforce upon graduation.

- MCC’s annual country scorecards include a *Gender in the Economy* indicator, which measures the extent to which laws provide men and women equal capacity to generate income or participate in the economy. This includes the capacity to access institutions, get a job, register a business, sign a contract, open a bank account, choose where to live, to travel freely, maintain property rights, and have protections against domestic violence and child marriage, among others.

**Programmatic Highlights**

- Under the U.S.-Peru Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership managed by the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, implementing partner International Labor Organization (ILO) launched an economic reintegration pilot for female adolescent survivors of trafficking in coordination with the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) and the
National Comprehensive Program for Family Welfare (INABIF), an independent branch within the MIMP that oversees all shelters dedicated to child trafficking survivors. This pilot includes training shelter staff to work with adolescents to successfully build out financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills for a wide range of career opportunities when they age out of the trafficking in persons shelter.

- The ECA TechGirls program is a month-long summer exchange program that equips young women (ages 15-17) from the U.S. and select countries with the knowledge and technical skills to pursue higher education and careers in STEM, contribute to their home economies, collaborate with peers to address global challenges, and build and sustain networks and connections in STEM fields. In July 2022, a global cohort of 136 young women from the U.S. and 35 participating countries came to Washington, D.C. for the exchange, which included a ten-day, intensive technology camp, virtual job shadowing experiences, site visits, discussions on STEM education and careers, leadership training, and intercultural collaboration.

- In Ghana, ECA’s 2022 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) funded the STEM Bootcamp for Girls from Underserved Ghanaian Communities. Two hundred STEM teachers and 200 adolescent girls attended six seminars focused on professional development for STEM
teachers, health talks and screening, STEM career counselling and mentorship, girls in robotics, girls in coding, and STEM competitions.

- ECA’s BridgeUSA program included work components that enabled marginalized youth to participate in international educational and professional development programs. In 2022, 7,859 adolescent girls were offered hands-on opportunities to enhance their skillsets and expand their knowledge base as au pairs, camp counselors, and interns, and through summer work travel.

**Objective 3: Empower girls with information, skills, services, and support**

**Public, Bilateral, and Multilateral Diplomatic Efforts**

- The Department of State hosted a partnership consultation with UNFPA, which provided an opportunity to further strengthen the U.S.-UNFPA relationship and technical relationships across the U.S. government. Engaging with UNFPA remains critical given the shared leadership on gender-based violence and girls’ priorities including ending CEFM and FGM/C.

- In December, the Department of State welcomed a new Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues, who serves as the Department’s principal public representative on youth issues, encouraging youth-related programming around the administration’s foreign policy priorities and
existing regional initiatives, while consistently and meaningfully consulting with young people on the formulation and implementation of relevant policies and programs.

- The Department of State supported the drafting of and later endorsed the U.K. Platform for Action on Promoting the Rights and Wellbeing of Children Born of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which was released at the November Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative International Conference. The Platform outlines principles and actions to promote the rights and wellbeing of children born in conflict-affected contexts. It also highlights the stigma and mental health challenges faced particularly by adolescent mothers who become pregnant from conflict-related sexual violence.

- The Department of State demonstrated its commitment to elevating the voices of adolescent girls through the inclusion of an adolescent girl as a youth delegate on the U.S. Delegation to the 66th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

- In December, the Department of State and USAID launched Safe from the Start ReVisioned, an update to the joint initiative to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies. The initiative focuses on improving and expanding protection services for women and girls, including adolescent girls, who face disproportionate challenges in conflict and crisis.
• In May 2022, USAID issued a multi-sectoral technical brief on Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH), recognizing the role that menstruation plays in achieving multiple sector objectives, and the many ways in which menstruation-related stigma and lack of access to relevant products and services can prevent people, including and especially adolescent girls, from contributing freely to their societies.

Programmatic Highlights—Select Examples

• Launched in 2014, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) public-private partnership provides a comprehensive, multi-sectoral package of interventions to address key factors that make adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) particularly vulnerable to HIV. These include structural factors, such as gender-based violence (GBV), exclusion from economic opportunities, and a lack of access to secondary school. The Department of State, through PEPFAR and in partnership with implementing agencies like CDC, USAID and Peace Corps, invested $380 million to reach over 2.9 million AGYW aged 10-24 years in 15 countries through DREAMS prevention services in 2022. This included access to HIV and violence prevention education, post violence clinical services, parenting and caregiver support, economic strengthening and community mobilization and norms change interventions. Since 2015, new HIV diagnoses among AGYW have declined in all geographic areas.
implementing DREAMS, 96 percent of which have had a decline of greater than 25 percent and nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of which have declined by greater than 40 percent.

- The Department of State’s *Innovation Station* initiative, which seeks to amplify women and girls developing solutions to climate-related community challenges, convened its second annual “Girl Power” virtual event in October 2022. The event introduced global audiences to girls and young women driving efforts to protect endangered wildlife, facilitate effective climate education, and improve recycling efficiency.

- Supporting Her Empowerment – Girls' Resilience, Enterprise, and Technology (SHE’s GREAT!), supported by the S/GWI office at the Department of State aims to identify and transform gender stereotypes through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts/Design, and Math training and leadership development, supporting girls’ full participation in their communities. Through the program's implementation, a network of stakeholders is harnessed to build economic empowerment skills and reduce girls’ vulnerability to GBV, including FGM/C and CEFM. In 2022, nearly 200 girls and young women participated in this program across multiple countries and regions.

- The State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' (INL) Demand Reduction Program launched a
pilot in October through the Organization of American States’s Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD) and U.S. NGO Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) to leverage peer-to-peer intervention strategies to prevent or delay the onset of substance use among youth. The project is active in four Caribbean countries with a focus on adolescent girls.

- Under the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative, the “MENA-US Empowering Resilient Girls Exchange (MERGE)” program, administered by Global Ties, brings together girls ages 15-19 from the U.S. and MENA region in a supportive virtual space to learn about their own mental health, develop emotional resilience skills to cope with stressors related to poverty and trauma, and to share this knowledge with their communities. MERGE reached 132 participants through Spring and Fall semesters, 75 of whom are from the MENA region and 57 from the U.S.

- ECA’s Sports Envoy Program, Sports Visitor Program, and International Sports Programming Initiative (ISPI) also support the education, empowerment, and leadership skills of adolescent girls through sports and cultural exchanges (see Annex 2).

- In Nigeria, ECA’s 2022 AEIF funded the Promoting Deaf Girls’ and Deaf Women’s Participation in the Political Process project. This project, led by Mandela Washington Fellows of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), aims at promoting deaf girls and women’s
participation in ongoing political processes through increased political inclusion, assistance in voter registration and voter turnout, and support for balanced election media coverage.

Objective 4: Mobilize and educate communities to change harmful norms and practices

Public, Bilateral, and Multilateral Diplomatic Efforts

- On December 12, the Secretary of State, USAID Administrator, and Director of the White House Gender Policy Council launched an action-oriented update to the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally*. The Strategy drives a comprehensive, interagency response to GBV abroad and includes a focus on girls and young women, recognizing the unique and disproportionate experiences of GBV they face. The Strategy also acknowledges the important contributions and perspectives of adolescent girls in global efforts to address GBV and was informed by girls from low- and middle-income countries around the world.

- The Secretary of State issued a joint statement with foreign ministers of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse on standing with the women and girls of Iran, who face targeted TFGBV by Iranian authorities.

- On the International Day of the Girl (October 11), the State Department hosted a photo exhibition and reception in partnership
with Too Young to Wed, which included remarks from the Deputy Secretary of State, Senior Advisers in the Department, and an adolescent girl advocate. The event was attended by more than 50 individuals from USG, civil society, and the media; a mini photo exhibit was made available to State Department employees throughout the week. The Secretary of State also released a statement recommitting the U.S. to advancing the rights and empowerment of girls and young women in all their diversity around the world.

- The Department of State negotiated the inclusion of text addressing the prevention of FGM/C and CEFM and the needs of those who have experienced FGM/C and CEFM in various multilateral resolutions and statements including through co-sponsorship of an FGM/C resolution.

- Department of State personnel attended the 2022 Annual “Donor Working Group” Meeting on FGM/C with UNICEF and UNFPA, which focused on Innovative Financing for FGM/C Elimination, with a deep dive into promising approaches. Twenty-two participants from seven countries attended, representing donor governments, multilateral partners, civil society, and foundations.

- In addition to a robust public diplomacy campaign and activities recognizing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW) on November 25 and accompanying 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, the Secretary of State issued a press statement in observance of IDEVAW.
● The Secretary of State also issued a statement in recognition of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation on February 6, highlighting U.S. recognition of this issue as a human rights priority and U.S. commitment to preventing FGM/C and providing support to survivors both domestically and globally.

● In FY22, MCC expanded coverage of the child marriage component of the Gender in the Economy selection indicator. As a result, this indicator incentivizes countries to outlaw child marriage and to ensure that customary laws cannot override protections against child marriage.

Programmatic Highlights - Select Examples

The Department of State and USAID provided $17.46 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 foreign assistance to address CEFM and an earmark of $3-5 million annually to address FGM/C. The Department of State also contributes $5 million annually to UNICEF through IO&P funding for the United Nations Population Fund UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.

Program highlights include:

● The State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) Voices Against Violence (VAV) Initiative, supported more than 3,000 survivors of extreme gender-based violence, including
more than 230 survivors and those at immediate risk of FGM/C with life-saving medical services, legal support and protection.

- The launch of USAID’s Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV) activity deliverables included the development and dissemination of foundational elements for integrated and standalone GBV programming in development contexts, comprehensive knowledge products and resources to strengthen GBV programming, strengthen the USAID GBV community of practice and support donor coordination in GBV programming. Resources include interactive data maps on CEFM and FGM/C, which display the prevalence and, often, co-occurrence of CEFM and FGM/C and related indicators across countries where these harmful practices occur. The next phase of the CARE GBV activity will focus on the implementation of the resources, strategies, and best practices in three focus countries. The implementation will include workstream initiatives on FGM/C and CEFM and interlinkages between other forms of GBV.

- In Kenya, USAID’s Koota Injena project promoted the use of community dialogues to end CEFM and the associated practice of FGM/C. The initiative’s premise is rooted in the belief that if community members who are willing to stand up against such harmful practices are trained to help their peers, family, and friends re-envision how women and girls are treated, communities can accelerate the abandonment of these deeply entrenched practices.
among the members of 39 clans in Kenya’s Samburu and Marsabit Counties.

- In Somalia, the USAID Adolescent Girls’ Education Somalia (AGES) activity reinforces Somali girls’ agency and drivers of change by: 1) reducing CEFM by equipping girls and young women with education and workforce readiness skills for future success; (2) mitigating harmful effects of CEFM through increased access to multi-sectoral services including, but not limited to, education, health, legal, and economic support; and (3) raising awareness of the risks and harms associated with CEFM.

- In Nepal, USAID’s Local System Strengthening to Reduce Child, Early, and Forced Marriage (R-CEFM) activity planned remedial education targeting 7,800 adolescent girls at risk of dropping out of school. In FY21, R-CEFM helped six municipalities with high rates of CEFM conduct self-assessments and develop proxy indicators. The activity trained local officials on implementing activities and strengthening local systems to reduce CEFM. As a result, the municipalities developed action plans and increased dedicated budgets. One municipality passed a law encouraging structures such as Child Rights Committees to reduce CEFM.
Objective 5: Strengthen policy and legal frameworks and accountability.

Public, Bilateral, and Multilateral Diplomatic Efforts

- On November 28, during the UK’s Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) International Conference, President Biden signed a Presidential Memorandum on Promoting Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence to strengthen U.S. government efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), including violations experienced by adolescent girls and young women.

- The updated 2022 USAID Youth in Development Policy recognizes that adolescence is a critical period, especially for girls, when significant physical, emotional, and social changes shape their futures. USAID’s youth work is motivated by a commitment to adolescent girls and young women, in light of longstanding systemic discrimination and barriers that continue to affect their full participation and access to opportunity. By taking a life-course approach through each sector, focusing on child, adolescent, and youth development at each stage in development, USAID can better achieve outcomes such as violence prevention, education, health, food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Enabling countries to engage youth in
development and contribute their demographic dividend requires continued investment across this life course.

Programmatic Highlights – Select Examples

- In Niger, USAID’s GirlEngage program provides space for adolescent girls to become change agents in their communities, establishing a foundation for long-term cultural shifts and the disintegration of harmful power structures through girl-led communication campaigns where girls drive the messaging and delivery of social behavior change content. The program addresses systemic barriers to education and aims to strengthen the application of laws that protect the rights of girls through the formation of child protection committees. GirlEngage also gives families the opportunity to strengthen their own financial situations through the creation of village savings and loans associations.

- In Bangladesh, the USAID Fight Slavery and Trafficking-in-Persons (FSTIP) activity works in 25 districts through collaboration with national, regional and local governments, survivor service provider networks, legal rights groups, civil society organizations, and committed partners. The goal is to reduce vulnerability to trafficking-in-persons, CEFM and unions, and related exploitation through prosecution, prevention, protection, and partnership.
MCC’s new compact with Lesotho requires the passage of four gender-related legal reforms prior to implementation, all of which strengthen protections for women and girls. These are the Harmonization bill, providing secure land rights for women married under custom, the Counter Domestic Violence bill strengthening the legal framework for addressing GBV, including CEFM, and two other bills to be passed in the next year.

Training Efforts

- The Department of State provides training to U.S. diplomats at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) through a three-day course entitled, “Promoting Gender Equality to Advance Foreign Policy.” This course, extensively updated in 2022, features modules on GBV, which includes identifying groups most at risk, training on forms of GBV against adolescent girls such as CEFM and FGM/C, and best practices for survivor-centered, trauma-informed approaches. FSI hosted three iterations in 2022 training 60 participants.

- To continue strengthening USAID’s compliance with the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Hub in the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation offered its standalone, cross-sectoral GBV course, “Preventing and Responding to GBV Across Sectors,” twice, training 42 staff members (28 females, 14 males).
• DDI/ID’s Children in Adversity team coordinates implementation of the U.S. Government Strategy, “Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity” (APCCA), which includes an interagency commitment to increasing knowledge, capacity, and policies on child safeguarding and child protection to protect against exploitation, abuse, and violence. DDI/ID co-leads the interagency working group on child safeguarding in conjunction with the Department of State. Working across the interagency, the sub-working group was able to identify priorities, define gaps, and create training materials to increase the awareness and understanding of child safeguarding principles. A series of 75-minute webinars were held for USG field staff across four different regions in 2022.

ANNEX 1: Additional Public, Bilateral, and Multilateral Diplomatic Efforts

• In Israel, in November 2022, soccer ECA Sports Envoys engaged with decision makers from the Israeli Football Association and the Committee for Advancing Women in Sports to the U19 National Women team to build support for gender equity in sports at all levels, including the empowerment of female soccer coaches and youth players.

• In May, the Department of State ECA espnW Global Sports Mentoring Program: Empowering Women and Girls through Sports welcomed
back 40 alumnae to celebrate the program’s 10th anniversary and highlight the lessons of Title IX, celebrating its 50th anniversary.

- The Department of State, along with other country members of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse, negotiated the inclusion and strengthening of text addressing the prevention of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), and the impact of TFGBV on women and girls, in various multilateral resolutions and statements including through co-sponsorship of a violence against women and girl’s resolution.

- In October 2022, Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) launched its new Inclusion and Gender (I&G) Strategy, deepening its commitment to foster inclusive economic growth and gender equity and equality in partner countries, including ways to increase the ability of marginalized groups, including girls and young women, to access, participate in, and derive benefits from its investments.

**ANNEX 2: Additional Program Highlights**

- The State Department ECA Sports Envoys program brings current and former American professional athletes and coaches overseas to lead youth clinics and team building activities, as well as share lessons learned on and off the playing field about the importance of education, community engagement, and respect for diversity. For example:
• In Cameroon, in August 2022, soccer Sports Envoys Lisa Berg and Staci Wilson led the “Goals4Girls: Empowering Women and Girls through Soccer” program, including workshops for coaches of female youth teams, youth clinics for female players aged 15 to 20, outreach in a refugee village, high-level meetings with key government officials, and a gala match. The program advanced the State Department’s goals of increasing opportunities for women and girls and building gender equity through sport.

• In South India in September 2022, swimming Sports Envoys Julia Harbaugh and Nora Deleske equipped more than 50 adolescent girls with water safety skills, as well as leadership and life skills. In each program city, Envoys joined local lifeguards and partners to teach essential life-saving skills and ocean rescue procedures while also emphasizing self-confidence, discipline, teamwork, and communication skills.

• In Mexico in October 2022, basketball Sports Envoys Coach Bob MacKinnon, Azura Stevens and Monique Billings engaged 300 young female basketball players and coaches of female teams to build confidence and reinforce skills. The Envoys encouraged parents and female athletes to continue investing their time in sports and promoted sports as an avenue for higher education.
• The ECA Sports Visitor Program brings non-elite youth athletes and coaches to the United States to explore U.S. society, culture, and history through the lens of sports. In June 2022, as part of the Sports Visitor Program, over 60 youth female athletes and their coaches from 12 countries participated in the Julie Foudy & espnW Sports Leadership Academy, a multi-sport camp for girls.

• The International Sports Programming Initiative (ISPI) supports two-way exchange programs that engage underserved youth, coaches, and sports administrators. In March 2022, ISPI held a virtual leadership camp for youth female soccer players from Moldova, conducting six sessions run by the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) focused on youth leadership and empowering women and girls through sports. In December 2022, ISPI brought 14 youth female basketball players and coaches from Serbia and Croatia to the U.S. for an intensive, 10-day leadership through sport exchange.

• The State Department Office of American Spaces has developed programming toolkits about empowerment for women and girls that are used by its network of nearly 600 American Spaces worldwide.

• In Kosovo, USAID’s After School Support for Teens (ASSET) activity connected girls in secondary schools to a wide range of technologies and business opportunities. ASSET sponsored mentoring opportunities between girls and female business and technology leaders through
online platforms in response to the switch to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In Burma, USAID’s Community Strengthening Project partnered with the Center for Social Integrity (CSI) to increase learning opportunities for adolescent girls in Northern Rakhine State. CSI supported teacher training and nonformal education classes to improve basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills for adolescent girls.

- In Haiti, USAID’s WASH in Schools activity, part of the Community-Driven Development (CDD) activity, addresses disproportionate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services for women and the LGBTQI+ community. At the École Nationale de Tabarre, CDD added modern, gender-segregated toilets and a ramp to increase access for people with disabilities. The activity also added separate changing rooms to meet menstrual and other hygiene needs. These interventions provide more than 800 girls with access to clean water and improved sanitation.

- The Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) supported the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access), which provided a foundation of English language skills to marginalized students (primarily girls ages 13 to 20), during after school classes and intensive sessions. Each participant gained a greater understanding of civic engagement through service-learning projects and a focus on leadership.
In November 2022, MCC and its partners launched *DigiFemmes*, a four-year collaboration among MCC, USAID, and Microsoft focused on empowering women-led small and medium enterprises (W-SMEs) in Côte d’Ivoire with the data and digital literacy and skills needed to access opportunities in the accelerating digital economy. One of the program components, the DigiFemmes Academy, provides a pathway for women looking to acquire skills as software engineers or to forge an entrepreneurial path. The Academy has generated a great deal of interest among young women seeking to start a career in the higher paying digital economy—60% of the participants selected through a rigorous process are under the age of 25.

In July 2022, MCC signed a compact for Timor-Leste that includes a $40m education project. The project will support the construction and operations of a Center of Excellence for Teacher Education and will train teachers and school leaders on approaches for gender-responsive education. The project will also include a component dedicated to removing barriers that women experience in the teaching profession and in attaining leadership roles in school administration.

MCC's Health Systems Strengthening project in Lesotho focuses on policy and institutional reforms that will integrate gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, response, and referral services throughout the district primary health care system. This will improve health outcomes for women, adolescent girls, and children, and avert GBV-
related deaths and HIV infection. Key project activities aimed at strengthening GBV prevention and response in the health system include:

- Integrating survivor centered GBV services into primary health care and health management information systems.

- Providing capacity building for health staff, including village health workers.

- Strengthening referral pathways for GBV survivors.

- Strengthening GBV data collection and use, including consent and confidentiality reinforcement.

- Ensuring GBV activities are aligned and responsive to the revised national GBV Action Plan and domestic violence legislation.